



House of the week

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Murder Mystery Weekends return to scene of crime

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165th YEAR NO. 5 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2019 \$1.00

City to address solar in historic district

Master plan re-examination also to allow for future technological innovations

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — How can a National Historic Landmark City be energy efficient without compromising the appearance of its historic homes?

Visible solar panels on historic homes has long been an issue for the city's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), and now will be part of Cape May's master plan update.

The city's Planning Board has until March 13 to adopt a re-

examination of the city's master plan. A draft of the plan will be available for public view 10 days prior to adoption, according to Craig Hurless, board engineer.

The board may be able to adopt the plan at its meeting Feb. 26. If the public suggests revisions, they can be amended at the adoption meeting, according to Hurless.

The Master Plan Advisory Committee has not reviewed the draft of the master plan examination but will meet again Feb. 19. The committee met Jan. 22

and was made aware the city's Environmental Commission wanted a separate energy master plan. Hurless said the master plan has a conservation element that could include the suggestion the city consider developing and adopting an energy master plan.

Planning Board member Harley Shuler suggested such a plan also be given to the HPC for examination. In the past, the HPC has objected to visible solar panels on historic homes.

The committee also recommended stronger language or

recommendation for the HPC to deal with new technology and materials and permit such use on a broader spectrum for wind and solar energy. Hurless said he was not sure how to include such a point in the master plan.

He said the HPC element of the master plan makes general recommendations about incorporating renewable energy technology and new materials into designs for historic structures in the historic district.

"That's been one of those topics where some people feel

strongly that the HPC is regulating this appropriately and others feel strongly that they should be more lax and allow for these newer energy systems and materials," Hurless said. "I don't know where the board falls on this."

The recommendation in the HPC element of the master plan is that the city advocated for the new materials and technologies and encourage the HPC to permit them on a wider basis.

See Master plan, Page A2



Provided

Murphy visits TRACEN

Gov. Phil Murphy talks with volunteers with the Jersey Cape Military Spouses' Club on Thursday at Coast Guard Training Center Cape May, where a food pantry has been open since Jan. 2 for Coast Guard and civilian employees affected by the partial government shutdown. Most returned to work Monday with the threat of another shutdown hanging over them.

Dogs brighten day at Lower Twp. schools

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

ERMA — Kindergarten is going to the dogs at David C. Douglass Memorial School on Fridays, or more accurately dogs are going to kindergarten.

Principal Nicholas Bailey updated the Lower Township Elementary Board of Education on Jan. 22 about its therapy dog program, preschool and other topics. He said two black lab mixes, Annie and Mollie, who are registered through the Alliance for Therapy Dogs, join kindergarten students Fridays for a tail-wagging good time.

"Mollie and Annie visit our kindergarten every Friday from 9:30 to 12," Bailey said. "The visits include group and individual reading sessions. They partici-

pate in all academic areas, so it doesn't matter what's happening throughout the day."

He said teachers welcome the dogs into the classrooms and the students continue working. The dogs also stop in the school office.

"Our staff loves Mollie and Annie," Bailey said. "Truly, they are members of our Memorial School family."

The dogs offer friendship and are uplifting, bringing laughter, comfort and general happiness to students and staff, he said.

Students smile when the dogs appear in their classroom. One student wrote a Thanksgiving card stating "I'm thankful for Mollie," according to Bailey. Mollie and Annie attended the

Therapy dogs, Page A3



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE
Therapy dogs Mollie and Annie join kindergarten students Friday mornings at David C. Douglass Memorial School for a tail-wagging good time.

Branches gives homeless hope for another day

Outreach center offers meals, warmth, safety

By DEBORAH MCGUIRE
Special to the Star and Wave

RIO GRANDE — Last week residents of Cape May County experienced Mother Nature's first blast of winter, and for some it was much worse than for others.

The night of Jan. 21 found air temperatures hovering around 14 degrees and a stiff 18 mph wind resulting in a wind-chill factor of -3.

Meteorologists are predicting this week's weather to offer more of the same dangerous cold. Throughout the county, officials have once again declared a Code Blue alert.

According to the Cape May County website, "A Code Blue alert is declared when temperatures drop below the freezing point (32 F) with precipitation and below 25 F without precipitation and weather conditions pose a danger to the homeless population."

In the past, to get the homeless off the streets during the coldest days and nights of the year, the county offered room vouchers to local motels. Effective Jan. 1, those vouchers have become limited, thereby leaving some homeless, literally and figuratively, out in the cold.

With no centralized county homeless shelter, municipalities are tasked with providing warming centers in their areas. Police stations and houses of worship are just a few venues that have been tasked with providing a warm, safe environment during Code Blue periods.

Started as an outreach ministry of St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Stone Harbor, The Branches is one place where Cape May County's homeless and marginalized can find a meal along with a warm, positive and safe environment during the day.

Staffed by volunteers, The Branches is open from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

During Code Blue it is open seven days a week with extended hours and serves as many as 60 people a day at 168 E. Vermont Ave. in Rio Grande.

"We do have a certain population who, due to mental health and addiction issues, will likely be among the marginalized. However, most of our clients would like their lives to be different — to have a job and be productive members of society," said Sandra Lockhart, director of The Branches.

Living in the woods

Kim, a mother of five, came to the area from Wisconsin eight years ago to see family.

"I got a job working in a hotel," she said.

She started out working in the housekeeping department and rose through the ranks until she was working in the office.

"I did a little bit of everything at the hotel over five years," she said.

Her world came crashing down when she developed a problem and got into trouble with the police.

A 28-day inpatient re-

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