



## House of the week

Page B1



## Couple shares love of alpacas on Lower farm

Page A10



## Democratic congressional primary

### Three are seeking the nomination in 2nd District



Tanzie Youngblood speaking at the Women's March in Ocean City in January.

### Tanzie Youngblood, a 'real Democrat,' was fed up and decided to do something about it by running

By ERIC AVEDISSIAN  
Cape May Star and Wave

Tanzie Youngblood never thought she'd grace the cover of TIME magazine.

Yet in the Jan. 29, 2018, issue, Youngblood's photo is among those female candidates running grass-roots campaigns for public office in a story called "The Avengers."

She's in good company; the cover also features a photo of Atlantic County Freeholder Ashley Bennett, who defeated Republican incumbent John Carman in 2017 after Carman posted memes on Facebook disparaging women who attended the Women's March in Washington, D.C.

Youngblood, 62, is a mother, grandmother, retired educator and Democratic candidate for the 2nd Congressional District.

Incumbent Republican U.S. Rep. Frank LoBiondo announced he would not run for re-election in November, starting a scramble for candidates in both parties to run for the coveted seat.

While the Democratic establishment supported front-runner First Legislative District state Sen. Jeff Van Drew, Youngblood and other progressives are running as what they call "real Democrats."

Youngblood, a resident of Woolwich Township in Gloucester County, said she's running on what she described as a "civil rights platform."

"I'm about equality, I'm about fairness and I'm about equity. That includes economic equity, educational equity, health equity, social and political equity. That in my opinion is a civil rights platform," Youngblood said. "The progressives said 'we like her. Your platform and our platform are the same.' They claimed me. If that's what being a progressive is, then I'm claiming that title."

Youngblood is one of three Democratic candidates running in the June 5 primary. The others are Van



Will Cunningham speaking at a gun control rally in front of Congressman Frank LoBiondo's office in February.

### Will Cunningham says he overcame adversity and wants to help others do the same thing

By ERIC AVEDISSIAN  
Cape May Star and Wave

Life punched Will Cunningham in the gut with a concrete fist at an early age.

Born to a teenage mother in Cumberland County, Cunningham, 32, was homeless and poor during his formative years.

Cunningham, a Democratic candidate for the 2nd Congressional District, recalled how his mother barely made above minimum wage.

"We struggled. My mother had an extended illness that led to eviction, which led to a bout of homelessness. We didn't have a stable living place for half of my high school career. The only thing I had control over were my academics," Cunningham said.

So he buckled down. He increased his workload, joined the football team, mock trial team and worked part time at McDonald's. He found his way to Brown University through GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs), a competitive grant program for low-income students. The first person in his family who graduated college, Cunningham called his experience at Brown "life-changing and transformative."

After graduation, he participated in Teach for America, a program that places college graduates in the most challenging schools in the nation to try to close the achievement gap.

He taught middle school social studies in Texas and graduated law school from the University of Texas in Austin as class president in 2012. He focused on dispute resolution, divorce, custody and small property mediations.

"When I talk about my story of hardship, I don't do that for sympathy. I do it so that people know when I say I'm going to fight for them, they know it, that they know there's someone who has lived that experience and no matter what accomplishments I have ... that experience is something I will



A portrait of state Sen. Jeff Van Drew provided by his office.

### Jeff Van Drew: state senator believes centrists are the most effective, plans to be a moderate

By ERIC AVEDISSIAN  
Cape May Star and Wave

When U.S. Rep. Frank LoBiondo, who served the district for 23 years, announced he would not run for re-election in 2018, Jeff Van Drew said he would campaign for LoBiondo's seat.

The decision didn't come as a surprise to anyone who has followed Van Drew's political career from Dennis Township to the Cape May County Board of Chosen Freeholders to the New Jersey Assembly and Senate.

For years, Van Drew, 65, a dentist who represents the First Legislative District in the Senate, declined speculation about a congressional run.

