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APRIL TIDE TABLE

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	am	pm	am	pm
4/3	6:28	6:54		12:29
4/4	7:14	7:37	12:48	1:10
4/5	7:59	8:21	1:37	1:52
4/6	8:44	9:05	2:26	2:35
4/7	9:31	9:52	3:16	3:19
4/8	10:19	10:41	4:08	4:06
4/9	11:12	11:34	5:02	4:57

Kurkowski to challenge Congressman LoBiondo

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Cape May City Councilman David Kurkowski confirmed he would challenge seven-term Republican Congressman Frank LoBiondo in the November general election.

"I am running," Kurkowski told the Star and Wave yesterday.

Kurkowski said he was endorsed Tuesday evening by the Cumberland County Democratic Committee and would be a candidate on their ballot.

He said the Atlantic County Democratic Committee has given him

verbal commitment he would be their candidate, and he planned to appear before the Cape May County Democratic Committee Wednesday evening.

"These are friends of mine, so I believe I will get their endorsement," he said.

Kurkowski, who was elected to Cape May City Council in 2006, will be on the ballot for the Democratic primary in June.

"I'm in it to win it," Kurkowski said.

Kurkowski, who has a masters and a Ph.D. from Temple University in Political Science, taught social studies in a prior career.

"I taught civics, taught about the Congress and the American political system in high school, and taught a couple courses at the college level," he said.

Kurkowski, 60, said running for Congress has been a goal for a long time and the opportunity came up when no other Democrat was interested in running for the seat.

"I don't feel voters should be denied a choice (of candidates) and I decided to commit to it," Kurkowski said.

Kurkowski is a resident of Cape May.

"I'm in it to win it." – 2nd Congressional District candidate David Kurkowski.

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School gives report to city

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – The superintendent and business administrator of the Cape May City School gave a budget report to city council telling the public they were keeping the school tax rate flat.

Superintendent Victoria Zelenek told city council and the public the school district has managed to maintain educational services while keeping the tax rate at .067 per \$100 of assessed value – the same as last year.

Highlighting the \$3.2 million budget, of which less than half is raised through taxation, Zelenek said no new staff would be hired for the 2008-09 school year. In fact, last year, Zelenek spent 20-percent of her time teaching in order to help keep the tax rate flat. At 6.7 cents per \$100, Zelenek said, the school tax is only 8.8-percent of Cape May residents' tax bill.

Business administrator Terry Nowotny said the state has determined Cape May's fair share contribution to its school system should be in excess of \$8 million, which is based on local property values and income; but property owners pay only \$1.4 million toward the school budget. Nowotny said the school budget has been reduced by \$94,898 from 2007, despite a projected rise in school enrollment. She said estimates suggest the enrollment would rise from 148 this year to 174 in the 2009-09 school year.

Councilman David Craig asked if the school was able to gauge the change in the number of Coast Guard children based on relocation of service members. Nowotny said that information relating to military personnel movements was not made available to the school.

The school is supplementing the budget with \$330,695 from its fund balance (surplus) and \$46,645 from its capital reserve. The school has no capital debt, and no funds were allocated for debt service.

Zelenek said staff cuts made in the 2007-08 budget would continue in the 2008-09 budget. The business administrator's position was reduced by 20-percent, a half-time custodial position was eliminated, a full time secretarial position with benefits has been replaced with a part time position without benefits, and the Technology, Library and Gifted and Talented positions remain half-time.

Zelenek said the Cape May City School is a leader in shared services, participating with other districts in 13 different areas, including maintenance, insurance, and child study

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Community clean-up



Photos by Sandy Maloney



The Nature Center of Cape May held the first of its two cleanups around Cape May's harbor last Saturday and plans another for Saturday, April 19 from 9 a.m. to noon. The United States Coast Guard lent a hand, cleaning around the Nature Center and the harbor as did various volunteers. Pictured above cleaning up the harbor beach are local residents Carl Behrens and his wife Maureen Harris, far left and far right, with their recruits from "India 179" Coast Guard. At left, Kevin Maloney gives the thumbs up after sawing a beam with help from recruits.

New patio fees don't add up for some mall businesses

City council considers half the proposed increase

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – City council seemed to back away from a proposed fee scale for patio permits slated for 2010, and leave it at half the increase for 2008 and 2009.

Council originally considered setting fees for patios at

\$5 per square foot for business with a liquor license, \$4 per square foot for businesses serving food only, and \$2 per square foot for a business with a seating area but no table service. The proposal was to charge half that amount this year and next (\$2.50, \$2 and \$1) to phase in the 2010 increase.

