

## INSIDE



- YOUTH/ EDUCATION**  
Lower Cape May Regional HS puts on one heck of an art show, **B1**
- 2008 Lower Cape May Regional graduate pages, **B6-13**
- ARTS**  
Cape May Stage offering Senior Night, **A13**
- COMMUNITY**  
Star of the Sea graduates 28, **A5**

**JUNE TIDE TABLE**

	HIGH		LOW	
	am	pm	am	pm
6/12	3:52	4:38	9:57	10:38
6/13	4:47	5:26	10:44	11:33
6/14	5:39	6:11	11:28	
6/15	6:27	6:53	12:22	12:11
6/16	7:12	7:33	1:08	12:51
6/17	7:55	8:13	1:51	1:30
6/18	8:36	8:52	2:32	2:09

**Special Fishing and Boating Pages Inside**

## Referendum committee files petition with clerk

By **CHRISTOPHER SOUTH**  
*Cape May Star and Wave*

CAPE MAY - Referendum committee members filed petitions with the city clerk Monday, challenging the \$10.5 million bond ordinance funding the project to replace Convention Hall with a new facility.

The committee was required to turn in signatures of 159 registered voters and on Monday turned in peti-

tions with 222 signatures of people asking for a public vote on the bond ordinance. Once the petitions are certified, the city would probably have to begin arrangements for a special election, since the general election in November is beyond the statutory limit for holding the referendum.

After turning in the petitions, the committee said their appeal to city council is to go ahead and rescind the bond ordinance and save the

city the cost of a special election. The committee maintains the public has not had enough input on the Convention Hall project and they don't want it funded at this time. Told that Convention Hall Committee chairman Louis "Skip" Loughlin has indicated there has been plenty of public input, committee member Virginia Hesel said, "Skip Loughlin doesn't accurately represent the citizens of Cape May."

Hesel said while gathering petitions the committee has encountered a lot of anger over the process. Suzanna Newman described the process as "something in motion they are reluctant to stop."

The committee is not opposed to the construction of a new Convention Hall, but they would like the process to stop for now, or at least change direction. Jeanne Powick said the process has been moving along without

much public input. "It's even difficult to find out when Convention Hall Committee meetings are held," she said.

The referendum committee representatives said what the new Convention Hall turns out to be is not up to the Convention Hall Committee, and the city is leaving the community out of the process. She said the citizens of Cape May need to be given the

*Please see Petition, Page A14*



**Jennifer Kopp/Cape May Star and Wave**  
West Cape May held its annual Strawberry Festival Saturday under sunny, if not balmy, skies. This year, Myrtle Avenue was open to vendors increasing the size of the festival. Pictured at top left, emcee Dan Wesler bows to newly-crowned Strawberry King Ian Smylik, 11, from West Cape May as Queen Layla Freeman, 6, of Erma looks on. Above, Liliana Short, 2, of Rio Grande, enjoys a piece of strawberry shortcake. Left, Emma Kushner, 5 of Devon, Pa. and Avalon, dances to the sounds of Michael Davis and The Bullets. Look for more photos in next week's edition.

## CM Taxpayer group votes 6-3 opposing referendum

By **CHRISTOPHER SOUTH**  
*Cape May Star and Wave*

CAPE MAY - In a 6-3 decision, the Taxpayers Association of Cape May (TPA) voted to oppose the referendum calling for a public vote on Ordinance 152-2008, appropriating \$10.5 million for the construction of a new Convention Hall.

The TPA held a forum on Friday, June 6, at City Hall, inviting referendum organizers and city officials to give their positions on the bond ordinance.

The petition organizers declined the invitation, saying they were too busy raising signatures before the June 9 deadline for turning in the petition challenging the bond ordinance.

Instead, the TPA heard from Mayor Jerry Inderwies

and Convention Hall Committee chairman Louis "Skip" Loughlin.

The TPA board of directors then authorized Dennis Crowley to draft a position paper (see page A11) to present the board's point of view. In their paper, the TPA says they oppose the referendum for essentially five reasons; the first being that the bond ordinance does not spend \$10.5 million.

"No money will be raised until it is needed," the position paper says.

Additionally, the TPA does not want to lose the waiver of a \$500,000 down payment for the project if the ordinance is rejected. Losing the waiver would result in an additional 2.5-cent increase on the tax rate in 2009.

