

Cape May Star and Wave

154th YEAR NO. 20 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2008 50¢

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SPORTS

Eastern Surfing Contest in Margate takes advantage of nor'easter waves, **B1**

Lower LAX girls attack Mainland but lose 18-9, **B1**

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Music Festival opens with 'energetic Celts', **A10**

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COMMUNITY

'Blessing of the Waters' opens Harbor Fest June 20, **A4**

MAY TIDE TABLE

HIGH LOW
am pm am pm

5/22	10:14	10:27	4:10	3:46
5/23	10:53	11:05	4:49	4:23
5/24	11:33	11:45	5:29	5:03
5/25		12:17	6:10	5:49
5/26	12:28	1:06	6:54	6:43
5/27	1:17	2:00	7:40	7:45
5/28	2:10	2:58	8:29	8:51

Council moves forward with Convention Hall

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY - With Councilman David Kurkowski absent, Deputy Mayor Niels Favre walked gingerly into Tuesday's city council meeting in order to have the super-majority needed to pass a \$10.5 million bond ordinance for Convention Hall. Favre explained that he had

a total knee replacement two weeks ago and was having difficulty sitting for long periods of time.

Prior to adopting the ordinance after second reading and a public hearing, Mayor Jerry Inderwies announced he, chief financial officer Bruce MacLeod and auditor Leon Costello went to Trenton last Wednesday and secured a waiver for the 5-percent down payment normally required for capital

bonds. Inderwies said the approval meant the city would not have to tack an additional 2.5 cents on the tax rate in 2009 to cover the down payment.

Councilwoman Linda Steenrod also said before the public hearing the ordinance was to establish financing for the project and was not an approval of a design plan.

But Jeanne Powick, who came in second to Terri Swain in last week's election,

said the bond for Convention Hall was premature.

Powick referred to the election saying the election of a new mayor meant people were not satisfied with the process and wanted to be involved.

"The people called for a fresh start," she said.

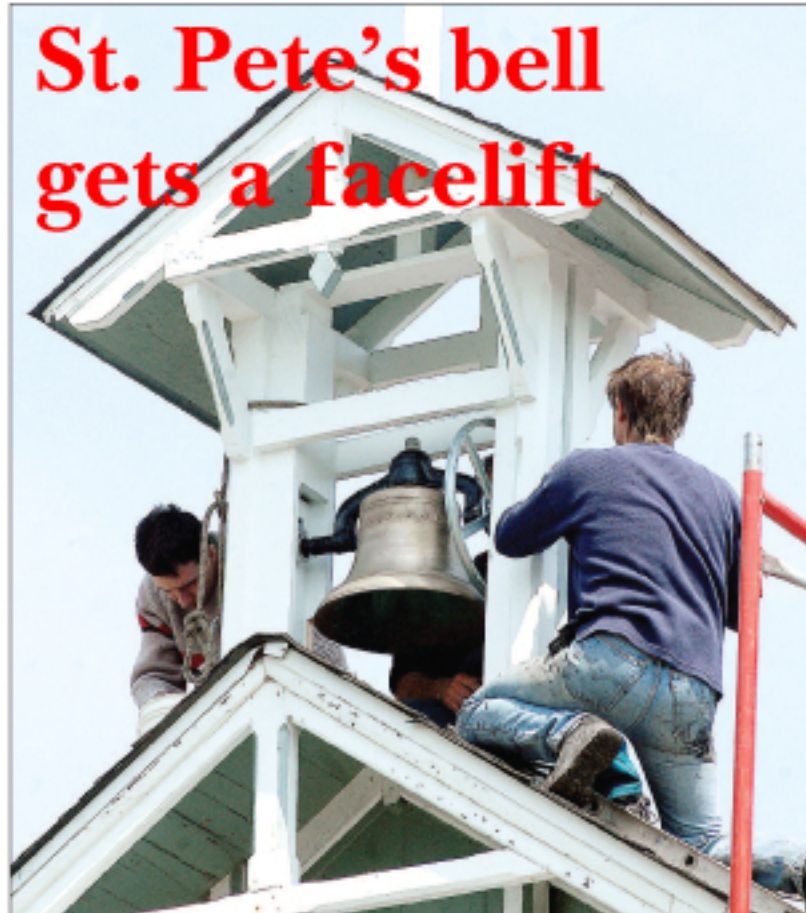
Powick quoted mayor-elect Ed Mahaney who told news reporters after the election the Convention Hall project was moving forward ignoring

the Master Plan. She said the people of Cape May were disenfranchised by the current administration and it was the Convention Hall Committee with the input of certain group that have decided what Convention Hall would be.

Her own survey revealed 11-percent of those asked would like the existing structure to be repaired, and 33-percent would like a modest

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St. Pete's bell gets a facelift



Above, Miklos Kecskes, Marton and Zoltan Zuberecz of High Climbers, reinstall St. Peter's bell after it was cleaned and repaired.

