

# Cape May Star and Wave

154th YEAR NO. 24 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 2008 50¢

## INSIDE



## City council exercises option and fires Corea

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY - The announcement by the city clerk of a resolution being added to the agenda "removing the city manager" was met with applause from members of the audience, Tuesday evening.

City council exercised their right as governing body to

remove city manager Luciano V. Corea Jr. from his position effective immediately. Corea, who was not present at the council meeting, was hired as the city administrator in 2000, and became the city manager in 2004 with the change in government.

Corea recently came under fire for his handling of two patio permits on the Washington Street Mall over the Memorial Day Weekend,

when police told owners on Saturday, May 24, they would not be permitted to reopen their patios until they had obtained a license. The businesses, Dairy Queen and Cucina Rosa were forced to close their patio dining areas until City Hall reopened on Tuesday, May 27.

City council passed an ordinance on May 20 setting a new fee scale for patio permits. On Tuesday, city solicitor Anthony Monzo said the new scale did not go into effect for 20 days. On May 20, Monzo said the old permits were effective from July 1 to June 30, so the old permits may have still been valid.

"It was wrong to enforce the ordinance within the 20 days," Monzo said.

In any event, city council members were not pleased with the enforcement over the holiday weekend, which

was cited in the resolution removing Corea as city manager.

Resolution 147-06-2008 said the council's decision was "based, without limitation" upon Corea's failure to follow policies and directives regarding allowing the businesses to operate over the Memorial Day weekend, for not advising each council member of

Please see Corea, Page A2

## COMMUNITY

Cape May gets ready for Washington Street Mall Rededication, **B1-4**

## NATURE

Harbor Fest schedule of events, **A14**

## ARTS

SOMA NewArt Gallery opening new exhibit, **A11**

## SPORTS

WCM surfer wins Legend Competition in Sea Isle City, **B5**

## JUNE TIDE TABLE

	HIGH		LOW	
	am	pm	am	pm
6/19	9:16	9:30	3:11	2:47
6/20	9:55	10:06	3:49	3:25
6/21	10:33	10:43	4:26	4:04
6/22	11:12	11:20	5:03	4:45
6/23	11:52		5:40	5:31
6/24	12:00	12:37	6:19	6:22
6/25	12:44	1:26	7:01	7:21

Special Star and Wave and Mall Rededication Pages on B1

## Good luck, Class of 2008!



Lower Cape May Regional High School graduated approximately 250 students last Thursday afternoon at the high school. Above, Natasha Johnson waves to friends after receiving her diploma. At right, the traditional and delightful throwing of the caps. Please see more photos, Pages A 12 and 13.

Photos by David Nahan



## City declares a 'parking holiday' for June 21 celebrations

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY - Don't worry about passing go or collecting \$200, but you'll get your free parking on Saturday, June 21, when the city suspends the parking meters for one day to celebrate the rededication of the Washington Street Mall and Harborfest.

Cape May City Council passed a resolution to declare a parking holiday, Saturday, allowing anyone to park throughout the city without feeding the meters. City council took this action as a way of celebrating the grand

opening of the newly renovated mall and the first annual Harborfest.

The resolution does not affect private pay-parking lots.

Oddly enough, parking meters were in the news around the time the mall was first dedicated. The June 24, 1971 edition of the Cape May Star and Wave carried a short article headlined, "Parking Meter Fees, Times Vary."

According to the 1971 article, the time meters were to begin daily around the mall was being changed from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. in order to "allow motorists to make short early morning visits to the mall

without having to pay."

In 1971, meters were to be in effect until 6 p.m. and cost the motorist 10-cents per hour. Parking meters along the beach from were in operation from 10 a.m. till 10 p.m., and the charge was 25-cents per hour. This included meters on the side streets in the vicinity of Convention Hall. The parking rate was also 25-cents per hour on Patterson and Second Avenue, but the meters went off at 6 p.m.

This year the city raised the cost of parking at metered spaces from 75-cents per hour to \$1 per hour.

City manager Lou Corea

said the city would utilize an electronic message board to inform motorists on Lafayette Street they would not have to feed the meters, but other than that, no action was being taken.

"We can't bag 1,000 meters throughout the city," he said. "No one will be handing out tickets, but I have no clue how to tell people."

Depending on how you look at it, not being cited for an expired parking meter seems like a bigger bonus in 2008. Today, a parking ticket costs \$32. The cost of a parking ticket in 1971 was just \$4.

