



## HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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## ELTC STAGES SWASHBUCKLER ZORRO!

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# Police arrest three in theft at Artisans Alcove

### Two suspects remain at large; group stole \$95,000 in diamonds

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Baltimore County police arrested three suspects in a jewelry theft May 8 at Artisans Alcove in Cape May.

According to WBAL Television, police arrested Robert Antoine Weathers, 53, and Robin Nelson,

50, on July 7 at a Comfort Inn in Catonsville, Md. The suspects were being sought for multiple jewel thefts, including \$95,000 worth of diamonds from Artisans Alcove and jewelry valued at more than \$25,000 from Bijou Jewelers in Lutherville, Md.

Weathers and Nelson are suspected of being part of a group

of five involved in the theft of diamonds from Artisans Alcove. According to WBAL, police identified a third suspect in the thefts July 9. Stanley Gwynn, 45, of Elkridge, Md., was charged with theft from \$10,000 to less than \$100,000 and was free on \$100,000 bail.

Cape May police said three of

five suspects distracted manager Patricia Rapsa while two others opened an unlocked jewelry case and removed trays containing 30 diamond engagement rings.

The suspects were clearly captured on high-definition video, which was disseminated to nu-



GWYNN



NELSON



WEATHERS

See Arrests, Page A3

## Cape May hosts classic cars at Rotary Park



John Cooke/Special to the CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The Jersey Cape Region of the Antique Automobile Club of America held an auto show July 12 at Rotary Park in Cape May. Seen above are a 1956 Corvette and a 1956 Bel Air. The AACA has one goal: the preservation of automotive history of all types. See more photos, Page A8.

## Villas girl, 11, dies in car crash

GOSHEN — Morgan Ferguson, 11, of Villas, suffered fatal injuries in a single-car crash July 9 on Route 47.

Preliminary investigation by Middle Township police indicated a white Ford F150 driven by the victim's mother, Kristin Conner, 40, of Villas, was traveling north on Route 47 when the vehicle left the travel lane and struck a utility pole and a tree. Morgan was ejected from the vehicle and suffered fatal injuries. Conner was transported to Cape Regional Medical Center for treatment.

The crash is still under investigation by the Middle Township Fatal Crash Team and the county Prosecutor's Office. No charges had been filed as of July 15.

The Goshen Fire Company, Court House Fire Company, Green Creek Fire Company, Middle Township EMS, Middle Township Ambulance Corps and Atlanticare medics responded to the scene of the crash.

## Agencies stage mock evacuation

By ERIC AVEDISSIAN  
Cape May Star and Wave

If a hurricane strike were pending in the region, southbound lanes on major highways would be converted to northbound lanes to get visitors and residents away from the shore as quickly as possible.

Amid a steady downpour of rain, several state agencies conducted an emergency-evacuation exercise July 10 to practice their response to major hurricanes.

Although no roads were closed during the drill, conducted by the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, South Jersey Turnpike Authority and the New Jersey State Police, there was an increased State Police presence and work crews along major highways along shore evacuation routes.

The following highways were the focus of the drill: Atlantic City Expressway (from Atlantic City to Washington Township), Garden State Parkway (from Lower Township to Egg Harbor Township), I-95

See Evacuation, Page A4

## Officials: Villas police station would not raise taxes

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — "In government, we're all entitled to our own opinions. We're not entitled to our own facts," Lower Township Deputy Mayor Norris Clark stated in answer to a letter to the editor authored by Councilmen Tom Conrad and Eric Simonsen that appeared in a local paper.

During a July 7 Lower Township Council meeting, Clark disputed a statement in that letter saying construction of a new police station next to Township Hall in Villas would lead to a tax increase for residents.

Clark said minutes from council's June 15 meeting confirmed Municipal Auditor Leon Costello's statement that the township had the capacity to take on \$11 million

in debt next year without affecting the tax rate. A new police station is estimated to cost close to \$4 million. Clark said storm water drainage improvements elsewhere in the township could cost \$1 million.

Conrad commented that \$7.1 million of \$11 million was already encumbered for 2015. Lower Township Chief Financial Officer Lauren Read said \$7.2 million was encumbered for a bond issue. She said an additional \$4 million would be available the following year.

Read confirmed that building a new police station would not lead to a tax increase.

Mayor Michael Beck said the township has been frugal in its spending and the time is right for the Police Department to leave the public safety building at the county airport.

Manager Mike Voll meets with LTMUA employees, refutes statements made by opposition about job losses.

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"A half-truth that is repeated constantly eventually is seen as true in the eyes of people who hear it repeated often enough," the mayor said.

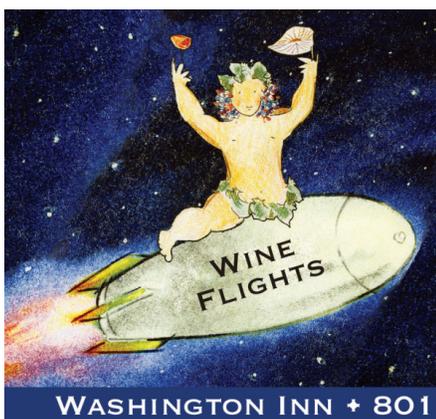
Beck said having the police station in Villas next to Township Hall

would provide a zone of safety for surrounding blocks. He suggested bringing Costello back to the next meeting to repeat that building a police station would not increase taxes.

"We brought him here last meeting just for that issue ... that was three weeks ago, and you wrote the letter after that and I think it's deceptive," Beck said.

Conrad said he agreed the police station would not raise taxes, but said the township would bond the project, something he compared to a person maxing out their credit card.

Read said that between 2014 and 2018, the township would have bonding capacity of as much as \$29 million without requiring a tax increase. Township Manager Mike Voll said there was no intention of bonding that amount of money.



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