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	APRIL 2010 TIDE TABLE			
	HIGH		LOW	
	am	pm	am	pm
4/15	9:17	9:30	3:05	2:57
4/16	9:54	10:07	3:45	3:34
4/17	10:34	10:48	4:27	4:14
4/18	11:18	11:35	5:14	5:00
4/19		12:10	6:05	5:53
4/20	12:28	1:11	7:03	6:55
4/21	1:31	2:22	8:06	8:05
Full Moon			4/28	
Last Quarter			4/6	
New Moon			4/14	
1st Quarter			4/21	
Apogee			4/8	
Perigee			4/24	

## FEMA reaching out to county flood victims

By KRISTEN RILEY  
Cape May Star and Wave

ATLANTIC COUNTY – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is reaching out to individuals, households and businesses affected by the state's storms and flooding from mid-March.

On Saturday, Disaster Recovery Centers opened across the state. On Wednesday, the Cape May County center opened. Visitors to a DRC can work with FEMA, U.S. Small Business Administration and

state agency disaster recovery specialists to find out what assistance is available to them.

"This is something we normally do as we begin recovery," said Charles Powell, FEMA public information officer. "This is an opportunity for people to come in and sit down directly with our people to discuss everything. A lot of times people just don't know the right questions to ask."

The Cape May County DRC is located in the basement of the main branch of the Cape May County Library, 30

Mechanic St., Cape May Court House. Powell suggests those interested in stopping by a DRC register with FEMA beforehand by calling (800) 621-FEMA or, for the speech and hearing impaired, (800) 462-7585 from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week.

Applicants will need the following information readily available to register: contact address and phone number; Social Security number; current mailing address; date damage(s) occurred; address of affected property; description of damage(s); insurance information; and family's

gross income.

"We're really strongly encouraging people to go ahead and register with us," Powell said. "Don't disqualify yourself."

On April 2, Atlantic and Cape May counties were two of the 12 counties declared as a disaster from the severe storms and flooding that began on March 12. Individual and public assistance was part of this declaration. A DRC in Cape May County will be established and up-and-running in the coming days.

"This is routine recovery

for disasters such as this. If I were in the position as some of these people, I would really like to sit down and talk to someone," said Powell.

Visitors to a DRC can receive information on state and federal disaster assistance; get help in completing low-interest loan applications from the U.S. Small Business Administration for homeowners, renters and business owners; inquire about the status of applications for federal assistance; and learn cost-effective mitigation measures

Please see **FEMA**, pae A2

## Petition to start referendum on parking meters

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – A group of property owners known as the Friends and Neighbors of East Cape May (FAN ECM) have filed petitions for referendum, effectively suspending two parking ordinances passed by city council March 16.

Cape May City Council voted 3-1 to pass Ordinance 200-2010 to create new metered areas, which include Beach Avenue from Third to Wilmington, and Wilmington on both sides from Beach to New Jersey. Other metered areas would include Madison, Pittsburgh, Baltimore and Brooklyn in the block between Beach and New Jersey.

City council also passed Ordinance 201-2010 creating back-in angled parking on Beach Avenue and on the east side of Gurney.

Councilwoman Linda Steenrod was absent from the March 16 meeting, and Councilman David Kurkowski voted against Ordinance 200-2010.

On Monday, FAN ECM issued a press release saying the group had collected 220 signatures on a petition requesting the ordinances be up for referendum. City solicitor Anthony Monzo said the action has suspended the ordinances until there is a resolution.

"The ordinance is suspended until the referendum process is completed, whether through election, repealing the ordinance, judicial opinion, or by rescission of the petition," Monzo said.

Monzo said state statute determines the time frame for this process.

"The (city) clerk has 20 days to review the referendum to see if it meets the statute requirements. Then if the clerk certifies the petition, it is presented to council and they have 20 days to make a decision to repeal the ordinances or let them stand," he said.

Monzo said the petitioners also have a period during which they can withdraw the referendum petition.

"If it stands it goes to election," he said.

City council has two such referendum petitions

Please see **Meters**, page A2



Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave

### Shore Grand Slam a winner

Fourteen local poets and storytellers competed Sunday in the first annual Shore Grand Slam. One winner was selected in poetry and storytelling, but the event itself was the real winner. See photos page A10.

