

Cape May Star and Wave

160TH YEAR NO. 39 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2014 75¢



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

Page B1



NATURE CENTER TRAINING TINY NATURALISTS

Page A2



Judge: SADC should rule on Willow Creek issue

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — Judge Allen Littlefield of the Atlantic County Superior Court denied injunctive relief sought by the Borough of West Cape May against Willow Creek Winery and dismissed the borough's complaint Aug. 18.

According to a news release from Willow Creek Winery, in doing so, the judge found that West Cape May was not a proper party to bring the lawsuit in Superior Court.

The borough had filed a declaratory judgment action against Willow Creek seeking to enforce a recent amendment to the Right to Farm Act that prohibits preserved farm

wineries from hosting weddings or other "special occasion events" unless certain conditions are met. The amendments, adopted July 2, direct the State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC) to establish a pilot program for special occasion events subject to 11 enumerated conditions, including municipal site plan review and approval.

Borough Solicitor Frank Corrado told the Star and Wave that Littlefield did not rule on the merits of the claim and stated any complaint about what the law requires should be brought to the SADC rather than Superior Court. Corrado said the borough disagrees with the judge.

Any further action by the borough was scheduled to be discussed in

closed session at West Cape May Borough Commission's Sept. 24 meeting, he said. Corrado said the borough has the option of appealing the judge's decision or filing a complaint with the SADC.

"The borough could do both if it wanted to," he said.

See Willow Creek, Page A3

Royal procession

Naturalists have high hopes that numbers will be larger during monarch butterflies' annual migration through Cape May area

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT — Naturalists and residents are watching the skies here during the annual autumn southern migration of monarch butterflies, hoping the declining species shows better numbers than previous years.

The monarch population has declined by 90 percent in the past 20 years, due mostly to habitat destruction.

Cape May and Cape May Point are hotspots for the insects as they travel 2,500 miles from Canada to their winter home in Mexico.

The spectacle of monarchs feeding on flower nectar can be seen in gardens throughout Cape May and Cape May Point.

Lindsey Brendel, a Monarch Monitoring Project field technician for New Jersey Audubon Society, is counting monarchs until the end of October, and loves every minute of it.

"This is a dream job," she said. Brendel graduated from Oakland University in Rochester, Mich., in April with a film/theater degree. Before joining the monarch monitoring team, she raised more than 500 monarchs from the egg stage on her family's beef cattle farm in Michigan.

"On our farm we have an endless supply of milkweed," said Brendel.

Monarchs will lay eggs only on milkweed. Caterpillars eat the milkweed when they emerge from their cocoons, she said.

Brendel said Cape Island sees many monarchs because the butterflies hug the coast to avoid flying over water when possible.

"They want to fuel up here before they cross 10 miles of water to Delaware," Brendel said. "That's why this is such a hot spot for monarchs."

The monarchs will wait for favorable wind conditions before crossing Delaware Bay, preferring to soar on thermals rather than flap their wings continuously, she said.



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Lindsey Brendel, a Monarch Monitoring Project field technician for New Jersey Audubon Society, uses a large butterfly net to capture monarchs. She later will tag their wings with a tiny adhesive sticker featuring a letter and number code used for research into their dwindling numbers.

Brendel said northwest winds from a cold front would bring a number of monarchs to Cape May Point.

She conducts a "census run" three times daily in September and October.

"It's a sampling technique," she said. "The goal is not to count every monarch in Cape May."

She drives her SUV at 25 mph on a route from Higbee Beach to Alexander Avenue in Cape May Point, tallying monarchs on a clicker. The goal is to estimate how many monarchs are passing through Cape May per hour. The data are then compared with other

See Monarch migration, Page A2

Lower Council urges residents to reject school ballot question

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township Council approved a resolution at its Sept. 15 meeting opposing Cape May's proposal to modify the method of collecting taxes for the operation of the regional school district, urging residents to vote "no" on a referendum question on the Nov. 4 ballot.

The resolution states that council's belief is the current funding formula for Lower Cape May Regional High School District is "fair and equitable." The resolution states council believes the current formula is fair because it equalizes the tax effort required of taxpayers in Cape May, West Cape May and Lower Township "by assessing all taxable real property within the Lower Cape May Regional School District at the same region-wide tax rate."

The resolution says Cape May's efforts are motivated by its desire to avoid paying its fair share of taxes to support the school district. It notes the state Commissioner of Education stated in a June 2 decision involving the River Dell Regional School District "that property valuation, not per-capita counts, has been regarded by the Supreme Court of New Jersey as the most equitable basis for school funding."

If the city of Cape May prevails in its passage of a proposal to modify the method of taxation, school district taxes for the average homeowner in Lower Township would increase by an estimated \$427 per year, states the resolution.

The resolution urge voters in the three towns that comprise the school district to vote "no" on the question to modify the method of taxation.

"It's extremely important that our residents understand to vote "no" on this issue," Mayor Michael Beck said. "We have a process whereby we are trying to educate our residents."

The education process is being handled by a committee since council has to somewhat distance

See Ballot question, