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Cape Storm Rugby starts strong **B1**

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HEALTH

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MARCH 2010 TIDE TABLE					
	HIGH		LOW		
	am	pm	am	pm	
3/25	4:11	4:55	10:35	10:39	
3/26	5:18	5:56	11:33	11:43	
3/27	6:17	6:51		12:26	
3/28	7:11	7:41	12:42	1:14	
3/29	8:01	8:29	1:37	2:01	
3/30	8:50	9:16	2:29	2:47	
3/31	9:37	10:01	3:20	3:31	
Full Moon				3/29	
Last Quarter				3/7	
New Moon				3/15	
1st Quarter				3/23	
Apogee				3/12	
Perigee				3/27	

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Bridal Guide

Firefighters man water pump to ease flooding

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY – The West Cape May Volunteer Fire Company has been using a county-owned pump to try to relieve street flooding that has closed Bayshore Road at Sixth Avenue for several months.

Fire Chief Chuck McPherson said Bayshore Road is a county road and the county maintains the storm drain.

'I never remember this much water laying anywhere. It's just a mess.'

–Chuck McPherson, West Cape May Fire Chief

"They've been working with us since December," McPherson said. "They have a contractor who's going to fix the road, but he can't fix it until the ground water goes down."

McPherson said he got the

idea that, if the county would loan them the pump, the fire company would man it. He said the suggestion was put to Freeholder Director Dan Beyel, who oversees public works. McPherson said Beyel told him the county could

loan the pump under an inter-local agreement.

"We had a meeting of the minds, so I thought let's try this," McPherson said.

On Monday, the pump was running not at Sixth Avenue, but near the old Seashore

Lines railroad tracks several hundred yards east. McPherson said the plan was to pump water from the lowest point, where water from surrounding areas drain.

"We're trying to lower the ground water," he said.

McPherson said he has a pond on his property on Shunpike Road, and there is a pond behind Westwood Mobile Estates. He said there has been water pooling at the

Please see **Pump**, page A2

No tax increase, but teachers get 4% hike

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – The Cape May City Elementary School district is not increasing its levy for the next school year and teachers are getting a 4 percent raise this year and for the next two as well.

Chief School Administrator Victoria Zelenak said the school district has a \$3.9 million budget, which reflects a cut of \$147,000 in state aid. Zelenak said the school district would lose another \$150,000 in state aid next

teachers at Cape May City Elementary School are paid in the lower one-third compared to peers in the county.

"Statistics put out by the New Jersey School Boards say starting salaries for contracts settled recently are about \$5,000 more than our teachers," Zelenak said.

She said the district negotiated with the teachers for more than a year over the percentage of increase and health benefits. Zelenak said the board felt if the teachers' benefits were going to be left intact they could not give

'Our history over the last few years shows our fiscal house in in order.'

– Victoria Zelenak, Cape May City School Administrator

year, as well as just under \$100,000 for services to the non-public school when Our Lady Star of the Sea closes.

"That amount still has to be in our budget," Zelenak said. Zelenak said the district cannot reduce the levy under state law.

"There is a state formula for each school which says what the fair share of taxes the community can afford are. If you are below that you are not allowed to reduce your tax levy," she said. "Most schools raise the tax levy. We could raise it because they took away \$147,000 we had in surplus. If we had to we could raise the tax levy, but we are able to submit our budget without doing so."

Zelenak said the district has had no tax increase for the past several years. She said the district was able to negotiate a 4 percent raise for teachers, saying the teachers were looking for closer to 5 percent, which she said might have brought them up to scale with other teachers in the county. Zelenak said

more than 4 percent.

Zelenak said not reducing the levy has allowed the district to put money into the maintenance reserve and general reserve, and the district feels it is protected against contingencies.

"Our history over the last few years shows our fiscal house is in order," Zelenak said. "We do have money in places where if there is any kind of emergency we will be able to call upon that."

The school did have an issue during the Feb. 5 blizzard when many Cape May residents lost power and needed to be sheltered. Residents should have gone to the elementary school, but there was a problem with the heat.