City council is considering not going with the second phase of the increase after business owners and managers complained their patio permit fees would go up 580-percent, 900 percent, and in one case, go up 10 times –

from \$1,800 to \$18,000.

City council did not buy the math presented by Shirley Goodroe of the A Ca Mia restaurant, claiming the 10-fold increase.

Deputy Mayor Niels Favre said no business is allowed to go out more than 10 feet from the building, and with a 20-foot frontage, or 200 square feet, the cost for a food-only restaurant would be \$400 a month this year.

"For six months that's \$2,400," Favre said.

Rather than a flat fee for the entire year, under the new ordinance, businesses would

pay for the number of months they wish to have a permit.

The owner of the Cucina Rosa restaurant said he could support a reasonable increase, but he feels the proposed increases are too much in light of business being down for the past three years.

"All this (mall surface) improvement has incurred cost on our buildings," he said, "in rain spouts, water services..."

Marilyn Lee of Stumplos claimed that business would see a 900-percent increase in their patio fee, and asked city council if they were trying to

eliminate patios on the Washington Street Mall.

"A 900-percent increase will allow no profit on the patio at all," she said.

Lee said she would like to businesses be able to sit down with the city and go over the "astronomical" fees.

Councilman David Kurkowski said he would have liked to have more information on how the rates were formulated. He said what he was hearing was that people felt the first phase of the increase was a more reasonable number than the total.

Councilwoman Linda

Steenrod said she was also struggling with the issue. She said she understood wanting to bring the fees in line with the market rate, but businesses were also being required to buy fencing and furniture that complied with new requirements for the mall.

"I'd still like to hear more input," she said.

"I kind of agree," Mayor Jerry Inderwies said.

Favre said the new rates were based on information from local realtors, who said mall rents were \$40 to \$60 per square foot – even more in some cases.

Patient satisfaction mostly positive at Cape Regional

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE – Patients at Cape Regional Medical Center rated the facility higher than the state and national average in six out of 10 categories, a hospital spokesperson said.

The comment came as a published news headline suggested the patient satisfaction level at Cape Regional Medical Center was below average.

Corinne Robinson, who is a Director of Patient Satisfaction and Patient Advocate at Cape Regional, said the headline was misleading and "did a great disservice" to the hospital. She said in 10 domains of the Hospital

Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems survey, Cape Regional scored higher than the state or national average. And in three of the four remaining categories, Cape Regional fell below the average by a point.

Robinson said the hospital has been working to improve patient satisfaction each of those four areas, and pointed out that the data is a year and a half old.

"We monitor patient satisfaction all the time," Robinson said.

She said Cape Regional was also one of the first to agree to release the survey data publicly. She said by next quarter all hospitals would have to make patient satisfaction survey results public.

Robinson said New Jersey one of most difficult states in

nation in terms of patient satisfaction.

"People here have very high expectations of care," she said.

At the same time, she said hospitals struggle to enact patient initiatives while getting lower reimbursement rates from Medicare and Medicaid. And, she said, the reporting on patient satisfaction is a requirement handed down from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid.

"We are required to submit data for overall quality initiatives, and patient satisfaction is part of that now," she said.

"We've been participating and collecting that data when directed by the hospital. We want to be as transparent with community as we can with our commitment to community and our quality of

care."

The hospital scored lowest in the area of whether or not the patients' rooms were "always" quiet at night. Only 47-percent of patients reported their room was always quiet at night. Statewide, only 48-percent of patients said their rooms were always quiet at night. The national average is 54-percent.

Only 61-percent of patients said they would "definitely recommend the hospital." The state average is only 64-percent, and the national average 67-percent.

Cape Regional scored highest in the area of doctors and nurses communicating well with patients (80-percent and 78-percent, respectively). Cape Regional also scored higher than the state and national averages in whether

their pain was always controlled, and on the cleanliness of rooms.

Robinson, a 30-year employee at Cape Regional Medical Center, the former Burdette Tomlin Memorial

Hospital, said the hospital immediately took issue with the headline published Wednesday in a local daily.

She said the community

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Grand opening of Cape May Dog Park

CAPE MAY – The Cape May Dog Friendly Association is holding its Grand Opening Celebration of the new Dog Park on Saturday, April 5, at 1 p.m. at 705 Lafayette St., Cape May. The rain date is April 12. Sponsorship opportunities are still available. Contact Marie Stone at 609-898-8706.

For more information on purchasing dog passes, please visit capemaycity.com.