

Wreck could be the Lady Mary

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY - The U.S. Coast Guard said a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration boat out of Norfolk, Va., could have located the wreck of the fishing vessel Lady Mary, which sank on March 24.

Reports originally said the scallop fishing boat out of Cape May went down about 75 miles off Cape May in the early morning hours, with only one of the seven crewmembers surviving. The bodies of four crewmembers, including the captain, were never recovered.

Petty Officer Christopher McLaughlin with the Coast Guard's Fifth District Public Affairs office said the Coast Guard contacted NOAA, which used sonar equipment on board the research vessel Thomas Jefferson to locate what was apparently a wreck, 60 miles off Cape May. The Coast Guard attempted to deploy a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) to reach the wreck, which sits in 180 feet of water. The wreck is about a mile and a half from the last location from which an emergency beacon signal was received.

"Our attempts were unsuccessful because of the weather and the capabilities of the ROV," McLaughlin said.

On Wednesday, McLaughlin said the Coast Guard was still considering options for get-

ting the ROV down to the wreck or whether to do something else.

"We're trying to decide what would be the best platform to get down there, whether to launch it from a Coast Guard boat or a boat from another agency," he said.

McLaughlin said the Coast Guard requested NOAA's help in locating the wreck, but released the Thomas Jefferson after attempts to launch the ROV were unsuccessful.

McLaughlin said a hearing to investigate the sinking of the Lady Mary, originally scheduled for April 6, has been rescheduled for Tuesday, April 14, at 10 a.m. in the Oceanside Club at the Coast Guard's Training Center-Cape May.

"Basically the purpose of the Marine Board Investigation is to determine the cause of the sinking and to prevent such a tragedy from happening in the future - to thoroughly investigate the facts related to the sinking and make recommendations to improve operations of similar commercial vessels," McLaughlin said.

The National Transportation Safety Board will also participate in the investigation and can make recommendations on issues to consider, identify and examine witnesses, and submit or request additional evidence in the course of the

investigation.

McLaughlin said Royal Smith Sr., owner of the Lady Mary would be one of those asked to give testimony. Additionally, the board would hear from Jose Luis Arias, the sole surviving crewmember from the March 24 sinking. The boat reportedly sank around 5 a.m., but the Coast Guard did not receive a signal from the Lady Mary's Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon until about 7:30 a.m. A Coast Guard helicopter picked up Arias and two deceased crewmembers, Royal Smith Jr. and Timothy Smith, the owner's sons.

The Coast Guard searched a 3,417 square nautical mile area for 37 hours trying to locate the remaining four crewmembers.

McLaughlin said the Coast Guard offers courtesy exams to commercial fishing vessels, telling the owner what is expired and needs to be updated, what needs repaired, check the number of lifeboats, survival suits, fire extinguishers, etc. He said the Coast Guard then gives the boat a decal.

"If they are underway and we board them the decal shows the inspection was updated and it goes a lot quicker. If they don't have the decal they could end up being fined and the voyage can be terminated," McLaughlin said.



Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave
Four contestants vying for the coveted title of Mr. LCMR perform "YMCA" as part of the talent portions of the program. Left to right are Chaz Lear, Bill Damiana, Dakota Abadie and Kyle Boyle. Twelve tried for the big prize which went to senior Ben New.

Mr. LCMR

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Gannon in a wrestling skit (that was actually real). Shane Parker, who would like to be either a pro golfer or a musician, sang "You Found Me." Rodriguez demonstrated soccer skills while jumping rope.

As if this wasn't enough entertainment, the audience also heard vocal performanc-

es by Alicia Magill, Nona Poehler, Jerami Roth and Rob Causey, Chris Jones, Bill Evans and Josh Babbish, and Andrea Hoffnagle. There were also several dance numbers choreographed by Stina Smith, Annika Nash and Kendra Heminway from Jersey Cape Dancers. Smith's dancers' performances are always crisp, appealing, acrobatic, entertaining and pro-

fessional. Money raised from the Mr. Popularity contest and admissions benefited the Make-A-Wish Foundation and the LCMRHS Music Scholarship Fund.

Mr. LCMR is just one of a number of highly entertaining and low cost performances staged throughout the year by the Tri-M Musical Honor Society.

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