

Cape May, West Cape teacher repeat Fulbright scholar

By **CRAIG D. SCHENCK**
Cape May Star and Wave



SARAH REGN

CAPE MAY — Cape May City Elementary School's 2024-25 Teacher of the Year is headed abroad again through the Fulbright Program.

Sarah Regn, 29, a shared service ESL teacher in Cape May and West Cape May school districts, was recently accepted into the Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. government and administered by IREX.

"I am absolutely thrilled to be a part of the Teachers for Global Classrooms program and get the opportunity to share my love for global education with other educators across the nation and world," Regn said, noting she would be heading to Peru for a two-week international immersion experience June 15-30. "I look forward to all that I will gain from this experience."

The year-long public diplomacy includes a two- to three-week international field placement for K-12 teachers.

Regn grew up in Shamong Township and is a 2013 Seneca High School graduate. She later attended Rut-

gers University where she played Division I Big Ten field hockey and pursued an undergraduate degree in psychology with a minor in English/education. She graduated with a master's degree in elementary/special education in 2018 and pursued ESL certification.

This is Regn's second Fulbright acceptance. Her first was as a 2018 Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Taiwan. During her grant, Regn was placed in Kinmen, a remote island in the Fujian province, and lived there for a year. "It was truly the most life-changing experience I have ever had. I loved Taiwan so much that I decided to stay a second year and work at Wagor International School in Taichung," Regn said.

Zach Palombo, superintendent of Cape May and West Cape May school districts, said Regn is a "phenomenal teacher and both districts are lucky to have her."

Palombo said he had just completed a letter of recommendation for Regn as Cape May County Teacher of the Year.

"Sarah is one of the most positive and devoted teachers that I have ever had under my leadership," Palombo wrote in the letter. "Her teaching abilities would make any administrator re-tire on their own previous practice while they were in the classroom and realize that they were lesser in comparison."

Regn is among 800 U.S. citizens who will teach, study and/or conduct research abroad for the 2024-25 academic year through the Fulbright Program. Participants engage in cutting-edge research and expand their professional networks, often continuing research collaborations started abroad and laying the groundwork for forging future partnerships between institutions.

Upon returning to their home countries, institutions, labs and classrooms, they share their stories and often become active supporters of international exchange inviting foreign scholars to campus and encouraging colleagues and students to travel abroad.

As Fulbright alumni, their careers are enriched by joining a network of thousands of esteemed scholars, many of whom are leaders in their fields. Fulbright alumni include 62 Nobel Prize laureates, 89

Pulitzer Prize recipients, 78 MacArthur Fellows and 41 who have served as a head of state or government.

Since 1946, the Fulbright Program has provided more than 400,000 participants from more than 160 countries — chosen for their academic merit and leadership potential — with the opportunity to exchange ideas and contribute to funding solutions to challenges facing communities and the world.

The Fulbright Program is the U.S. government's

flagship international educational exchange program and is supported by the people of the United States and partner countries around the world. The program is funded through an annual appropriation made by Congress to the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Participating governments and host institutions, corporations and foundations also provide direct and indirect support.

HPC appoints chairman

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that but in-between that and the post there is a small, thin rubber gap that keeps the water from flowing inside."

Hammerman reminded the commission that the application included replacing the chain-link fence around the pool with the TimberTech product.

The submission was approved to replace the railings with TimberTech Radiance Express to match the existing siding. Boecker requested the condition of submitting another application, omitting redundancies and clarifying the final product.

The HPC also heard a request for contributing siding and doors at 302-304 Washington St. on the mall. The first application submission was denied in review. Property manager Robert Shepanski was there on behalf of the applicant Monzo Catanes DeLollis.

Shepanski said the commercial property was built in the late 1800s and is a contributing building to the historic zone.

"The owner acquired the building in 2017 and completed renovation work started by the previous owners, which included remodeling the second floor's interiors and first-floor retail stores, as well as installing windows and siding on the building," he said.