Bob Steenrod, president of the Chamber of Commerce of

Greater Cape May said hopefully the city would announce the parking holiday on 1700AM, and the chamber was putting the news on ads running on three radio stations. He said the announcement of a parking holiday was being made in commercials running on Channel 40, and in press articles.

"We will also be announcing during a radio remote at Harborfest," he said.

They would also be announcing a free trolley service, sponsored by the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts, running between the Washington Street Mall and Harborfest on Saturday.

## LT cuts \$33,000, passes budget

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH  
Cape May Star and Wave

LOWER TOWNSHIP - After several attempts to pass the 2008 municipal budget, and with council members promising to take a closer look at the \$23 million budget, council passed the budget 5-0 after cutting \$33,000 in expenses.

Deputy Mayor Robert Nolan said he met with township manager Joe Jackson and the municipal auditor Leon Costello, and as a result of their discussions were able to cut \$33,000; but Nolan indicated it wasn't easy.

"We're going to have to look at a new way of doing things," he said.

Nolan said \$3,000 was cut from community events activities, and he said the township would look for business sponsors to make up that amount.

Nolan said they also eliminated a benefit package for council members, and were offering a healthcare buyout to township employees, offering a cash stipend in lieu of healthcare. The solicitor's budget was cut by \$14,000.

Nolan said they were trying to satisfy Councilman Wayne Mazurek's demand that the budget be cut by 5-percent.

"That, my friends, is to the bone," Nolan said after listing the cuts being made. "We made cuts which will create some hardships. This is a lean piece of meat."

Mazurek said he was satisfied the budget had been "really dissected" for the first time since becoming a councilman. Mazurek asked Costello if any more reductions could be made.

"It's as low as you can go," Costello said.

The 2008 municipal budget is now at \$23,197,601.70, which is an increase of \$503,441.58 over 2007. The local tax rate rose 2.4 cents per \$100 of assessed value, from .324 to .348. The township will raise \$16,336,235.52 from property taxes.

Lower Township's total assessed value is about \$4.69 billion.

## A look at the Washington Street Mall

By DEVON HALEY  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY - Looking back at the transformation of the City of Cape May it may not take much thought to figure what was the driving force behind the growth in prosperity. Cape May's development of a small fishing village with dirt roads to a National Historic Landmark City with resorts and hotels is partially due to three blocks of downtown Cape May.

"The town's success is due to the mall," said Vince Casale, owner of Casale's Shoes. Casale said when he started his business in 1957, Cape May was like a ghost town and it was very hard to make a living selling merchandise. However, in 1969 Cape May's economy was renovated. The city proposed an idea that was ahead of its

time and a bit risky - an outside pedestrian mall.

Casale believes the first restoration of the mall was due to the visionary city fathers. He said they had the tenacity to persevere in spite of overwhelming odds. In the end, this perseverance brought prosperity and prominence to our city.

"The idea of an outside walking mall was unique," said Rosemary Stumpo, owner of Stumpo's Italian Grill. "It was a very creative plan at the time."

When Stumpo bought The Delsea in 1969 there were few bed and breakfasts, only rooming houses for fishermen.

"The construction of the mall was a substantial part of making Cape May a visitor vacation spot," said Stumpo.

After removing many of the buildings in the downtown

area of Cape May, the mall was completed in 1972. With the completion, came the people.

"It started as a trickle," said Casale. "Then a landslide and finally an avalanche. The town came alive!"

Casale remembers how suddenly there were multiple bus tours each day and people from all over the country were traveling to see the new Washington Street Mall. Casale said Victoriana kicked in with civic pride. People started to fix up their buildings and homes. Then real estate market went "bonkers" and the business district thrived. Stumpo said the mall sparked a renaissance of restoration.

It was a great time of growth for the town. Over the next 36 years, the mall brought an influx of business

and tourism to the city.

However, by 2007 the mall needed another lift. This time there was opposition. Those that were for the change saw the promise of many more years of business for the city. The mall was literally sinking into the ground, and a renovation would update the downtown district of Cape May. A referendum was finally passed to fund the \$3.5 million renovation and after a long winter of construction, the newly renovated mall was just completed in May. This summer will be the first season after the restoration and it is too soon to tell if the mall will bring the people as it did 36 years ago. Nevertheless, business owners are confident.

"Now the town will go forward for another 30 years," said Casale.