



## Caper Tigers ready for fall sports season

Page A7



## House of the Week

B1



170th YEAR NO. 35 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2024 \$1.00



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The A.J. Meerwald, New Jersey's official tall ship, is offering public sails from the Cape May-Lewes Ferry terminal in North Cape May until Sept. 12. The Meerwald is a restored oyster dredging schooner launched in 1928.

## A.J. Meerwald sets sail off Cape May

NORTH CAPE MAY — The tall ship A.J. Meerwald is scheduled to stop in the Cape May area through Sept. 12.

New Jersey's official tall ship, the Meerwald will sail from the Cape May Ferry Terminal, in partnership with the Delaware River & Bay Authority.

Guest are invited to aboard the historic wooden, traditionally rigged tall ship. Passengers can help the crew hoist the sails or simply relax and enjoy an unforgettable experience during the two-hour sails.

Sails times are available departing at 10:45 a.m., 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. Charters and Education Sails for non-profit groups are available.

The afternoon and evening sails will cruise along the scenic Delaware Bay, with views of the Cape May Lighthouse. Sails will head out the Cape May Canal into the bay and head east to the lighthouse and/or west toward West Cape Bay.

The Wednesday and Saturday morning sails will be environmental educational ones, with discounted tickets for children.

All passengers are welcome to bring their own food and drinks aboard for the sail. The current sailing schedule and tickets can be found at bayshore-center.org.

"Sailing aboard A.J. Meerwald, a 1928 Delaware Bay oyster schooner, connects you to our local environment. Aboard you will likely see osprey, bald eagles and dolphins, as you glide along under sail to enjoy our wetlands and estuaries at work as the nursery for many local species of birds, fish and other aquatic animals here in southern New Jersey," said Jessica Yorke, Executive Director of the Bayshore Center at Bivalve. "Together with DRBA, we look forward to offering visitors the opportunity to connect to our local history and learn more about oystering on the Delaware Bay."

### About A.J. Meerwald:

The schooner is a restored oyster dredging schooner from Bivalve. Launched in 1928, A.J. Meerwald embodies the true spirit of the schooner, adapted to efficiently fulfill the prevail-

ing conditions and specific demands of her native waters.

The Meerwald was one of nearly 500 schooners built along Delaware Bay before the decline of the local shipbuilding industry in the 1930s. One hundred years later, there are only a handful of converted schooners still harvesting oysters.

Today, the AJ Meerwald is operated by the Bayshore Center at Bivalve as a traveling classroom and vehicle to enjoy the area's waterways.

Passengers can enjoy sailing aboard a 115-foot schooner from the age of sail. The Bayshore Center at Bivalve is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to advance the understanding of the human effects on New Jersey's aquatic environment through education, advocacy, and programming.

BCB operates the Delaware Bay Museum and offers shore-based programs at its campus and schooner's home port of Bivalve on the scenic Maurice River in Cumberland County.

Visit bayshorecenter.org or call (856) 785-2060 for more information.

## Where do those who serve live?

Cost, lack of availability lead to housing crisis in N.J. shore communities

By JULIA DiGERONIMO  
Special to the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — This city is beautiful year-round, but summer is when people flock to the area. To keep up with the increase in tourism, Cape May relies on seasonal workers to operate popular businesses and restaurants.

A seasonal employee is contracted to work for a set number of months. Cape May isn't the permanent residence of most of these workers, raising the question of where they live during the summer.

With many properties renting short-term at high prices, housing is neither readily available nor affordable.

New Jersey's cost of living is 11 percent higher than the national average and its housing costs are 30 percent higher.

On top of that, Cape May's cost of living is 22 percent higher than the state average and 48 percent higher than the country's.

Before 2020, Cape May had fewer than 400 short-term rentals. Now, about 800 summer and year-round rentals have been converted into short-term rentals, raising rental prices and resulting in fewer affordable options.

