



Caper Tiger basketball teams play double-header

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House of the Week

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171st YEAR NO. 5 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2025 \$1.00



John Cooke/For the STAR AND WAVE

Attendees at the opening ceremony of "Routes of Black Travel: 'The Green Book' in Cape May and Wildwood" peruse the many examples of businesses available to help Black travelers in the 1960s.

'Routes of Black Travel' opens

Exhibit highlights restrictions, accommodations amid Jim Crow

By JOHN COOKE
For the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — A new exhibit explores how Black travelers used the "Green Book" and other publications during the Jim Crow Era to find friendly accommodations in the United States.

Its walls lined with little-known history, the "Routes of Black Travel: 'The Green Book' in Cape May and Wildwood" opened with a ceremony on Martin Luther King Jr. Day in the Carroll Gallery at the Emelen Physick Estate.

The exhibit, presented by Cape May MAC in association with the Center for Community Arts (CCA), highlights methods of travel for vacation or business to Wildwood and Cape May.

"We started on this journey last year when we realized Cape May had restaurants and accommodations in the 'Green Book,'" exhibit team member Mary Stewart said. "We've added that information to some of the trolley tours, which expands the scope of our storytelling and gives a more dimensional view of Cape May."

"The Negro Motorist Green Book," later renamed "The Negro Travelers' Green Book," was an annual guidebook first published in 1936 that provided African-American travelers essential information about safe places to stay, dine and obtain services while traveling in the segregated U.S.

"Many people have no idea this history even exists," local historian Jeffrey Hebron said. "People assume that Black people



John Cooke/For the STAR AND WAVE

Local historian Jeffrey Hebron describes some of the context in the displays in the exhibit presented by Cape May MAC and the Center for Community Arts at the Carroll Gallery.

were only housekeepers and servants, with no knowledge they were business owners too."

Jim Crow laws forced racial segregation and were enforced harshly, often with violence. The laws lasted nearly 100 years until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. The "Green Book" and similar publications helped keep Black travelers stay safe during this time and provided them some measure of freedom of movement.

Esso gas stations created safe havens for Black motorists to fill their tanks, and hotels such as the Banneker House, the Hotel Dale and Richardson's

Hotel, among others in Cape May, along with guest houses in Wildwood, gave Black visitors safe spaces to relax at the seaside.

Some of the establishments noted in the exhibit are clearly recognizable. John T. Nash was born in 1917 at 818 Jefferson St., on the corner of Dale Place, and later lived with his family in the brick house there.

When he returned to Cape May after serving in World War II, he and his wife, Janet ("Dolly"), bought the land previously occupied by the central hotel and built a motel.

The called it The Planter after the Confederate

ship confiscated by Janet Nash's famous ancestor and war hero, Robert Smalls. They sold the motel in 1979. Today it is The Boarding House, operated by the Hirsch family.

"The location has so much history, and we're thankful they put this together to help us tell that story," Jonathon Hirsch said.

"Isn't it amazing how much we don't know about a town we've lived in for years?" Stewart said.

The exhibit is open through March 23 in the Carroll Gallery on the grounds of the Physick Estate, 1048 Washington St. Admission is free.

Funding sought for playground in Lower Twp.

Inclusive facility would comply with DCA rules for Jake's Law

By RACHEL SHUBIN
Special to the Star and Wave

VILLAS — The township is hoping the state will pitch in for a \$1.114 million inclusive playground at Rotary Park.

On Jan. 22, Township Council authorized submitting an application to the state Department of Community Affairs Green Acres program, which is funding as much as 75% of approved projects that comply with Jake's Law.

The law was passed in 2018 to encourage the construction of inclusive playgrounds designed with standards exceeding those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

According to the DCA, Green Acres has always funded inclusive, accessible playgrounds through its park development grants and loans. However, starting with the 2023 funding round it made available 75% matching grants to counties and municipalities for Completely Inclusive Playgrounds that are designed according to special guidelines established by the DCA as a result of Jake's Law.

The 2025 funding round will be the last opportunity for these special non-competitive incentive grants,

and many municipalities in the region have submitted applications. The deadline is Feb. 5.

According to a resolution authorizing the application, the township agrees to fund as much as \$394,726.

"Jake's Law playgrounds are all-accessible for everyone," grants coordinator Colleen Crippen said. "One of the requirements is community engagement and getting feedback from the public for what they would like to see in the playground."

The township received 200 completed surveys offering suggestions such as adding walking trails, seating to accommodate both younger and older people, shaded areas, handicap-accessible restrooms and an enclosed fence (a requirement of Jake's Law playgrounds).

Will Hanson, the project manager and engineer, explained Jake's Law to council.

"You must have accessible parking, routes to the playground and related facilities, unitary safety surfacing around the equipment, accessible bathroom facilities, natural or artificial shade, fencing, inclusive play equipment, quiet

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West Cape May's Sabo seeks seat in Assembly

By CRAIG D. SCHENCK
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — Carol Sabo has higher aspirations than serving as mayor of the borough, announcing Jan. 20 that she is running for a seat in the state General Assembly.

"Today I took a step of action," the 61-year-old wrote on Facebook. "I am declaring my candidacy for the New Jersey state Assembly in District 1."

The wife and mother of a 31-year-old son said running for the state Legislature "seemed like a natural progression."

She said advocacy is part of being a social worker and that she hopes to take local concerns and the larger geographic area's concerns and bring them to "where the decision makers are."

"It's a job I'm certain I can do, it's just getting the position," she said.

Sabo said she wants to make sure the "voice of this area is heard loud and clear in Trenton from someone who can communicate those needs clearly."

Citing U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew's stance when he was

serving the area as a Democrat, she said the region needs to diversify the economy.

"We focus a lot on tourism in this area, but one of the bigger concerns is affordability," she said.

Born in Plainfield, she attended Gettysburg College where she earned a bachelor's degree in sociology and German and later earned a master's degree in social work at Rutgers University-Camden.

Sabo has dedicated her life to helping others, first through her 18 years of work at the Cape May County Special Services School District and later as a commissioner and now mayor of the borough. Former mayor Pam Kaithern appointed her to fill an unexpired term in 2013 and she won re-election in 2014, 2018 and 2022.

She said she continues working toward making the community better because of her joy of living there.

"I am so connected to the town; I have lived here so long that I care about quality of life here, how we can continue to make this a com-

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THE CAFÉ MENU RETURNS

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