TPA cited the cost of the referendum, which would be \$25,000 to 30,000, and feels

the referendum would subvert a 12-month process. Finally, the TPA believes the referendum would result in time delays and would negatively impact tourism, the project and design features.

Christine Miller, is a supporter of the referendum but not a petition committee member. She supports the referendum to reject the bond ordinance authorizing \$10.5 million for the project saying, "If you give the city the money you will never see it again."

She said an ordinance funding the project should be passed by the new council, which will be sworn in on July 1. She said passing the bond ordinance at the end of the term of the old administration cheated the new mayor out of the process.

Miller said the loss of the waiver is a non-issue.

"The waiver is not a grant," Miller said. "In the bond you appropriate 5-percent and then borrow the balance. Without waiver you have to borrow whole amount."

She also believes there's not reason the city cannot seek a waiver on a new bond ordinance.

"A waiver is not guaranteed to anyone. On the other hand no reason to believe if they granted a waiver for this ordinance...the finance board would not approve another."

Inderwies described the chances of getting a new waiver as "slim to none," but a spokesman with the Department of Community Affairs declined to speculate on the chances of getting a new waiver, saying each application is handled on a case by case basis.

As far as the cost of the referendum, Miller said the city

was forced to pay for a referendum last time, but as a result, the \$5 million bonded for the mall was reduced to \$3.5 million in a subsequent bond.

"Through process of referendum taxpayers to this point saved \$1.5 million," she said.

Last Friday, at the TPA meeting, comments made around the table suggested the referendum for the mall bond ordinance cost the city more money.

Loughlin said the architectural firm Kimmel-Bogrette had been hired on the recommendation of the city engineers, Remington Vernick. He said the firm had a lot of experience in designing public buildings and had done much so far to accommodate everyone.

Inderwies highlighted some of the costs associated with the referendum, including the

possible loss of about \$1.5 million in CRDA grants, and the loss of rent and user fees.

Loughlin told the group a one-year delay of the project would add 8.5 to 11-percent to the total cost.

"The mall was delayed for a year and it didn't change anything - it just cost more money," Loughlin said.

"The most catastrophic event in town was the mall disaster," Crowley said, referring to the mall referendum.

Addressing the public meeting policy, board member Jack Wichterman asked Loughlin if Convention Committee meetings were open and advertised.

"They were open," Loughlin said, adding all the meetings were held in the City Hall auditorium.

*Please see Oppose, Page A2*

## Harbor Fest gearing up for June 21

By **JOHN K. ALVAREZ**  
*Cape May Star and Wave*

CAPE MAY - Cape May's Harbor has had many a ship sail its waters. From whaling boats to schooners. Tall ships to pirate vessels. However, if Gretchen Ferrante, sanctuary director of the Nature Center in Cape May, has anything to say, on June 21, during Cape May's Harbor Fest, what the people will be talking about is a small fleet paddling by - The Kayak Regatta. A worthy title for this event, to be sure. It's also for a worthy cause.

"Six years ago, we were

given an anonymous donation by a person who saw what we doing here working with children," Ferrante said. "He was very pleased and wanted to provide scholarship money. For many years we worked with the Coast Guard in different capacities. So we thought what a great way to give back to the Coast Guard. Many of the families here have limited income. We wanted to provide opportunities for the Coast Guard kids who live around here. The name 'Good Neighbor Fund' came from the fact that the Coast Guard is our neighbor."

"With that anonymous donation, we were able to start the fund and give the kids two weeks free so they could attend classes here (at the Nature Center). When we went public and let people know what we were doing here, other people donated to the fund as well as different groups that were in the Coast Guard."

The Nature Center was able to afford 40 students from the Coast Guard with free classes. This year the classes will run from June 23 for ten weeks till the end of August.

"We have eight weeks of

camp programs and an additional two weeks of that we extend some other children programs. It not a traditional camp," said Ferrante.

Sadly, this year the anonymous donor passed away and the center hasn't heard from his family. With that portion of the fund no more, the Nature Center had to find a new source. But where?

The solution was to have a fundraiser during Harbor Fest. This is where the idea for the kayak regatta came about, sort of. Some people

*Please see Fest, Page A2*

## Convention Hall Town meeting cancelled

CAPE MAY - The town meeting regarding Convention Hall following the regular council meeting on Tuesday, June 17 at the Cape May City Elementary School, 921 Lafayette Street has been cancelled.

City council will hold a closed session meeting at 6 p.m., and hold its regular meeting following the closed session.