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New council to make call on Convention Hall

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Cape May City Council went into closed session for a little more than two hours Tuesday and when they came out it was announced that no new action would be taken on Convention Hall until the new council is sworn in July 1.

Council met without Deputy Mayor Niels Favre, who is out due to knee replacement surgery, but with council-elect members Jack Wichterman and Deanna Fiocca.

Shortly after the start of the 1 p.m. meeting, council adjourned to the council meeting room, and Mayor

Edward J. Mahaney Jr. called the meeting back to order at 3:15 p.m. Mahaney described the closed session as a healthy discussion in which everyone participated fully.

Mahaney said everyone participating in the meeting was in total agreement on two points: the first being no further action would be taken by city council regarding Convention Hall until the new council is seated; and there was agreement on the procedure the council would follow regarding future action.

“We will announce that procedure at our next meeting on June 15,” Mahaney said.

The city has bonded \$10.5 million for the construction of



Image courtesy of Kimmel Bogrette

The Kimmel Bogrette design for Convention Hall as approved by voters in November 2008.

a new Convention Hall, but bids received thus far have exceeded that amount. Additionally, the voters passed a referendum for the

\$10.5 million on Nov. 4, 2008 by a vote of 818-421. Subsequently, the city has had to alter its plans based on CAFRA requirements. The

Department of Environmental Protection would not allow the new structure to cover so-called virgin sand, and the design had to be moved 24 feet closer to Beach Avenue, causing the promenade to be reconfigured. The project's cost now includes that element, the demolition and construction of the existing building plus the Solarium (if no alternative is found), plus the geothermal energy component.

All 11 bids received in March were rejected as being too high. Bids were once again delayed in May for

Please see Hall, page A2

Van Drew wants traffic study on Route 47 from NJDOT, DEP

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

TRENTON – State Sen. Jeff Van Drew said he is still waiting to hear back from Gov. Chris Christie about his proposal for a traffic study on Route 47.

Van Drew sent Christie a letter dated May 28, in which he outlined Senate Bill 1133, which calls for a traffic study on Route 47 involving the commissioners of the Department of Transportation and the Department of Environmental Protection. In his letter, Van Drew said traffic congestion, which he said becomes a health and safety problem, results in excessive pollution from idling cars stuck in traffic, as well as traffic accidents – some of them fatal. The bill has passed the Senate Transportation Committee.

Van Drew said he has not yet heard back from the governor, but he expects he will have conversations with the commissioners over the summer.

“I have had some already, along with the governor,” he said. “Once and for all we have to move forward and make this situation better. We have nothing to lose ... and it can't get much worse.”

Route 47 is one of only a few options motorists have when choosing to travel to the Jersey shore during the summer season. Route 9 ceased to be an option since the bridge was closed to traffic, so at some point, most shore traffic winds up on Route 47 or the Garden State Parkway.

“The issue is to look at ways to alleviate traffic on 47, and this forces the DOT and DEP to come together to see if there is an environmentally responsible way to bring 55 to a conclusion at the

Please see Study, page A2



Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave

Cirque du Jersey Cape

This group seems to have a leg up on the competition. Members of The Jersey Cape Dance and Gymnastics Academy performed a Cirque du Soleil routine during the dance school's 25th anniversary recital June 4 and 5. See more photos on pages B1 and B2.

Thornton-Sheppard get GOP nod

By ERIC AVEDESIAN
Ocean City Sentinel

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE – Incumbent Freeholder Gerald Thornton and Ocean City Council President Susan Sheppard pulled an upset in the county Republican primary, defeating two party-backed candidates in a contentious contest on Tuesday.

Incumbent Freeholder Ralph Bakley and Ocean City businessman John McCann, both received the backing of the Cape May County Regular Republican Organization. They lost.

According to the unofficial election results, Thornton received 5,664 votes while Sheppard received 5,576. Bakley and McCann received 4,348 and 4,277 votes respectively.

Bakley, a retired Cape May police officer, fared better in his hometown, with 215 votes.



Eric Avedissian/Cape May Star and Wave

Freeholder Gerald Thornton and runningmate Susan Sheppard after their GOP primary win, Tuesday.

McCann received 189 votes, Thornton 172 and Sheppard 149 votes in Cape May.

In Ocean City, both Sheppard and McCann garnered the most votes with 972 and 920 respec-

tively. Thornton received 813 votes and Bakley 754 in Ocean City.

Thornton said the party snubbed him because of his independent voting record, most notably his public opposition to purchasing the Beesley's Point Bridge. Repairs to the bridge, which connects Cape May and Atlantic counties, is estimated to cost \$32 million, about \$12 million more than the state anticipated.

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Art show celebrates 100 years at St. Mary's

By JENNIFER KOPP
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT – “Being creative is closest to God,” said Sister Celeste from St. Mary's by the Sea. “God is called the ‘Creator’ and what a great gift and responsibility He has given us.”

Artists from all over were invited to participate in the celebration of the Sisters of St. Joseph's of Philadelphia purchase of the Shoreham Hotel in 1909. The sisters turned the building into Saint Mary's by-the-Sea as a retreat house, which it's been ever since.

The anniversary weekend included art workshops, retreats, a sketch crawl, an art show, tours and a wine-tasting auction as well as prayer.

Joan Dollinger, who helped organize the event said, “The entire weekend was cloaked in the depth experience of God.”

Of the local artists participating was Janice Wilson Stridick, daughter of the late watercolor artist Alice Steer Wilson, who taught a workshop on creative writ-



ing.

“This was such a great experience,” Stridick said. “I'm more of a spiritual person than religious, but this weekend all boundaries were dropped. You could feel the love and appreciate all the hard work that went into this.”

Stridick also said she felt she had stepped into one of her mother's paintings. Wilson had painted the building many times.

“The wonderful thing about this building is its beauty. There's nothing fancy,

Please see St. Mary's, page A3

Menendez opposes offshore drilling

By ERIC AVEDESIAN
Ocean City Sentinel

OCEAN CITY – U.S. Senator Robert Menendez and local officials held a press conference Thursday, June 3, to reiterate his opposition to offshore drilling in the wake of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

BP's Deepwater Horizon oilrig exploded April 20, killing 11 crewmembers and sinking into the Gulf of Mexico. BP officials have tried capping the well, but initial attempts were unsuccessful. As a result, a gushing oil geyser continued seeping into the gulf at an estimated rate of up to 4 million gallons a day. The oil spill is the largest one in United

States history, affecting the southern U.S. coastline's wildlife and economy.

Mayor Sal Perillo welcomed Menendez to Ocean City.

“Senator Menendez is probably one of the best friends that the shore communities have. Before it became fashionable in the last 45 days, Senator Menendez was one of the few voices speaking out with regard to offshore drilling off of the eastern coast of the United States,” Perillo said.

Menendez said a similar situation to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill could occur if oil drilling happened off the New Jersey coast.

“As we look out at the Atlantic and the eight miles of Ocean

City's pristine white sand beaches, we can't help but think of the millions of gallons of oil washing up on the Gulf Coast and the damage that its causing. We can't help but think of the thousands of families affected by the environmental and economic disaster occurring in the Gulf,” Menendez said.

Menendez said to fully protect the New Jersey shore, drilling must not be allowed off the mid-Atlantic coast. He said he wants oil companies to be held fully accountable for any damages caused by oil spills.

Menendez said he and others pleaded with the Obama

Please see Oppose, Page A3

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