

# Sippel, Perry, Coombs, police chief sworn in in Lower

VILLAS — Lower Township started off the new year by holding its annual reorganization meeting Jan. 4 at the Paul Schmidtchen Theater at Lower Cape Regional High School.

The reorganization began with an invocation from Assemblyman and Deacon Erik Simonsen. The reorganization also featured the swearing-in of the mayor, deputy mayor and council representative from Ward 2, who were all re-elected to their positions, as well as recognizing retirements in the Lower Township Police Department and the oath of office of a new chief of police, promotions, as well as new officers to the department.

Frank Sippel took the oath of office as the township's mayor, administered by Cape May County Sheriff Robert Nolan, while his grandchildren Colin and Ava held the Bible.

Sippel was re-elected as mayor after being appointed in 2020. He has dedicated 36 years of his life in service to the nation, retiring from the U.S. Army in 2015 as a command sergeant major, serving as the state command sergeant major — the highest position in New Jersey — and managed more than 8,000 soldiers and airmen.

Sippel was also employed as the undersheriff for the Cape May County Sheriff's Office. He has officiated high school and youth sports for more than 25 years and has been involved in the Lower Township Healthy Youth Coalition.

Dave Perry was sworn in as deputy mayor by Nolan as the Bible was held by his wife, Janet.

Perry has served as a fire commissioner for Lower Township Fire District 2 and as the Lower Township fire official. Perry is certi-



William Priole is sworn in as the new chief of the Lower Township Police Department as his girlfriend, Virginia Nichols, hold the Bible on Jan. 2.

fied by the state as a fire official, fire instructor level II and fire investigator. He is also a state-licensed electrical contractor, a member of the Town Bank Volunteer Fire Company since 1974 and a member of Cape Island Lodge #30 of Free and Accepted Masons.

Kevin Coombs was sworn in by Simonsen for his Second Ward council seat as his children Gabriella and Keva held the Bible.

Coombs has lived his entire life as a resident of Ward 2, where he shares his home with his two daughters, who are both in the Lower Township school system. He has a bachelor's degree from Rowan University and has been a teacher in the Lower Township Elementary School District since 1998. Additionally, he has coached wrestling for several years in the Lower Cape May Regional School District.

Along with being a teacher and coach, Coombs has been the general manager of Two Mile Crab House and currently works at Urie's Restaurant for the past 25 years. Coombs volunteers

with various nonprofits, most recently being active on the board of the nonprofit Cape Love, which assists the community's less fortunate.

Sippel told those in attendance that 2021 brings challenges and great opportunities as the council will continue to work on infrastructure improvements, repairs to local parks and the recreation center, and focus on projects to improve public health and safety.

"We're committed to continue to make improvements while keeping costs down so we can keep Lower Township an affordable place to live," said Sippel said.

Lower Township also honored outgoing Police Chief William Mastriana in his retirement as new chief William Priole took the oath of office.

Mastriana had been a member of the Lower Township Police Department for 28 years and served more than seven years as chief.

"I want thank all police and civilian personnel at the Lower Township Department for all of their support," Mastriana said.



Frank Sippel is sworn in as mayor of Lower Township during the reorganization meeting Jan. 4 at Lower Cape May Regional High School. Sippel was appointed to the position in 2020 and then won re-election in November. With Sippel are his grandchildren, Colin and Ava.

"I would like to thank all of those who gave me this opportunity to serve as the Lower Township chief of police and to make a difference in the community we serve. I want to thank my family who has been there for me my entire career and who have supported me in every endeavor I chose to pursue."

Priole is a 29-year veteran of the police department. He was hired in fall 1991 and graduated from the Atlantic County Police Academy in February 1992. His career accomplishments include being named Officer of the Year and serving as a member of the department's Fatal Crash Investigation Team. He was promoted to patrol sergeant in June 2011, promoted to lieutenant in July 2015 and promoted to captain in June 2019. Priole graduated from the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Po-

lice (NJSACOP) Command and Leadership Academy in 2017.

Priole's girlfriend, Virginia Nichols, held the Bible while Sippel administered the oath. Mastriana pinned the badge on Priole.

"I am excited for the opportunity to lead the department that has been such a big part of my life for many years," Priole said. "The Lower Township Police Department has built strong ties with our community. I am committed to continue to build on these relationships with our community through community policing."

The police department recognized Lt. Doug Whit-

ten on his retirement after 25 years of service and Officer Eric Danze for receiving an award for his police work from Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

The department also recognized the provisional promotions of Capt. Kevin Lewis, Capt. Donald Vanaman and Lt. Charles Ryan.

Perry also administered the oath of office to his son, Sgt. Michael Perry, while the younger Perry's children Michael and Madden held the Bible and his wife, Kortney, pinned his badge.

The department welcomed three officers to its ranks: Christopher Vassar Jr., Patrick Dunn and Antonio Marroquin.

## Cape Regional sees spike in coronavirus patients

By DAVID NAHAN  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — The Cape May County Department of Health said the number of COVID-19 patients at Cape Regional Medical Center has decreased since Jan. 4, when there were 28 coronavirus-positive patients, including six in intensive care and one on a ventilator.

Gov. Phil Murphy said statewide the patients hospitalized due to COVID-19 were hovering at less than half of the 8,270 peak of the pandemic (see related story).