The applicant requests approval to complete the siding on the northeast elevation, remove the entry door to unit B, the Cheese Store, and install a French wood door and plain transom to match the other four entry doors on the building.

"I spent about an hour or two in the new library here in town researching the books, and I couldn't find any historical photos of this entry door on this building," Shepanski said. "There's lots of shots looking north up Washington Street, which do show the building, but because it's behind a bay window, you can't see it. To my knowledge, I don't believe the door and the transom above is likely original."

The current transom has different styles and is unique, Shepanski added.

"That's the real question, if the transom is original," HPC member Janice Wilson Stridick said. "If we had evidence that this was the original, then we wouldn't approve it."

Wilson Stridick asked if that were reason enough to table the conversation.

"That window is a handsome transom, but it doesn't go with anything else on the building," Carroll said. "I agree — it might be the one original thing left — but it's kind of looking out of place when everything else was changed around it."

Shepanski said the door needs to be replaced because it's destroyed and there is no jamb left, which is why the operators asked for it to be replaced. He said he had tried to repair the door.

"I'm very uncomfortable with removing that transom because it appears to me that it is original and it's pretty clearly the main en-

terance," Boecker said. "I'm thinking that the other windows above the storefront may have had decorative components to them, or this was the only one because it was the primary entrance."

Boecker agreed with Wilson Stridick, saying he wanted to determine whether it's the original transom because it would be a shame to lose it.

"It's beautiful and adds a whole layer of character," Boecker said. "Mr. Shepanski, if we were to ask you to come back with a little bit more research about this, would you be willing to go through this effort to find out if it's original or not?"

Shepanski said he would be willing to do research but noted he had found no photos or evidence in the report that the transom was original. Boecker asked Carroll if he would be willing to go look at the building with him and said he would look for photos.

The HPC approved the siding replacement but tabled the discussion on the door and transom replacement until more research is done.

The commission also discussed hosting a public HPC alignment workshop. Boecker said it would help the commission in its next phase of the HPC transition.

"To realign around why we are here, why we are really doing this, what's the purpose of this [commission] and using a few frameworks of exercises to help us all have a voice in alignment around what our true purpose is," Boecker said. "And what each of our roles are, because each of us brings something different and complementary to this organization."

The workshop would be a way for the commission to understand what each mem-

ber cares about and allow them to work together as a team as closely as possible.

Boecker said the event likely would last four hours with breaks, allowing time for the public to attend. A date was not set.

The last topic discussed was a parking amendment proposal created by the commission last September and submitted to the planning commission for consideration. The proposal included a potential revision to the zoning ordinance regarding parking under habitable structures.

"After due deliberation and further consideration and hearing comments from the planning commission, I would like to suggest we consider indefinitely tabling that," Boecker said. "I believe we've got some other priorities we need to pursue, namely getting our bylaws revised and finally resolving the historic district map."

Testa said the proposal has been repeatedly postponed, even from the prior administration, and it's an important subject.

"Apparently it's a touchy subject as well as being important," Testa said. "I think we all saw the merits of what Cape May would look like in the future if we maintain this regulation and what we would do in the historic district."

Testa added he believed what the commission sent off to the Planning Board had merit but it would be better to get the commission in order.

"To increase our chances of us getting it done, because ultimately it has to go to the Planning Board and City Council for amendment," Testa said. "I'd like to do anything to increase those chances, and if it needs some more time and we get some other business

done, maybe we'll get some new arguments and think more. That's fine with me to put off to a future time."

Wilson Stridick said the amendment was put on the planning commission's agenda and its origin was unclear.

"I watched [the meeting] and it was kind of a nightmare," she said. "The letter Chris wrote spelled out why it was important to the HPC; it was clear as a bell. I think that the alignment meeting John is proposing is where we can talk about things like this, because we need to be clear and persuasive."

Boecker said resolving and approving the historic district map is a high priority, after which the commission can move on to other issues.

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