

Cape May Star and Wave

153rd YEAR NO. 21 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY THURSDAY, MAY 17, 2007 50¢

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	HIGH		LOW	
	am	pm	am	pm
17	9:02	9:22	2:51	2:43
18	9:55	10:13	3:44	3:35
19	10:49	11:05	4:38	4:27
20	11:45	11:59	5:33	5:22
21		12:43	6:28	6:20
22	12:55	1:44	7:25	7:21
23	1:53	2:45	8:20	8:24

Beach tent ordinance, mall bond ordinance passes

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Two of the more contentious ordinances on the Cape May City Council agenda passed unanimously, Tuesday night. City council approved Ordinance 99-2007A regulating tents on Cape May beaches by a 5-0 vote. The ordinance, scheduled for second reading and a public hearing, received no public comment. During council comment, however, several council

members described the ordinance as a compromise solution to a controversial subject.

"This has been a hot topic," Deputy Mayor Niels Favre said. "There has been a lot of public input and this is a fair compromise."

Favre said the city has tried to craft a tent ordinance that made sense for the city.

Councilman David Kurkowski said he thought the ordinance would meet the needs of the community and the businesses running beach concessions.

The city had been attempting to amend the ordinance to correct discrepancies between the city code and beach regulations. One portion allowed tents up to six feet in height, and the other allowed a maximum of seven feet. Some businesses were seeking an ordinance allowing nine-foot high tents, which drew criticism from a number of residents. Ordinance 99-2007A sets the maximum height for beach tents at eight feet, and with a maximum area of 100 square feet.

The second "hot topic" ordinance was Ordinance 104-2007, a bond ordinance appropriating \$3.5 million for capital improvements to the Washington Street Mall. Unlike the previous ordinance, Ordinance 104-2007 received public and council comment before being passed 5-0.

Resident Jules Rauch told city council the mall is in need of revitalization, but he said the business owners are not participating in the process.

"A new pedestrian surface

and appendages are essential, but concurrently the business and real estate owners must make their own commitment and participate in providing individual improvements, making this a real mall revitalization," he said.

"Is it fair and equitable for the taxpayers to pay for mall improvements, when they must be responsible for and pay for their individual sidewalks reconstruction?" Rauch asked.

That sentiment was echoed

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A Day of Remembrance

On Thursday, May 10, the Cape May County Police Academy and the Cape May County Chiefs of Police held a memorial service for the police officers killed in the line of duty in Cape May County. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the death of Corrections Officer Fred Baker from Lower Township. Joining Cape May County during National Law Enforcement Memorial Week was a group of 110 New Jersey police officers participating in the tenth annual Unity Tour. The officers were riding to Washington D.C. to honor fallen officers and participate in a memorial service. "Every one of us – regardless of our profession or station in life – recognizes that there is no greater purpose in life than serving and protecting one's community. And there is no greater honor than having the courage to sacrifice one's life in fulfilling this purpose," Freeholder Vice-Director Ralph E. Sheets Jr. said.

Photos by Christopher South

A record day for the 24th World Series of Birding

By R. E. HEINLY
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COUNTY – Excellent birding weather and a huge morning flight of migratory land birds combined with the ever expanding popularity of birding to produce many records at Saturday's World Series of Birding (WSB). A record 115

teams participated including a record 23 youth teams. They recorded a cumulative total of 265 species of birds statewide. In the Big Day Stay Division, a record 139 species were tallied by the Carl Zeiss Optical/Cape May Bird Observatory Team of Pete Dunne, Don Freiday and Will Russell.

The World Series of Birding

has become the premier birding event of its type in the nation. Reflecting this and birding growing popularity in general, it received coverage by a variety of national and local media including National Geographic Magazine. Interviewed amidst the crush of tired but happy birders at the finish line at the West Cape May

Fire Hall, at midnight Saturday, Cape May Bird Observatory Director and World Series of Birding creator Pete Dunne, admitted that even in his most hopeful projections he did not envision the event becoming such a phenomenon. Sponsored by the New Jersey Audubon Society (NJAS), it has not only raised nearly \$9 million

for conservation causes, but according to NJAS President Tom Gilmore, it has tremendously increased public awareness of and support for conservation efforts statewide. Among the conservation victories made possible in large part by the WSB, Gilmore cited improved state environmental laws, the establishment of the Garden

State Presentation Trust, saving many natural areas statewide, and the halting of the Horseshoe Crab harvest. Raising money via pledges per bird tallied, participants this year raised over \$700 thousand for such efforts. Mindful of the day, at Sunday's Awards Brunch,

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Former Ponderlodge may becoming 'Ponder-dump'

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

LOWER TOWNSHIP – The former Ponderlodge Golf Course, purchased by the state to become a wildlife management area, has deteriorated to the point where Lower Township officials are worried the facility will become a health and safety hazard.

At the May 7 township council meeting, Mayor Walt Craig said he asked Walt Fry from the code enforce-

ment office to visit the wildlife management area and identify code violations. Fury came back with a list of nearly 40 violations for which any township property owner could be cited.

On Tuesday, Craig said the township is still investigating whether or not it can issue summonses to the state for municipal code violations.

Craig said township manager Joe Jackson drafted a letter to the state and included the list of violations and photographs, asking for them to reply within 10 days. Jackson

said the letter has gone through a number of revisions and should be sent out by the end of the week.

The problems center around deterioration of the former golf course facilities, including the hotel/banquet hall, the clubhouse, pro shop, maintenance building, and the owner/guest house. Craig said there were about 10 hotel rooms, which were left as they were when the facility closed – with linens, towels, etc., which can be seen through the broken windows. There are also fallen light

stanchions, broken fences, and debris littering the facility. Fences around pools are down, and the pools are filled with stagnant water.

"I think it's a two-fold problem. It's an on-going safety

problem, but with the deterioration of property there could be health problem as well," Craig said.

Craig said the stagnant water would become a mosquito breeding ground.

He is also worried about individuals, especially kids, getting into buildings. He said graffiti has been found inside some of the buildings.

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WCM looking at solar panels

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY – The Borough of West Cape May is working on getting money to install solar panels at Borough Hall as a way of saving money on monthly electric bills.

The board of commissioners passed a resolution last week authorizing the borough to apply to the county for funding for the project, estimated to cost about \$80,000.

According to Commissioner Dick Rigby, Cape May County is offering a \$50,000 grant, which can be used for improving infrastructure or tourism. Last year, the county offered the same amount,

which was to be earmarked for beautification and recreation. West Cape May used \$10,000 toward the new playground at the West Cape May Elementary School and \$40,000 to create a space for the farmers market behind Borough Hall.

Rigby said with a state rebate, the cost should be reduced to approximately the \$50,000 grant amount.

Rigby said as the commissioners went through the bills every two weeks it became obvious how much the borough was spending on electricity.

"I was struck by how much we are paying Atlantic City Electric. Between Borough Hall and Public Works, it averages over \$2,000 for the

two buildings. That's a fair amount of change," he said.

Rigby said it is estimated that 40 panels would save the borough about \$400 per month.

"With this step, if it works, it will cut the borough's electrical outlay and serve as a demonstration to people in the borough. For people with air-conditioning and electric heat, it may well serve them to look at this," he said.

Rigby said the grant money came rather quickly last year, and when it is approved the borough would seek bids or requests for proposals. He said there may be action taken as early as next week. Otherwise, his only concern

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Photo courtesy of Christy Igoe and Dawn Staggs

Mother's Day Parade

Wandering through West Cape May's Wilbraham Park is this mother duck and her brood of at least 11. Think they'll all come home for Christmas?