"The seasonal nature of many jobs in this area worsens the issue of finding housing," said Kiley DeFeo, a seasonal worker for the Wetlands Institute in Stone Harbor.

Due to the lack of summer rentals, most seasonal workers can afford to live in the area only if their family owns a house.

DeFeo lives in her grandmother's home in Ocean City and commutes to the Cape May National Wildlife Refuge for work.

"I'm very fortunate to be able to stay at my grandma's shore house, but it can be a hassle to get to my shifts in Cape May," DeFeo said.

Two markets that rely on seasonal workers are the restaurant business and environmental field, and employers have begun to offer

See Housing crisis, Page A6

## City awards contract for new ladder truck

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council awarded a \$2.1 million contract for the purchase of a new ladder truck for the Cape May Fire Department through the HGAC Cooperative.

At an Aug. 20 meeting, Mayor Zack Mullock said he thought the manufacturer selected was Ferrara Fire Apparatus. City Manager Paul Dietrich said based on the budgetary amount the city appropriated, the manufacturer would be Pierce.

Mullock said he would vote for the purchase but if anyone had told him they had budget restraints that did not allow for another brand of truck, he would have liked to have been informed.

Dietrich said the truck was the one requested by the fire department at \$2.1 million. It is anticipated the truck could be delivered to the city by March, he said.

Councilman Shaine Meier said he spoke with Fire Chief Alex Coulter who informed him this was an opportune time to order a new ladder truck. An ambulance ordered by the city would not be delivered for two years.

Meier said the manufacturer brought a model of the truck to test on Cape May's streets.

"That's obviously the critical thing for here; the maneuverability of the truck is almost as important as some of the other specifications of the truck because you have to be able to get the truck to where the fire is," Dietrich said.

## Mullock launches mayoral campaign

CAPE MAY — Mayor Zack Mullock announced his re-election campaign Aug. 21, submitting petitions to City Clerk Erin Burke.

"I love Cape May and want to make sure it is a safe, clean, family-friendly community for many years to come for your family and for mine," he stated in a news release. "As your mayor, I have strived to work with all of the community and have brought people together around our shared goals."

Mullock touted his accomplishments working with the community and City Council during the

past 3.5 years, including building a new fire house while saving the Fire-fighter Museum, restoring the Franklin Street School for use as a library in conjunction with the county and working with the community, the state, environmental organizations and the DEP to save the Sewell Tract.

He noted the city hired five full-time police officers and more firefighters, while equipping them with important upgrades such as radios, ambulances, firetrucks and other vehicles.

See Mullock, Page A9

## West Cape HPC may boost penalties, address violators

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — Borough Commission is expected to introduce an ordinance to clarify language dealing with the Historic Preservation Commission in the municipal code.

Proposed changes include allowing the HPC administrative officer to be a "municipal official or officials who are designated by the borough through ordinance or resolution."

At an Aug. 14 meeting, Mayor Carol Sabo said the HPC's administrative officer could be the zoning officer or someone else.

The ordinance includes specifying a certificate of appropriateness issued by the HPC would be by resolution to approve a proposed project for

minor and/or major work in the historic district. Major work in the code would be defined as including demolition of any building, improvement, site, place or structure, or a change in the exterior appearance of any contributing building.

New language defines relocation of a principle or accessory building or structure, any addition to or new construction of a principle or accessory building or structure as major work, except for sheds of an area of less than 120 square feet.

A change is proposed in the definition of minor work, which is approval of fences, rear decks, shutters, HVAC, generators, exterior shower enclosures and hardscape work.

See West Cape, Page A10

## HIGH TIDE HAPPY HOUR

EVERY Monday-Friday from 3pm-5pm.

Score Big on weekdays at the Rusty Nail with \$4 Pacifico Draft, \$8 Shack Margarita, \$8 Fishers Island Lemonade, \$8 Dip Trio and \$10 Buffalo Chicken Dip!



205 BEACH AVE, CAPE MAY • RUSTYNAILCAPEMAY.COM • WALK-INS WELCOME

