

## Prosecutor launches Safe Place program

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## House of the week

Real Estate Resource



169th YEAR NO. 7 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2023 \$1.00

African American churches often began as "societies." In 1811, the Religious Society of Free Africans held meetings in Trenton before joining the A.M.E. conference and changing their name to Mt. Zion in 1817.

Historians refer to the religious gatherings of enslaved people as the "Invisible Institution" because Africans met in secret places "hush harbors," to pray unseen.

David Nahan/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Ralph E. Hunter speaks during a Black History Month event Saturday at the Ocean City Free Public Library. Hunter brought the traveling exhibit, 'This Little Light on Mine: The Black Church,' and talked about the origins and growth of the Black church in America.

## 'This Little Light of Mine'

### 'Minister of history' details origins, growth of Black Church

By DAVID NAHAN  
Cape May Star and Wave

OCEAN CITY — Ralph E. Hunter Sr. comes from a family with three generations of ministers, but decided long ago that his path is preaching about the region's African American history.

Hunter, founder and president of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey, brought one of the museum's traveling exhibits to the Ocean City Historical Museum on Saturday afternoon.

The exhibit, "This Little Light of Mine: The Black Church," was set up in the Ocean City Free Public Library's lecture hall as part of its Black History Month exhibit. Hunter entertained and informed a sizable crowd there with his lively speaking style, punctuated with humorous anecdotes but with serious intent about how the Black church rose out of slavery, the discrimination that existed in the area that affected life and generational wealth, but also some of the successes that arose in spite of it.

Often asked why he did not choose the ministry, Hunter explains that he loves history and "became the minister of history in his family."

Hunter came to Atlantic City in the 1950s and fell in love because he saw a thriving African-American community with people who looked like him owning businesses.

"When I got off the bus for the first time ... I fell in love. I couldn't believe I saw police officers who looked like me," he said, and restaurants filled with people like him.

He talked about Sara Spencer Washington, one of the nation's first Black millionaires, an entrepreneur who founded Apex News and Hair Co. in the resort, a beauty products school and company that would employ 3,500 people.

Because African Americans were not permitted on white golf courses, and visiting celebrities such as boxer Joe Louis wanted to play golf, she had a nine-hole course built on her farm in Pomona, the Apex Country Club.

Juxtaposed with that success, however, Hunter pointed out that Atlantic City was two separate cities — the north side where the African American population lived and the south side with the boardwalk.

Hunter explained the impact on the African American residents of redlining — the demarcation of where they could rent and own property. That factors into generational wealth because of the lower

values of properties in certain areas.

As an example, Hunter said he had a house built on the north side of Atlantic City in 1961 and a friend had the exact same house built in Ventnor. His house is now worth \$100,000 but his friend's is valued at \$700,000 — a vast difference when trying to pass on property to the next generation or sell to fund retirement.

Hunter became a collector of African-American memorabilia, but he also was a donor. His grandfather had a storefront church in Memphis, Tenn., and his father would stand outside blowing his trumpet to attract people to come inside the church.

Seven years ago, Hunter said, he got a call from a curator with the Smithsonian Institution asking about the trumpet. It was in Hunter's collection but is now in the national museum's collection next to Dizzy Gillespie's horn.

Hunter began his own collection decades ago and related the story of how he first started collecting after he sold his own business. When he came to an antiques store in North Carolina, he inquired if there were any Black or African American

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## Slope will hide bulk of seawall on Beach Ave.

### Historic Preservation Commission lauds aesthetically pleasing design

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) lauded the design of a proposed extension of the seawall and Promenade, noting the plan to form a vegetative slope to mask the wall would be boost both protection and aesthetics.

Mayor Zack Mullock said during an HPC meeting Feb. 6 that the initial design called for a block wall that was unsightly and unwanted by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). He said SHPO had an issue with the design of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project at Wilmington Avenue and any extension of the seawall undertaken by the city.

The Army Corps project covers only the corner of Wilmington and Beach avenues while a project initiated by the city would extend the Promenade and raise the height of the seawall from Philadelphia Avenue to the Army Corps project at Wilmington Avenue.