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT - St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Cape May Point is a quiet landmark in a quiet community snuggled amidst the dunes of the lower cape.

But that has changed with the return of the bell, which has hung in the tower since 1882.

Last year, the church elected to send the bell out to be refurbished. According to John Mathers, senior warden, the

bell was manufactured by Meneley Bell, West Troy, N.Y. The church hired High Climbers of Chester Springs, Pa., who took the bell down and reinstalled it. The bell was sent to Church Specialists in Yardville, Pa., and then to Ohio for cleaning. Mathers said they also replaced the wheel so the bell could be rung.

St. Peter's Church was built in 1876 for the Centennial Exhibition. Originally it was not

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Lifeguards asking city for fair wages and pension plan

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
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CAPE MAY - Cape May City lifeguards, who have been without a contract since Dec. 31, 2006, say they are asking the city to give them a fair wage and pension plan.

Cape May and the lifeguards, represented by UAW Region 9, Local 2327 for the past year, are at an impasse and the contract has gone to non-binding arbitration.

Fran Smith, president UAW Region 9, Local 2327, said at one point he thought they had an agreement, with an offer being ratified by the rank and file. However, city manager Lou Corea said he did not believe a contract had ever been ratified.

Smith said the lifeguards are looking to improve their pension situation, wages, and working conditions.

Under the current pension system established by the city, lifeguards must work 60 days in order to qualify for a year's service for pension purposes. Smith said the 60 days is out of touch with the other shore communities, where guards must work anywhere from 43 days, in Longport, or 50 days, as they do in Brigantine, Ventnor, Margate or Sea Isle City to qualify for a year of service. Ocean City requires 45 days service. The guards would like to see the requirement cut back to 50 days saying most of the younger guards can't work 60 days during a season.

"At 16 or 17, the number of days a youth can work it's not possible to make 60 days. Most kids can't qualify, but the city takes 4-percent out of their gross wages," Smith said. "If they don't work 20 years it's lost."

Smith said the guards don't have the right to buy back service in order to qualify for a pension.

Corea said 60 days was arrived at by the negotiation process and the number was reduced from 75 or 80. He said the city reviewed the workable days, came up with something like 84 workable days, and city council voted to set number at 60.

"The court upheld that the city can establish a reasonable number," Corea said.

The guards also believe they're not getting an equitable wage based on what other guards, and some other city employees are making. Smith said the guards were able to get to where they are because they were making less than seasonal custodians.

Corea said lifeguards are paid a daily rate. Under the expired contract, guards started at \$73.03 per day, and

a senior lifeguard with 10-plus years would make \$103.15. A lieutenant makes \$124.38, and after eight years is at \$149.23.

The guards are looking for an increase to \$80 per day for starting guards. They said in Stone Harbor, for example, guards are getting \$88 per day.

The guards said after 11 years they have topped out and can only get pay raises through collective bargaining.

Smith said labor laws exempt the city from paying guards for overtime, which is something they would like to receive. Most city employees generally work 37.5 to 40

hours and receive time and a half for hours worked after 40. Smith said guards typically work 48 hours per week, and lieutenants 56 hours, all straight time.

Smith said the guards do not want to disparage other city workers, but feel they are

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Patio fees finally approved

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
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CAPE MAY - City council finally approved a fee scale for patio permits on the Washington Street Mall after separating it several months ago from an ordinance outlining regulations for patio use.

The ordinance passed 3-1 on Tuesday, with Councilwoman Linda Steenrod voting against the ordinance and Councilman David Kurkowski absent.

Steenrod said at \$3 per square foot for food establishments with no liquor licenses, their increase would result in

a 50-percent increase. Businesses with food and alcohol or food with no table service would have an 80-percent increase.

Steenrod also wished to amend the ordinance to charge a fee for the entire year instead of allowing businesses to pay for the number of months they selected. Steenrod said she thought a monthly permit would be hard to enforce, and a yearly permit would be better for businesses, visitors, and the city. She said it would encourage businesses to stay open longer.

Councilman David Craig said he would rather approve

the fee scale and look at it again after the season saying, "The mall is ready to go and the season is at our doorstep."

Deputy mayor Niels Favre said council had already made compromises and felt the ordinance they were voting on was fair to businesses and to the residents whose taxes are paying for the mall revitalization.

"We've been playing with this for quite some time and we should go ahead and adopt it," Mayor Jerry Inderwies said.

The fee ordinance passed without public comment.



Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave

D.A.R.E. graduation ceremony

A joint D.A.R.E. graduation was held for students from Our Lady Star of the Sea Regional School and Cape May City Elementary School Tuesday. Hosted by instructor Patrolman Tony Genaro, center, students listened to keynote speaker, Mike Frankel from Channel 40, read D.A.R.E. essays and poems and had a pizza party. Each student also received D.A.R.E. certificates, pictured above.