"I think we are in a particular point in our history not only in the state but in the United States of America where we need individuals who are going to bring hopefully the quality, the gentility, the decency and the honor and integrity back to public service," Van Drew said, noting both Republicans and Democrats have lost "a great deal" of what public service means.

Van Drew illustrated the nation's idealized call for leadership as parents pointing out their Congress members to their children and proudly saying, "That's our congressman and we're really proud of him. He's a person of integrity, a bipartisan individual who can work with both sides and really cares about people and really cares about the country."

"I realize one individual, certainly one congressman alone, cannot do that but we can certainly try to begin to start the process," Van Drew said.

Van Drew secured the endorsements of the Democratic Party committees in all of the district's eight counties. The national Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee also endorsed Van Drew for Congress as part of their "Red to Blue" program, hoping to flip the district from Republican to Democrat leadership.

The Cook Political Report changed New Jersey's 2nd Congressional Dis-

## Tax rate rises for Cape May, West Cape but falls for Lower

By RACHEL SHUBIN  
Special to the Star and Wave

ERMA — The Lower Cape May Regional Board of Education approved its 2018-19 budget April 26, calling for a tax decrease for Lower Township residents but an increase for Cape May and West Cape May homeowners.

The state determines the share Cape May, West Cape May and Lower Township contribute to funding the regional school district through an equalized valuation based on property values and resident students.

Cape May's share of the school budget has increased from 27.59 percent last year to 31.63 for 2018-19. West Cape May's share has increased from 7.98 percent last year to 8.41 percent. Lower Township's share has decreased from 64.43 percent last year to 59.96 percent.

The tax rate will increase for Cape May and West Cape May, while it will decrease in Lower Township.

The tax rate for Cape

May property owners will increase from 21 cents per \$100 of assessed value to 24.4 cents. West Cape May's tax rate increases from 36.5 cents per \$100 assessed value to 37.8 cents. Lower Township's tax rate decreases from 38.1 cents per \$100 assessed value to 33.6 cents.

The owner of a home assessed at \$250,000 in Cape May will see their tax bill increase from \$525 to \$610, or \$85.

The owner of a home assessed at \$250,000 in West Cape May will see their tax bill increase from \$913 to \$945, or \$32.

The owner of a home assessed at \$250,000 in Lower Township will see their tax bill decrease from \$953 to \$841, or \$112.

According to Business Administrator Mark Mallett, the reason the local tax levy that a municipality contributes fluctuates from year to year is the state calculates the Equalized Valuation Allocation for regional school districts, which is based on property

See Tax rate, Page A2

## Panel recommends higher, wider, longer seawall, Promenade

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's Seawall/Promenade Advisory Committee recommended to the Planning Board as part of the city's master plan re-examination that the Promenade be extended along the entire beachfront and consideration be given to a higher seawall for storm protection.

During a meeting April 26, Seawall/Promenade Advisory Committee member Louis Bruno said the committee "was in its infancy," so recommendations were being made without the benefit of engineering reports. He said when looking at a photo of the seawall from the 1960s, little has changed.

"Monies have been allocated for a feasibility study to look at the Promenade and seawall working in conjunction with the Army Corps of Engineers, and that process actually

kicked off in September 2015 and information is starting to trickle in from the Army Corps of Engineers on recommendations for our seawall," Bruno said.

He said the Army Corps could have a plan in place by 2019 but funding would still need to be sought. Bruno said any Army Corps project costing less than \$10 million does not require Congressional approval.

Two hurricanes, Jose and Maria, passed by the coast last year. Bruno said even though neither hurricane hit Cape May, the city felt effects with high storm surges that impacted beaches and water coming close to the seawall.

Superstorm Sandy in fall 2012 created flooding at Beach and Wilmington avenues and piled sand in the street, he said.

"As you recall, that storm was supposed to hit

Committee, Page A4

See Youngblood, page A9

See Cunningham, page A8

See Van Drew, page A9

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