"We don't want it to be plain cement, we don't want it to be cinderblock," Mullock said, noting covering it in brick would have increased its cost.

Ian Walczak, senior engineer with Colliers Engineering and Design, said they tried to hide the wall as best they could.

"The approach we took was to have natural building aspects of it, so basically introducing a vegetative sand slope in front, almost like a

dune that will hide the majority of the gray structure itself, and we also wanted to pay homage to the original 1905, timber Promenade that ran along the east end," he said.

A timber bulkhead would be built with a vegetated sand slope up to the seawall, Walczak said. It would be constructed on top of the current stone and gravel wall and the view from Beach Avenue would be a vegetated dune.

"From Beach Avenue, you're not seeing a hard and gray structure. It's pleasant, it feels like you're at the beach," Walczak said.

HPC Commissioner Jim Testa said the current timber bulkhead is more than 100 years old.

The concrete portion of the seawall will give the city the protection it needs from the ocean, Walczak said.

Testa said a point of discussion was how much of the traditional views of the ocean would be blocked by the new seawall.

"It seems to me from what you've done, the amount of blockage by the seawall itself is pretty minimal," he said.

Walczak said the existing seawall varies between 8.5 and 9.5 feet high and Beach Avenue has an elevation of about 5.5 feet. The protection level will be an elevation of 15 feet but the entire wall will not be that high.

"What we decided to go with is a two-level design

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## Lower police plan curfew crackdown

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township Council approved a resolution supporting Lower Township police reinforcing a curfew ordinance due to a juvenile delinquency problem in some neighborhoods.

At a Feb. 6 meeting, Mayor Frank Sippel said a curfew ordinance in a northern New Jersey municipality had been declared unconstitutional because some provisions of a state statute were left out.

"We do have a curfew ordinance, it is in effect," he said. "The chief put out a directive to the police department for his officers, he gave them some marching orders on how we are going to handle this."

Police Chief Kevin Lewis said the curfew ordinance is still on the books for the township and such a curfew is legal statewide. He said

the legalization of marijuana and the state Juvenile Justice Reform Act "took a lot of tools out of our toolbox."

"Nothing good happens after 12 (a.m.), my parents always told me," Lewis said. "Hopefully we can get them all home by 12 and we won't have any issues."

The curfew applies to anyone under the age of 18. It states it is unlawful for juveniles to be on any public street or public place from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. between Sept. 15 and May 15 and between midnight to 6 a.m. from May 15 to Sept. 15.

Exceptions to the juvenile curfew include:

- When the juvenile is accompanied by his or her parent or guardian.
- When the juvenile is engaged in or traveling to or from a business or occupation that state laws authorize.

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## Ivy losing its grip on higher education

### Nontraditional providers changing what, when, where we learn

By CRAIG D. SCHENCK  
Cape May Star and Wave

MAYS LANDING — A paradigm shift in higher education, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has many institutions struggling to catch up across the nation and around the world.

Online classes, targeted instruction and expedited certificates and degrees are just part of the change from a time-based traditional education to a flexible schedule in which gaining specific knowledge is the goal.

The evolution requires meeting the demands of learners regarding time and place instead of educators setting those parameters.

That was the message of author and educator Scott Van Pelt, an expert in higher education who discussed the recently published book he co-authored with Arthur Levine, "The Great Upheav-

al: Higher Education's Past, Present, and Uncertain Future," on Friday at Atlantic Cape Community College.

The event was part of "The Future of Higher Education: A Time for Leadership" in the Walter Edge Theater on the Mays Landing campus.

The program was part of Atlantic Cape's Faculty Development Day, which included a welcome address from Josette Katz, senior

vice president of Academic Affairs, and break-out sessions before and after the keynote speech.

Katz said it marked the return of Atlantic Cape's speaker series for the first time in about 15 years. Upcoming events have yet to be announced.

Van Pelt said higher education has been slow to react to some of the changes play-

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