



## HOUSE OF THE WEEK

Page B1



## SOUTH JERSEY CHAMP

Page B7



# Cape May, county to be Coast Guard Community

Designation mostly symbolic, but commandant says it shows increased commitment

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Within 90 days, the city and Cape May County are expected to be designated as a Coast Guard Community.

That was the word from the U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Robert Papp when he headlined a ceremony last week at Convention Hall.

While the designation as a

Coast Guard Community is mostly symbolic, it is hoped that it will keep Training Center Cape May here should base closings arise in the future.

In 1995, there was a recommendation to close the Training Center, Mayor Edward Mahaney said. He said it would have been devastating to the local economy.

Papp said the Coast Guard has been in Cape May for 100 years. In 1948, Cape May be-

came the Coast Guard's East Coast training center, he said. In 1982, Cape May became the sole training center in the nation, according to Papp.

"We take great pride in our community service and in those communities that we serve in," he said.

In Cape May, more than 500 Coast Guard personnel put in about 3,000 hours of community service over the past year, including donating more than

1,000 pints of blood, Papp said.

"The community has enveloped us, has hugged us, has brought us in as well," he said, noting Operation Fireside, in which local residents invite recruits to their homes for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner.

Papp said local residents have become babysitters, mowed lawns and shopped for groceries for Coastie families when a spouse is away.

"It's all those things that make us feel a part of the community," he said.

After 100 years in Cape May, why go through the trouble of naming the city and county as a Coast Guard Community? Papp compared the relationship between the Coast Guard and area as a "common-law marriage." Papp said the actions indicate an implied commitment and

See Community, Page A2

U.S. Coast Guard holds change-of-watch ceremony for master chief petty officer.  
Page A2

## U.S. Coast Guard salutes those who served, sacrificed



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Coast Guard Training Center Cape May, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 82 and the Cape May Beach Patrol held a Memorial Day ceremony Monday on the beach at Gurney Street. The ceremony included a rifle salute, playing of Taps and the launching of a flower-filled boat. See more photos on A7.

## School-funds talks unlikely for Cape May, Lower Twp.

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Neither Lower Township nor Cape May officials are willing to sit down to discuss changes to the funding formula or adding additional members to the Lower Cape May Regional Board of Education from Cape May.

Cape May made a request to 1st District legislators state Sen. Jeff Van Drew and Assemblymen Bob Andrejczak and Samuel L. Fiochi two weeks ago to amend legislation to allow Cape May an additional seat on the Lower Cape May Regional Board of Education. In addition, Cape May is requesting a change in the school-funding formula from the regional school board of education to return the district to its original per-pupil tax allocation.

At a May 19 Cape May Council meeting, cor-

See Talks unlikely, Page A5

## Chairman resigns following vote to dissolve LTMUA

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Nels Johnson, chairman of the Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority (LTMUA) Board of Commissioners, submitted his resignation May 16.

His resignation follows Lower Township Council's 3-2 vote May 5 to begin the process of dissolving the LTMUA. Water and sewer services would be absorbed into township operations, with a projected savings of nearly \$1 million annually, according to auditor Robert Swartz.

"I don't think it's a good situation for the township," Johnson told the Star and Wave.

He said LTMUA workers were under the impression they would come "waltzing into the township keeping their salaries intact and their seniority."

See Chairman resigns, Page A2



JOHNSON

## Cape May-Lewes Ferry kicks off anniversary celebration

By PHIL PIZZU  
Special to the Star and Wave

NORTH CAPE MAY — The 50th summer season of the Cape May-Lewes Ferry kicked off May 22 with a party at the ferry terminal attended by local elected officials, representatives of the Delaware River and Bay Authority and ferry crew members, who were recognized for their hard work on one of the vessels.

All those in attendance were treated to samples of new menu entrees and appetizers from the terminal's food service operation, along with birthday cake. Some of the new food items include shark bites, fish and chips, jerk chicken sandwiches and an outdoor raw bar, serving shrimp, oysters and

clams on the half shell.

The M/V Delaware, one of the three vessels currently in operation, is celebrating its 40th birthday this year. She was delivered to the Cape May-Lewes Ferry on May 17, 1974, and has logged about 80,000 crossings.

The M/V Delaware was docked next to the ferry terminal and open for tours to showcase the many upgrades performed in-house by ferry employees.

On the outside, the M/V Delaware received a new paint job, including a retro racing stripe and anniversary logos on the smoke stacks. Other improvements include new passenger seating, flooring, flat-panel televisions and 40 new Adirondack chairs on the bow of the second deck for passen-

gers' relaxation and sunbathing.

Frank Minor, deputy executive director of the DRBA, led the program.

Lower Township Mayor Mike Beck addressed the crowd, and said "the relationship between Lower Township and the DRBA has never been better."

Director of Ferry Operations Heath Gehrke told the group that "about 75 percent of ferry traffic occurs between Memorial Day and Labor Day." He added that ridership numbers for this April and May have been "strong."

In addition to the upgrades to the vessel, the food service operation in the terminal building was renovated by ferry employees and DRBA staff at a cost savings of nearly \$250,000.

Lower Township, DRBA team up to offer schedule of summer events.  
Page A3

Upgrades were made in plumbing, HVAC, carpentry and electrical systems, plus the addition of a new refrigeration unit.

The main anniversary celebration will occur June 28 in North Cape May and June 29 in Lewes, Del.

The event will include a car

See Celebration, Page A3



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