The number at Cape Regional had fallen to 20 as of Sunday, with four in the ICU and one on a ventilator.

On Jan. 5, 73 residents and staff at Crest Haven Nursing and Rehabilitation Center received their first dose of the vaccine as

part of the state's Phase 1A group.

Six county residents, according to the department, succumbed to the virus between Jan. 4 and Jan. 10, bringing the county's death toll to 148, including 87 in long-term care, since the pandemic began in March.

On Jan. 9, the department reported the death of a 72-year-old man in Woodbine. On Jan. 8, it was a 73-year-old man from Lower Township. On Jan. 7, there were two coronavirus-related fatalities, an 83-year-old female from Lower Township and a 74-year-old female from Middle Township. The department also reported a 77-year-old Dennis Township man's death on Jan. 6 and an 88-year-old man from Dennis Township on Jan. 4.

Active cases had climbed to more than 600 over the weekend, spread through-

out the county's communities, but that number also declined a little by Sunday to 592, with another 10 in long-term care and two among residents.

The county is approaching 5,000 positive cases, reaching 4,886 on Sunday with 39 new cases in the communities, but no new cases among visitors or in long-term care.

The two active cases among visitors were in Cape May, which at one point had more than 30. The 10 active cases in long-term care included six in Woodbine, one

in Ocean City, one in Middle Township and two in Dennis Township.

There were 149 active cases in Middle Township, 114 in Lower Township, 82 in Upper Township and 74 in Ocean City. Other active cases included 41 in Dennis Township, 36 in Wildwood, 19 each in North Wildwood and Wildwood Crest, 12 each in Sea Isle City and Woodbine, 11 in Cape May, eight each in Avalon and Stone Harbor, six in West Cape May, two in Cape May Point and one in West Wildwood.

## Authorities seek suspect in 2 area bank robberies

WOODBINE — State Police are seeking the public's assistance with identifying a man who allegedly committed two bank robberies in Cape May County.

The perpetrator entered Sturdy Savings Bank in Dennisville at about 3:10 p.m. Dec. 30 and handed the teller a note requesting that money be placed on the counter. The suspect then departed the bank in an unknown direction with cash provided by the teller.

Additionally, the perpetrator entered TD Bank in Marmora at about 3:20 p.m. Jan. 7 and handed the teller a note requesting

that money be placed on the counter. The suspect then departed the bank in an unknown direction with cash provided by the teller.

The suspect is described as a white man about 40 to 60 years old, 6 feet tall with a medium build and gray hair. The suspect in both robberies was wearing a black knit cap, a black gaiter-style face covering, blue jeans, a black coat and black gloves.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the New Jersey State Police Woodbine Station Criminal Investigation Office at (609) 861-5698. Anonymous tips are welcome.

# Beach Break

Relax, life takes time...

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12				13				14			
15				16			17				
			18	19			20				
21	22	23				24					
25					26			27	28	29	
30				31				32			
33			34				35				
		36	37				38				
39	40				41						
42					43			44	45	46	47
48					49			50			
51					52			53			

## Crossword

**ACROSS**

1. Stallion's mate
5. Gremlin's kin
8. Lighter \_\_\_ air
12. Bread baker
13. Body of water
14. Eroded
15. Zilch
16. Sieve
18. Quick farewells
20. Request urgently
21. Fall fruits
24. Depend
25. Elizabeth or Victoria
26. Drift off
27. Wash the floor
30. Jars
31. Curved chest bone
32. Journey
33. Still life, e.g.
34. Gathered
35. Started the day
36. Cow's foot

38. Enough
39. Potent particles
41. Like a skyscraper
42. Squad cars
44. Weak, as an excuse
48. \_\_\_ India Company
49. Spoil
50. Hero
51. Tinting agents
52. Lunched
53. Plants seed

**DOWN**

1. Sun, follower
2. Ms. Gardner
3. Lipstick color
4. Makes possible
5. Road turns
6. Allows
7. \_\_\_ and wide
8. Fabric weave
9. Postnuptial vacation
10. Precinct

11. Geek
17. Parodied
19. Tokyo currency
21. Greenish blue
22. Contented sound
23. Luxury suite
24. Steal
26. Young louse
28. Unseat
29. Target
31. Ump's relative
32. Vine support
34. Tree-trunk growth
35. 100 percent
37. Disregards
38. Stickum
39. Passed with flying colors
40. Waiter's need
41. Harness-racing gait
43. Chapter in history, perhaps
45. Hoopla
46. Tend the lawn
47. Chicago trains

## Sudoku

#481

			4	1				
		2		5	3			
							8	7
2	5						4	
		9		4	7			
6				8				1
8			1					9
7					3			
	3	5		7				8

#482

	5			2	4			
			7	1	5		8	
8					9			
6						9	5	
							2	8
	4	3	5					
5			4					6
							1	
	9			7				4

HOW TO PLAY: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once. Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line. You already have a few numbers to get you started. Remember, You must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column, or 3x3 box.

Hang up on telephone fraud – Just say 'No'  
Never give a caller: Credit card numbers, social security numbers, bank account numbers, personal information. Questions: Call Cape May County Consumer Affairs at (609) 886-2903.

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