



Live concerts resume at ferry terminal in North Cape May

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House of the Week

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170th YEAR NO. 28 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, JULY 10, 2024 \$1.00



David Nahan/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Hannah Oeschle, left, Kailin Back, right, and Sophia Elliott bring in a seine net from Cape May Harbor to show children what they caught. The children were part of the "Splish Splash" summer camp last week at the Nature Center of Cape May. Below, holding a tiny crab caught in the net. And if you look closely, you can see the tiny crab is holding a tinier fish. Bottom, Emily Mawhinney, Elliott and Back bring in another net of creatures.

'Splish Splash' Nature Center summer camp lets kids enjoy natural world

By DAVID NAHAN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — When the two teenage girls in waders dragged a seine net from the shallow part of Cape May Harbor into the small sliver of beach, the 5- and 6-year-olds waiting there were excited to see what they had caught.

As soon as the girls, interns Kailin Back and Hannah Oeschle, laid the net on the ground, the children quickly ran over and did the "scoop and boop," carefully picking up the tiny fish and then dropping them in small containers.

The children were taking part in the "Splish Splash" summer camp last week at the Nature Center of Cape May, which was just across the street at 1600 Delaware Ave.

The Nature Center holds weekly camps through August, according to Sophia Elliott, one of the teacher-naturalist interns working there as recipients of the Randy Nuessle Memorial Scholarship. There are other teacher-naturalists and youth interns from the Cape May County 4-H, Elliott said.

"We have a lot of help around here," she added about the Nature Center. "It's a lot of fun."

The camp was the second of the season. The first was "I'm Like a Bird," exploring creatures with wings, including birds, bats and butterflies.

"We do different activities," Elliott said. "Today we're doing seining. We come down to the harbor, take out our seine net and we usually catch Atlantic sil-



verside, and today we caught a baby flounder and some pipe fish," she said. "It's just cool."

"We call the method the 'scoop and boop.' The children scoop up the animals (from the net) and can look at them and put them in little buckets of water. They can learn about the different types of fish that are in the local waters here.

"Today we also grabbed a mussel and we'll probably feed it to our octopus when we get back from the harbor," she said.

Each week's camp has a theme. "Splish Splash" involved "a lot of water activities, learning about the ocean, learning about the harbor, sea animals and things like that," Elliott said.

The camps are 9 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday. They have camps for a variety of ages, 5, 6, 7-8 and 9-12. A NJ Audubon family membership is required to attend. Cost is \$200 a week for the five-day camps.

This week's camp is "Jitterbug," learning about bugs. Coming up are "Among the Wildflowers" July 15-19; "Survivor" July 22-26, practicing skills needed to survive in the wilderness; "Fly Me to the Moon" July 29-Aug. 2, exploring all things space and sky; "Like a Rolling Stone" Aug. 5-9, digging



up fossils and seashells; and "What a Wonderful World" Aug. 12-16, celebrating the diversity of life on planet Earth.

There also is the Guy Buckelew Fishing Camp for ages 9-13 Aug. 21-25 (cost \$300) learning the principles of preparation, practice and patience good for angling and "any aspect of life."

Elliott said among the many programs at the Nature Center is a "Harbor Safari" similar to the day camps are but for families.

She noted along with the aquatic lab at the center they also have terrestrial animals including snakes, turtles and a chinchilla. "It's really cool," she said.

During the summer the Nature Center of Cape May is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

In addition to the camps,

the center is a hands-on learning environmental education campus. It includes the Trucksees Welcome Center, observation tower, indoor observation lounge, classrooms, exhibit aquaria, small gift shop and themed display gardens, according to the New Jersey Audubon website. There is a full schedule of natural history programs for the public throughout the year and the diverse habits nearby are incorporated into its programs.

For more information go to njudubon.org/centers/nature-center-of-cape-may/

There are many other programs to be found on the website for people of all ages. The Nature Center of Cape May is at 1600 Delaware Ave., right next to the harbor. Call (609) 427-3045. Register at njudubon.org/summer-camps.

Carriage horse collapses, dies working in city

The 18-year-old Percheron likely suffered a blood clot

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — "Ice," a Cape May Carriage Co. horse, collapsed and died June 27 on Columbia Avenue from an apparent blood clot or acute cardiac arrhythmia, according to necropsy report from the Mid-Atlantic Equine Center in Hunterdon County.

The 18-year-old Percheron horse, which was pulling a carriage at the time, was believed to be in good health, according to Cape May Carriage Co. owner Chentel Semanchik.

Heat was not a factor since at the time of the horse's death, 8 p.m., the temperature was in the low 70s, she said.

The horses do not work during the day but start at 5 p.m., a policy she instated when she purchased the carriage company.

"Ice" was a former carriage horse in New York's Central Park, where it

was determined he was too large for work in the city at 19 hands tall, she said.

The necropsy report stated the gelding was in "good body condition and well-muscled" with no scars or external lesions. The report said "Ice" appeared to be otherwise very healthy and showed no signs of abuse or neglect.

Semanchik said the necropsy found a very small area in the horse's small intestine that likely threw a blood clot. She said draft horses generally live into their mid-30s to early 40s.

Pulling a carriage is not a difficult task for a horse, Semanchik said.

"A horse that size can pull four times their body weight without wheels," she said. "They are on pavement, they're walking, he was 1,800 pounds, he was huge."

Horses are built to

See Horse dies, Page A4

Sportsmen's Club gets eviction stay, to keep clubhouse

NJDEP trying to force group from land occupied for years

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — An ongoing effort by the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to evict the Sunset Beach Sportsmen's Club from a small portion of land on the former magnesite factory property has been stopped with a stay from Superior Court Judge Dean Marcolongo.

The state of New Jersey signed a charter for the Sunset Beach Sportsmen's Club in 1949. The land on which the clubhouse is located was given to the club by the owners of the former magnesite factory, Harbison-Walker Refractories, more than 49 years ago. The state purchased the magnesite factory site in 1999 to restore the environmentally damaged land.

The club contends a lease of the land for the clubhouse has been in effect since 1982. DEP contends the lease expired in 1999 and sought removal of the Sportsmen's Club from the property.

On May 7, the DEP's

motion for summary judgment was granted for eviction. The summary judgment noted a lease was granted in 1982 but the defendant no longer had a legal right to possession of the property and DEP could apply for a warrant of removal, but not before Nov. 11.

There was evidence presented to the court that DEP and the Sportsmen's Club drafted a proposed 5-year lease in 1999 but it was never signed, and no agreement was finalized. It noted the club continued to occupy the land without paying rent for more than 20 years after the lease expired.

Attorney Chris Gillin-Schwartz, representing the Sportsmen's Club, claimed DEP suddenly reversed course and demanded the club leave the property it had occupied for decades. Deposition testimony demonstrated the DEP knew of the club's activities on the property before it purchased it.

Gillin-Schwartz con-

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