

# Cape May Star and Wave

153rd YEAR NO. 13 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY THURSDAY, MARCH 22, 2007 50¢

## INSIDE



### AREA

What's going on around the area, B1

### SPORTS

Spring sports' schedules, B5

### CAPE MAY

Star of the Sea reaches out to Haitian project, A5

RELIGION/OBITUARIES...A6  
OPINION/LETTERS...A8  
ARTS...A10  
MOVIES...A13  
WEATHER...A14  
SPORTS/OUTDOORS...B1,2  
EDUCATION/YOUTH...B3  
COMMUNITY/LIFESTYLE...B4  
CLASSIFIED...B8,9,10,11  
PUBLIC NOTICE...B11

### MARCH TIDE TABLE

	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH
	am	pm	am	pm
22	11:17	11:41	5:04	5:07
23	12:11	12:11	6:02	6:00
24	12:38	1:13	7:04	6:59
25	1:42	2:24	8:12	8:05
26	2:54	3:40	9:23	9:17
27	4:06	4:50	10:30	10:25
28	5:11	5:48	11:28	11:26

INSIDE:  
Spring  
Brides  
2007  
preview!

## Bennetts 'debacle' costing another \$660,000

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH  
Cape May Star and Wave

ERMA - The cost of the Freeman S. Douglass Memorial Park complex continues to grow as Lower Township is being forced to spend another \$660,000 to correct improper construction of the long anticipated sports facility. The facility, which was formerly referred to as the Bennett's Crossing Sports Complex, has been under construction for over six years and is now about a \$1 million over budget.

Township resident and former council candidate Bob Hartman said he lives across the street from the complex and he has been watching the developments since 2001.

"It took one year, 45 days to build the Empire State Building," Hartman said. "This still isn't finished." Mayor Walt Craig echoed that sentiment later in the meetings, saying Philadelphia had demolished two stadiums, built two stadiums and had the teams playing in them in less time than it has taken to get this project finished. Now it seems none of the fields were graded

properly and everything has to be redone.

The township started using the fields in 2006, but has never accepted the project as being completed. Craig said throughout the construction of the complex he, former councilman Stig Blomkvist, and a few others raised questions about the grade of the field not being proper. Craig said he, as a layman, noticed the crown on the football field was not sufficient to allow drainage, the dimensions for the baseball fields were not correct. Craig said the dugouts at the baseball field were too small and the fence

was only four feet high when it was supposed to be six. He said his concerns and those expressed by others fell on deaf ears.

Craig said the township's engineers, Remington and Vernick were asked to do a forensic engineering study on the field and they determined most of the grading did not come up to specifications. He said it was estimated the township would have to bond another \$660,000 to cover the cost of new engineering work, bringing in fill dirt, using appropriate soils and materials to promote drainage, and to reinstall sod. A report from

Tuckahoe Turf Farms issued a similar report, Craig said, calling for an additional 250 tons of topsoil and 12 to 20 tons of clay mixture for the baseball infield.

"Their (Remington and Vernick's) report in August 2006 laid the foundation for what is needed," Craig said. Some residents at Monday's meeting were upset with the township council for allegedly being asleep at the wheel and not providing oversight for the project. Council members responded by saying they have been providing

Please see Complex, Page A2



### 'Kiss me, I'm Irish'

And he really is! That is, six year-old Brendan Reilly of Cape May, pictured left, at the Corinthian Yacht Club of Cape May's (CYCCM) annual St. Patrick's Day party. At top are Maureen Harris, Carl Behrens and Rick Coale, CYCCM Rear Commodore. Above, Crystal Hardin with mother Penny, jazz up the St. Patrick's Day party in matching feather boas.

Photos by Jennifer Kopp

## Tents, no tents on Cape May City Council agenda

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY - An ordinance dealing with beach tents was pulled from the agenda before Tuesday's Cape May City Council meeting because draft ordinance is still being hammered out, Deputy Mayor Niels Favre said.

Favre said they wanted to be able to have a focused discussion on the ordinance, and he expects the ordinance to be introduced at the April 3 city council workshop. Favre said public comment would be heard at that time. This is in addition to the public hearing required at the second hearing of an ordinance.

Beach tents have been a hot topic in Cape May recently.

Last year, Congress Hall was issued fines for violating rules regarding temporary structures. Congress Hall neighbor Barbara Skinner has repeatedly asked why fines were never collected. However, city manager Lou Corea indicated earlier this year that the code on which the violations were based were not applicable.

The city has gone about trying to rework the ordinance to make sections of the city code agree with each other. Currently the code allows tents of up to 150 square feet. One section of the code allows for tents of six feet in height, whereas another section mentions seven feet. Corea said six feet does not seem practical because many people could not stand in them,

but opponents are worried the beaches will be filled with tents 12 feet in height or taller.

Former Cape May Mayor Bruce Minnix spoke during the public comment portion of the meeting and said he has had a beach tent for 30

years. "We have found them wonderful, and adequate, and I'm six-four," he said.

Skinner asked if anyone from city council had been to the construction office to view an application for a permit she said included, among

other things, a 65-foot wooden walkway and tables.

Deputy Mayor Niels Favre said he had seen the plans and did not think what was presented was permitted by local law.

Skinner said a savvy business man does not submit

plans that "don't stand a snowball's chance." She said there was no need to substantially increase the height of tents on the beach. Skinner said business owners should consider using their own property for business events.

## Point 2007 budget: 2.5 tax rate increase

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT - The Board of Commissioners of Cape May Point introduced the new \$1.4 million municipal budget, this month, of which 78 percent is paid for by local property taxes.

Of the \$1,465,205 needed in 2007, \$1,140,121 will come from taxes. Another \$179,000 will be raised from local revenues, such as fees charged for licenses and permits. Combined, taxes and local revenues account for 90 per-

cent of the revenues in the new budget.

The budget also allows for \$80,000 to be used toward operating expenses. Mayor Malcolm Fraser said the borough is trying to maintain its current reserve, and in that respect has found a 2.5 tax rate increase necessary.

"We have to position ourselves to move into next year because the state is limiting us to a 4 percent (budget) increase," Fraser said. "Our financial advisors advised this so we don't step off the

Please see Point, Page A2

## Juvenile snatches charity money

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH  
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY - The Christmas Grinch apparently doesn't have an off season.

Cape May police charged a juvenile male with theft for allegedly snatching a donation jar for the West Cape May Christmas Parade.

On Wednesday, March 14, during the lunch rush, two juvenile males and an adult female entered the Westside Market and placed a food order. While they were waiting for the food, one of the juvenile males allegedly grabbed a mayonnaise jar off the counter and ran out the door. The plastic jar was being used to collect money for the annual West Cape May Christmas Parade.

Susan Bland, an employee of Westside Market said customers alerted them to the theft. Bland told police she had recently exchanged

Please see Grinch, Page A2



Police, customers and employees mingle outside Westside Market last Wednesday after a donation jar for the annual West Cape May Christmas Parade was stolen. Police charged a male juvenile with the theft.

Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave