



Editor wrapping up long career in news reporting

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House of the Week

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170th YEAR NO. 46 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2024 \$1.00

Cape May County backs Trump with 59 percent of vote

Voter turnout nearly 70 percent in the heavily Republican area

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — In the presidential election, 59% of Cape May County voters selected Donald Trump, who received 31,342 votes to Kamala Harris' 20,760. All results are unofficial until certified later this month.

The county saw 69.81% voter turnout with 53,447 ballots cast from 76,562 registered voters.

In Cape May, Mayor Zack Mullock ran unopposed and received 1,065 votes. Stephen Bodnar was elected to one open council seat, receiving 623 votes. Lori Schwartz trailed with 271 votes, Mark DiSanto with 143 votes and Joell Perez with 139 votes.

In Lower Township, Mayor Frank Sippel ran unopposed, receiving 8,312 votes. Kevin Coombs, who also ran unopposed, received 8,220 votes for a council-at-large seat.

Cape May Point had three open seats with incumbents Anita van Heeswyk re-elected with 104 votes, newcomer Suzanne Yunghans with 89 votes and newcomer Elise Geiger with 88 votes.

Harry Sundstrom Jr. was elected to the Lower Cape May Regional School District representing Cape May.

Three incumbents were re-elected to the Cape May City Elementary School Board of Education, with Mark LeMunyon receiving 790 votes, Joseph McKenna 778 votes and Shaun Deignan 740 votes.

For two seats on the Lower Cape May Regional School District Board of Education representing Lower Township, Kelly Cronin received 4,222 votes followed by Glenn Douglass with 3,508.

Three seats were open on the Lower Township Elementary School District board, with Patricia Smith receiving 4,557 votes, James Morris 4,152 votes and Monica DiVito 3,987 votes.

In West Cape May, Kathleen Satt was elected to the Board of Education with 373 votes and David LaPuma was re-elected with 347 votes.

Republican Len Desiderio, who ran unopposed, was re-elected to the Board of County Commissioners with 35,719 votes county-wide.

Van Drew re-elected; Kim wins Senate seat

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Republican U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew won re-election in the 2nd Congressional District, defeating Democrat Joe Salerno.

Van Drew received 211,199 votes, or 58.3 percent, to 147,946 votes, or 41.1 percent, for Salerno.

In Cape May County, Van Drew received 63.61% of the vote to Salerno's 35.97%.

In 2019, Van Drew switched parties from Democrat to Republican, pledging support to former president Donald Trump.

During his victory party at a Sea Isle City eatery, Van Drew termed his win a "landslide." He previously served three terms in the New Jersey General Assembly and four terms in the State Senate.

Salerno, a Lower Township businessman and engineer, was making his first run for office. He defeated Tim Alexander in the Democratic primary in June.

In a statement, Salerno said the ultimate mark of a strong democracy is to support the will of the voters, and while he was nat-

urally working for a different result, he respected the people, the process and the system that's vital to this country.

In the U.S. Senate race, Democrat Andy Kim defeated political newcomer and Cape May hotelier/developer Curtis Bashaw with 53.2% of the vote to Bashaw's 44.5%.

Bashaw was former executive director of the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority, and his company owns and operates eight hotels, 10 cottages, six restaurants, four retail outlets and a working farm, all on the shore and Long Island's East End.

Kim received 2,04,305 votes to Bashaw's 1,710,340. The Senate seat opened when Sen. Bob Menendez stepped down after being convicted of taking bribes and obstructing justice.

Kim stated after he read the indictment of Menendez, he was stunned and felt strongly that the people of New Jersey deserve a choice for what kind of public servant they have in the Senate.

In Cape May County, Bashaw received 60.20% of the vote to Kim's 38.54%.



Robert Newkirk/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Lower Township celebrates Veterans Day

Cub Scout Pack 87 of Erma marches during Lower Township's Veterans Day Parade on Nov. 9.

City Hall lightning damage to cost Cape May \$347,000

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The latest damage cost from a July 12 lightning strike to City Hall and a radio tower that sheared off a VHF radio antenna on a mast and sent a surge through the building that damaged computers, network cards, servers, and the phone system is \$347,000.

At an Oct. 30 City Council meeting, Deputy City Manager Justin Riggs said the damage totaled about \$347,000 with the city's insurer, the Joint Insurance Fund and the Municipal Excess Liability Joint Insurance Fund, expected to reimburse the city for the full amount minus a \$1,000 deductible.

He said he and City Manager Paul Dietrich attended the claims hearing of the JIF.

"We should have that check any day," Riggs said.

"We actually already have the \$99,000 check."

Dietrich said the city spend another \$70,000 for equipment to provide additional lightning protection at City Hall to lessen any future lightning strikes. He said lightning protection was placed throughout the building as well as grounding all equipment.

"I think we've learned from past experience, and we don't want to do this again to this magnitude," Dietrich said.

He said he felt confident the city had protected the building as best as it could.

"We are doing an assessment of all the other city buildings, and we'll look at budgetary appropriations as necessary for those various other buildings that may need upgrades," Dietrich said.

Council approved of disposing of lightning dam-

See **Lightning**, Page A2

Council finds unused cash in 'pockets' of old projects

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — It's nice to reach in the winter coat you have not worn in eight months and find a \$20 bill in your pocket that you forgot about.

The city is reaching into its pockets and collecting leftover amounts from projects and purchases and reappropriating the money for current projects.

At an Oct. 29 meeting, City Council introduced an ordinance to cancel certain funded capital appropriation balances dating back to 2011 of \$560,889 and reappropriating the funds for other capital projects.

The ordinance states the city has determined that all or a portion of certain capital improvements have either been completed or are no longer applicable.

The capital improvements covered most every area of city operation from improvements to public buildings, acquisition of safety equipment, road reconstruction, acquisition of vehicles and machines, acquisition of property, storm water infrastructure repair and installation, improvements to the Cape May Elementary School swimming pool, conversion of the Franklin Street School into a county library and funding for a feasibility study of design and reconstruction of the existing seawall on Beach Avenue to New Jersey Avenue and along Delaware Avenue from Baltimore Avenue to Buffalo Avenue as required by the Department of Environmental Protection.

The unused funds will be appropriated for varied

Unused cash, Page A3

Original Christmas song celebrates St. Joseph

By DAVID NAHAN
Cape May Star and Wave

WILDWOOD — Father Ed Namiotka and Thomas Raniszewski, two former altar boys from Wildwood, have written a Christmas song they hope will become a standard. It puts a spotlight on St. Joseph.

"The Carpenter's Son," with vocals by tenor Drew Seigla, is available now on most music platforms as people prepare for the Christmas season.

"Joseph is a role model for not only families and fathers, but men in general,"

Raniszewski said. "That's what I would like people to get out of the song."

Standing on the porch of the year-round holiday store Winterwood in Rio Grande on an unseasonably warm day as Mariah Carey's "All I Want For Christmas" was playing in the background, he added, "I hope that it becomes a beloved Christmas song like this one. Every winter when they defrost Mariah Carey, they can defrost our song, too," he said, laughing.

"Recognition of Joseph Christmas song, Page A8



David Nahan/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Thomas Raniszewski, left, Father Edward Namiotka and Jonathan Delgado collaborated on the song 'A Carpenter's Son.'



AUTUMN HARVEST FARM-TO-TABLE DINNERS

FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS AT BEACH PLUM FARM

Fall brings a joyous medley to Beach Plum Farm. Corn, squash and pumpkins dot the decor, setting the atmosphere for an evening featuring the freshest of autumn's bounty.

Reserve Tickets at BeachPlumFarmCapeMay.com
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