



## Boardwalk may link Douglass Park with ferry terminal

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## House of the Week

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# 'Eddie lives in Somers Point'

Documentary will highlight town's part in '83 cult classic

By CRAIG D. SCHENCK  
Cape May Star and Wave

SOMERS POINT — Locals offered up fond memories about Tony Mart's, the Somers Point music scene and cult classic movie "Eddie and the Cruisers" as they reminisced June 21 for a producer filming a documentary for PBS NJ.

The episode is about Somers Point's role in the 1983 movie. Producer Steve Rogers was at Tavern by the Bay at 800 Bay Ave. to shoot footage of locals talking about partying all night from the 1950s through the early 1980s, how they remain moved by the music of John Cafferty and still love pointing out where the star of the movie drove his car off the old Route 52 causeway and into the water and expected death.

Rogers said the project is "a particular heartfelt one for me," noting he was 10 when the movie came out and "it stuck with me all these years."

He is pleasantly surprised that so many people feel the same way.

"I told Carmen (Marotta), 'Is it just you and me?' and he said 'no, you sure are going to find a lot of people on the beach July Fourth.' There's something about confirmation that makes you feel so good," Rogers said.

Executive producer of "Here's the Story," he reached out to the Somers Point Beach Committee in May to make arrangements to tell the tale of the city's part in the film and highlight its unique musical history.

The 1983 film, directed by Martin Davidson, starring Tom Berenger, Michael Pare as Eddie Wilson and Joe Pantoliano and featuring a soundtrack by John Cafferty and the Beaver Brown Band, was shot largely at Tony Mart's — the legendary rock 'n' roll club at the shore for almost 40 years — as well as in other parts of Somers Point.

It's about rock star Eddie Wilson, whose car plunged off a bridge — the old Route 52 causeway to Ocean City — in 1964 and disappeared. Two decades later, a renewed interest in the band leads a reporter to question what if Wilson were still alive.

According to [tonymart.com](http://tonymart.com), the venue "was a window into the evolutionary popular music from late swing through the golden years of rock 'n' roll in the '50s, '60s and '70s, and on to the new wave sounds of the early 1980s."

The movie "immortalized Tony Mart's as a rock 'n' roll institution," according to the site.

Rogers, a 1993 graduate of Stockton University who grew up in the Long Beach Island area, said he completed about 20 interviews during the shoot.

"It was a soulful, entertaining experience, to be sure," he said. "I wish I had more time, more subjects. The folks that were there were so genuine and wonderful. It was what I was expecting and hoping for."



Craig D. Schenck/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

PBS NJ producer Steve Rogers films an interview with Jim Witchko, 81, of Ocean City, during a shoot June 21 at Tavern by the Bay in Somers Point. Rogers is creating a piece for his series 'Here's the Story' about the town's role in 'Eddie and the Cruisers' and its extensive musical history.

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—Steve Rogers,  
PBS NJ producer  
of 'Here's the Story'

Rogers said he did not anticipate the shoot would be "talk show-style," in which the audience is listening, but "that's what happens when you make independent films."

About a dozen people were sitting around at any one time listening and enjoying a cold beverage.

The interviews had people reminiscing about old times in Somers Point and how the movie portrayed the local music scene.

Jim Witchko, 81, of Ocean City, said it really captured "the essence of Somers Point," noting locals "rocked all night here."

"We know about bands, we know about parties," Witchko said.

He said the movie does a nice job of advertising the city, which he said was "built around people enjoying themselves; it's all about fun."

Witchko said he was working in Somers Point at the time it was filmed and felt the establishment did not get its just due in the film.

"I'm a little disappointed the movie did not give more credit to Tony Mart's, which was a fantastic venue," he said, pulling out framed photos of it and Bayshores across the street.

He said he was not as much a fan of the 1989 sequel "Eddie and the Cruisers II: Eddie



Craig D. Schenck/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Rogers, who grew up in the Long Beach Island area and graduated from Stockton University in 1993, interviews a subject for his documentary June 21 in Somers Point.

Lives!"

"I came over hoping there would be a third sequel," he told Rogers, who noted Pare is interested in taking part in a third movie.

Charlie Falkenstein had two connections to the movie. He rented a house from Tony Marotta, owner of Tony Mart's, on Shore Road and George Street,

so he frequented the establishment even before the filming. He also provided the two Chevy Novas, a 1963 and 1964, that Tom Berenger drove in the movie.

Falkenstein managed a car lot in Cherry Hill and was approached about selling the two

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# Cape May sets sights on park, police station, the Promenade

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city has millions of dollars of projects on its agenda for the future, ranging from road reconstruction to expansion of the Promenade and construction of Lafayette Street Park to a new police station.

The city is bonding \$9.8 million for general capital projects, \$1.8 million for the water/sewer capital projects and \$1.4 million for beach projects.

Council approved \$1.1 million previously for the capital budget. At a June 18 City Council meeting, City Manager Paul Dietrich said future capital bonds in the amount of \$4.5 million could be issued in early 2025 and an additional \$2 million for the water/sewer department.

The general capital bond includes \$2 million for road projects. Ohio Avenue, Stockton Avenue, Washington Street and Idaho Avenue are part of a USDA project, which includes water line replacement for lead pipe remediation.

The capital budget earmarks \$700,000 for Franklin Street streetscape, which will include creation of eight new parking spaces in the City Hall parking lot.

Dietrich said the city would undertake a sidewalk restoration project, separate from the road projects, concentrating in the downtown area.

He said the city has funding in its bond for the main part of Lafayette Street Park and a nature trail behind Cape May City Elementary School. He said the nature trail project totaled \$2.6 million.

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# Cape Regional, Cooper merger finally complete

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — Cape Regional Health System is now part of Cooper University Health Care, effective July 1. As part of the closing, Cape Regional Medical Center has been renamed Cooper University Hospital Cape Regional.

"This agreement will transform health care for the residents and visitors of Cape May and Atlantic counties," said George E. Norcross III, chairman of Cooper University Health Care's board of trustees. "We are ready to move forward and for our unified team to begin delivering the highest level of advanced health care to more people in shore communities and beyond. We are excited by the opportunity to build something extraordinary here."

"Today is a significant day and a new chapter for health care in Cape May County and beyond. I want to thank our entire team for all the great work in serving the people of this community so well, for so many years, that brought us to this exciting new beginning where we will be able to serve even more people," stated Garry Gilbert, former chairman, Cape Regional Health System board of trustees.

In December 2022, Cooper and Cape Regional announced the proposal to merge, followed by execution of a Definitive Agreement in April 2023.

Final regulatory approval by the Cape May County Superior Court was secured May 28.

Cooper, with its market-leading MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper, is based in Camden and is southern New Jersey's leading academic health system and only Level I trauma center, with more than \$2.2 billion in revenue.

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