



Two groups honored for historical preservation efforts

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House of the Week

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170th YEAR NO. 14 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3, 2024 \$1.00

Don't look up (without special glasses)

North America to experience total solar eclipse on April 8

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Cat Stevens sang about being followed by a moon shadow. North America will be under one when a total solar eclipse occurs April 8.

While the New Jersey cape is not in the path of totality, residents will be able to see about 85 percent of the effect of the eclipse.

It is set to begin at 2:08 p.m. locally, reaching its maximum

point at 3:23 p.m. Scientists are suggesting an interesting way to view the eclipse is to watch its effect on birds and wildlife.

A Zoom press event was held March 26 by SciLine, a philanthropically funded, editorially independent, free service for reporters based at the non-profit American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Shannon Schmoll, director of the Abrams Planetarium at Michigan State University, said solar eclipses do not occur every

month because the moon's orbit around the Earth is tilted by about 5 degrees, which causes the moon's shadow to miss the Earth.

The darker inner part of the moon shadow is called the umbra and surrounding that is a lighter shadow called the penumbra.

"As the moon goes around in its orbit and the Earth is rotating, the shadow of the moon being cast on the Earth will move across the Earth and so if you are within that path, the umbra, the

dark part of the shadow, you will see a total solar eclipse," Schmoll said. "Whereas, if you are in the path of the penumbra, the lighter part of the shadow, you will see a partial solar eclipse, so the moon will go in front of the sun but it will never completely cover it like we have in the path of totality."

The moon shadow will first reach land in Mazatlán, Mexico and travel from Texas to Maine and end off the coast of Newfoundland, she said. The path for

the total solar eclipse is about 100 miles wide with a duration of one minute to 4 minutes, 30 seconds depending on location, Schmoll said.

Looking directly at an eclipse can cause permanent eye damage, so eclipse glasses or some sort of indirect viewer must be used. Schmoll warned there are fraudulent eclipse glasses being sold, noting proper eyewear will bear the code: ISO 12312-2.

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Veterans Service Office now open

CMCH facility will provide help with benefits, counseling, other needs of past military members

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — A county with a sizable population of veterans now has a Veterans Service Office.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held March 26 at the new office at the National Guard Armory in the Crest Haven Complex.

The event was attended by county officials, VFW and American Legion commanders and Lower Township Mayor Frank Sippel.

Vincent Solomeno, deputy commissioner of the state Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, said previously the state had 14 Veterans Service Offices in its 21 counties. He said Gov. Phil Murphy

and the state Legislature included funding in last year's budget to open additional facilities.

The offices are staffed by trained and accredited veterans services officers who serve as a point of entry for state and federal veterans programs and services, Solomeno said.

"I think what most obviously comes to mind are the financial benefits that someone might receive if they have a service-connected disability," he said.

Solomeno said in 2023, 19 veterans service offices statewide were able to secure more than \$129 million in initial federal benefits for about 6,000 veterans or their survivors. He said there has

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Military student aid helps school board lower tax rate 15%

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — A \$1 million boost in state aid for military students helped the Cape May City Elementary School Board of Education reduce its tax rate by nearly 15 percent.

The tax levy for the 2024-25 spending plan will remain at \$1.9 million, while the local purpose tax rate will fall from 48 cents to 41 cents per 100 of assessed value.

During the Board of Education meeting March 21, Business Administrator John Thomas said the school is receiving a new category of state aid for military students of more than \$1 million.

He said the preschool is growing and now has four classrooms, which in-

clude students from West Cape May Elementary School.

A \$6 million project financed by a state Regular Operating Districts (ROD) grant will fund replacement of the school's roof and heating and air conditioning systems, Thomas said. The roof portion of the project is out for bid and is expected to be replaced this summer, according to Thomas.

A public hearing for the budget is scheduled for 6 p.m. April 25. It has been submitted to the county superintendent for approval.

Superintendent Zack Palombo reported a book fair raised more than

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Easter Fashion Stroll

Cape May held its annual Easter Fashion Stroll on March 31 in Rotary Park. Above, girls age 4 to 6 line up for judging. Below left, 5-month-old Naomi Carbo meets the Easter Bunny for the first time. Below right, Richard Dandreas and Linda Vargo, of Woodland Park, compete in the senior category. The won the bonnet category.



WCM may limit number of dispensaries

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — Borough Commission introduced an ordinance to limit the number of retail cannabis dispensaries to one. The borough's ordinance governing cannabis dispensaries, passed in 2021, included no limit. Shore House Cannabis opened last October on Sunset Boulevard. A second cannabis dispensary was proposed for the location of Cape May Linen on Sunset Boulevard under the name of Potent Petals, but the borough has not been able to find out if the applicants still intend to open a dispensary. Borough Commission sent a letter of support for the application to the state Cannabis Regulatory Commission (CRC) that simply states the use

is permitted within the borough's zoning codes.

During a meeting March 27, Mayor Carol Sabo said the proposed ordinance would allow only one dispensary to operate except any licensee that has received a resolution of support from Borough Commission prior to March 31, 2022. The licensee must have obtained all state and local approvals no

later than one year after the effective date of the ordinance.

"This would limit it to the one that's existing," she said. "The commission at the time in 2022 had issued a letter of support to another operation. To our knowledge, they have not moved forward with that application."

Sabo said she reached

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