

Tall-ship captain writes book about tall sea tales

By RACHEL SHUBIN
Special to the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Fishermen are infamous for telling tall tales, and now sailors are getting in on the act.

Capt. Johann Steinke's "The Greatest Captain in the World" is an illustrated children's book that tells the tale of shipmates telling tall tales.

Steinke is a tall-ship captain and master storyteller. The words and rhymes of Steinke, along with the storytelling of Joel Rudd and the professional illustrations of Andy Catling, make for an exciting reading experience.

"Joel was a shipmate of mine and he is the most natural storyteller I ever came across," Steinke said. "I discovered he was making up stories when he introduced the crew and he always introduced our captain as 'arguably the scariest captain in the world,' and then would proceed to make up a story. I was amazed."

The book features two kids who head down to the dock and end up hearing some very tall tales from the crew of the "Greatest Captain in the World" as they face off against giant waves, storms and more.

"I listened to Joel's stories and I thought it would make a really good kids' book," Steinke said. "I sat him down, asked him for ideas about the story. Many years later I compiled them into a story and presented them to an artist."

Steinke has worked on more than a dozen tall ships, cruising up and down the West Coast, in the Bahamas, on large lakes and even from Ireland to Denmark in a replica Viking vessel.

"I went the self-publishing route because I read that most publishers don't allow the author to choose anything and certainly not pick an illustrator," Steinke said. "I found an artist from England and emailed him. He got back to me right away, saying the story would make a great children's book."

In Washington, he captained the Lady Washington, which appeared in several "Pirates of the Caribbean" films.

"I love history and I am very thankful that 'The Greatest Captain in the World' turned out historical," Steinke said.

He was recently named captain of the A.J. Meerwald, a 90-year-old, two-masted former oyster schooner that is New Jersey's official tall ship. It is based out of Bivalve in Cumberland County.

Steinke said he wants everyone to discover the joy of history, sailing and the sea, and this book is a part of it.

"As a tall-ship captain, there is always something different and always a challenge," Steinke said. "Every day on a boat feels like three days on land. You spend 10 years on a boat and it feels like a lifetime."

"The Greatest Captain in the World" will appeal to all ages and those who enjoy pirates, sailing and adventures. Steinke teaches



Provided

Capt. Johann Steinke will sign copies of his book, 'The Greatest Captain in the World,' at Whale's Tale.

the reader some sailing vocabulary and the book includes a glossary with history explanations in

the back.

He said he hopes his readers will find their inner sailor, explorer and adventurer.

"The work I do is directly in touch with people," Steinke said. "Sometimes you change their life because you show them a different point of view. In some ways, you'll never know, but sometimes I hear back from people who have told me they were miserable with their job until they discovered ships and now they're happy. It's challenging but I love to interact with people."

A book signing is scheduled for 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 1, at Whale's Tale, 312 Washington St. in Cape May. Books will be available to purchase. Call (609) 884-4808 for more information.

"I hope people will come out to the signing and I will do a reading and dress kids up as pirates," Steinke said.

Visit bayshorecenter.org for more information about visiting and sailing on the A.J. Meerwald.

Lafayette Street Park

Continued from Page A1

ing when Lafayette Street Park Advisory Committee member Mike Jones presented conceptual plans to the Board of Education. "I can't vote on anything I really don't know about,"

Reed said.

School board President Dawn Austin said if the board continued to delay their approval of the park designs, no progress would be made in completing the park. She said the only park-related item being

proposed for school-owned property was a gazebo and reconstructing the baseball field. Austin said students would be secured from the rest of the park by fencing.

Rippman said the issue is not political. He said the school board needs additional information. Meier said he is available

to meet with school board members, as is the city's engineer and city manager to discuss the conceptual plans. He said plans have been presented on two occasions to the school board.

Meier said he felt "beat up" during the first presentation of the plans to the board. Austin noted she and three other board members have attended meetings of the park committee.

School board member Mark LeMunyon said he had concerns when he heard Phase 4 of the project was being put on the "back burner."

The city received an extension of time to receive funding for Phase 3, Meier noted.

School board solicitor Robert Fineberg said the original plan and a modified plan had been presented to the school board. He said he received a

letter from city solicitor Frank Corrado referring to a letter from the county planning director to Mayor Chuck Lear. The letter confirms the Board of Open Space has \$1.7 million available for Phase 3.

He said Open Space was seeking a letter of support from the school board for the modified plans specifically stating the school is satisfied with security concerns shown on the plan. Fineberg said the school business administrator prepared a proposed motion addressing that request.

Rippman repeated that he wished to have the motion tabled for more time to review the issue. He asked if the city had received a "free and clear" from the state Department of Environmental Protection to complete phases two and three of the park. Much of the property has been under remediation from Jersey Central Power and Light as the former site of a coal-gasification plant that left widespread pollution underground.

Meier said the conceptual plan must first be completed and then the engineered plans finalized. He said the city does not have a "free and clear" from the DEP because it must be done in order. JCP&L has signed over a portion of land it owned to the city in Phase 3 of the project, Meier said, and the utility had the right to maintain the remediation and would assist the city with putting in foundations and light poles.

Reed asked that diagrams of the park be presented at the next school board meeting. Fineberg said Open Space is also seeking a letter of approval from the state Green Acres program and a long-term maintenance budget and schedule from the city.

The school board voted to table the issue until its Dec. 13 meeting when a representative from the park committee will present the conceptual plans.

TIDES : Nov. 21-28, 2018				
DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
21	6:08	6:26		12:13
22	6:48	7:10	12:12	12:58
23	7:30	7:54	12:54	1:44
24	8:13	8:41	1:38	2:32
25	9:00	9:31	2:24	3:22
26	9:50	10:26	3:14	4:15
27	10:44	11:27	4:09	5:12
28	11:44		5:10	6:13

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