## Inter-departmental firefighting

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Unless drastic changes are made, the Cape May Fire Department does not want West Cape May Volunteer Fire Company firefighters responding to fires in Cape May.

Cape May Fire Chief Jerome Inderwies Jr. addressed an April 6 letter to West Cape May Commissioner Ramsey Geyer saying, "Effective April 1, 2010 the Cape May Fire Department has decided to no longer utilize

the services of the West Cape May Fire Company."

When reached by telephone, Geyer said he was concerned about the way the matter was being handled, saying it was inappropriate to unjustly raise the matter publicly because it raises concerns that should have been raised between the fire companies and the board of commissioners. Geyer said although he is not sure how the process works, there must be a formal process within the fire company structure that tells how these

matters are to be handled.

When originally contacted, Inderwies said this was an internal matter and wished to handle it through the fire companies. However, Geyer said Inderwies' letter made it a matter of public record.

West Cape May Fire Chief Chuck McPherson said the letter blindsided him but said what the letter indicated wasn't true.

Inderwies wrote, "Chief McPherson has refused to ade

Please see **FIRES**, page A3

## Goodbye to Steve Protasi: Cape May's man on the mall

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – For most of his 20-odd years as a merchant on the Washington Street Mall, Steve Protasi was literally the man on the mall who everyone knew and talked to.

The other merchants who knew him, which was nearly everyone, and even town officials considered him the go-to guy when they wanted to know what was happening and how people were doing.

"If you picture the small town merchant standing outside his store, greeting everyone, that was Steve," mall merchant Marlene Mediuch said.

Perhaps nothing illustrates this more than Mediuch's first reaction upon hearing Protasi had died. She said when she heard the news she her first reaction was to pick up her phone to call Protasi to find out what happened.

"For me not to get a phone



File photo by Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave  
Steve Protasi on July 31, 2008 at the dedication of the renovated Washington Street Mall.

call from him is hard," she said.

Joanne Rantuccio, who manages Henry's next door to the Hallmark store Protasi operated, said Protasi always spent time talking to the other

merchants, asking how they were doing and leaving them with a kind word. Protasi, especially after becoming president of the Mall Merchants Association, made it his business to see that all

the mall businesses were doing well.

Rantuccio said Protasi and her late husband, Tony, were two larger than life characters on the mall.

"Tony always called him 'My little buddy,'" she said. "You used to see them walking down the mall together...it was kind of comical."

Rantuccio said Protasi was the guy to talk to learn about anything going on around the mall.

"He cared a lot about the mall merchants and what was happening. It was very important to him that we all worked together to make the mall the best it could be," she said.

Susan and Barry Tischler knew Protasi for the entire time he ran the card/gift shop.

"Steve's loss will be tremendous for the mall," Susan Tischler said.

She said besides being president of the MMA, Protasi did a lot of other work for the

community.

"He was a good-hearted person. It was an honor and a privilege to have known him," she said.

Barry Tischler said Protasi greatly improved the MMA after taking over as president.

"He got things done, with organizing the association, advertising, promotions and fund-raising," Tischler said. "And he was a nice guy with a sense of humor, very generous."

Others said Protasi was generous with his time. Kelly Sawyer of the Dairy Queen said Protasi would take time to help others even if it meant being away from his business. She said he even closed his shop for a short time to come over and unclog her toilet.

"He did a lot for the mall and he cared a lot for each business," she said.

Mediuch said Protasi had a daily routine that included stopping at the Lemon Tree every morning for an iced

tea. He also attended church faithfully at Our Lady Star of the Sea, where he was an usher.

"I never saw him miss church, even when on vacation," Mediuch said. "As much as he was into his business, he would take time for church."

Mediuch said Protasi called her every day around 2 p.m. and she, like everyone she talked to after his death, had seen Protasi during that week. She said Protasi had no immediate family besides his children Meghan and Ryan, who she said meant the world to him. Ryan, a student at Virginia Tech, ran the Beaches and Cream Ice Cream Parlor on Beach Avenue with his father for several years. Meghan has been teaching in Thailand for the past couple years.

Pam Smarro, who was asked to give the eulogy, knew Protasi for years. She

Please see **Steve**, page A2



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