"We have hot water heat, and when we have no electricity, which is needed to force the hot air, we cannot generate heat," Zelenak said.

She said the school had a safety meeting Tuesday with Public Works Director Robert Smith and he would

Please see **Hike**, page A2



John Alvarez/Cape May Star and Wave

Local women hold 'Knit-in' in Wilbraham Park

A group of knitters took advantage of some very nice weather over the weekend and gathered in Wilbraham Park in West Cape May for a "Knit-in." There were about 22 knitters in all. Wilbraham Park was where a group known as Salty Knits decorated trees, lamp and sign posts with yarn.

Lawsuit settled in Lower; zero tax increase sought

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

LOWER TOWNSHIP – Township Solicitor Anthony Monzo said the township had settled a lawsuit brought by International Fidelity Company and Fondacaro Fence Company against the township.

Fondacaro had sought payment of \$290,000 for work at the Freeman Douglass Sports Complex at Bennett's Crossing. The township had to spend an extra \$600,000 to repair allegedly substandard work on the athletic fields, which did not drain properly. Fondacaro sought payment for work it said was done according to the engineer's

specifications.

Monzo said the lawsuit was settled in mediation. He said the township convinced International Fidelity, which insured Fondacaro, they had some exposure in the case. Fondacaro, Monzo said, is bankrupt.

"We worked out an agreement with International Fidelity for payment of legal fees and dismissed any claims by anyone," Monzo said. "We cannot get anything from Fondacaro and this ends with no loss to the township."

Last week Monzo said there was still a criminal investigation over alleged over-billing the township for work done by subcontractors. Monzo said the township was over-

billed \$55,000 for electric work on the project.

MAB member Fred Long said Fondacaro indicated there was no settlement as long as there was an investigation. Monzo said the company could file a motion to vacate the settlement, but he felt they had no grounds.

"The civil settlement is not tied to the criminal investigation," he said.

Advisory board asks no tax increase

The Mayor's Advisory Board updated Lower Township council last week on recent initiatives and

Please see **Zero**, page A2

Seven candidates seek three Cape May Council seats

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Seven people have filed petitions for three Cape May City Council seats being vacated by incumbents.

At least five of the seven waited until the March 18 deadline to file petitions, making voters wait until the last minute to see who would be on the ballot.

Robert W. McCafferty Jr. was the first to file. McCafferty is retired from Franklin Glass in Marlton, and resides in Victorian Towers. He is best known as "China Bob" for his donation of Chinese terra cotta warrior

statues to local schools and his extensive lecturing about his travels. He filed with the slogan "China Bob" – Wharton, Traveler, Lecturer, Benefactor."

Next to file was Alison Bjork of Hughes Street in Cape May. Bjork is best known for her successful efforts in establishing the dog park on Lafayette Street in Cape May. Bjork's slogan is "Common Sense for Cape May."

Shaine P. Meier, a Vermont Avenue resident, is the youngest candidate in the field of seven. Employed by Westside Market, Meier chose the slogan "The Voice

of the

People." Deanna Fiocca is running for city council after considering becoming a candidate four years ago. Fiocca is a Cape May native who previously lived in Lower Township and served as vice chair on the Lower Township Zoning Board. She



Four of seven candidates for Cape May City Council. Left to right: Dawn Brautigam, Jack Wichterman, Deanna Fiocca and Bill Murray. Three others, Alison Bjork, Shaine Meier and Robert McCafferty Jr. are vying for the three council seats.



is the general manager for Lucky Bones Restaurant. Fiocca's slogan is



"Independent Thinker." John W. "Jack" Wichterman has lived in Cape



May since 1998 and served as a Cape May City councilman from 2002 to 2004. He is a past board member of the Taxpayers Association of Cape May. He was a council candidate in a field of eight in 2006. His campaign slogan is "Experience and Straight Talk."

William H. "Bill" Murray is a retired attorney who has been a homeowner in Cape May since 1982 and a fulltime resident since 2003. He is a board member of the Taxpayers Association and a zoning board member. His slogan is "Building Our

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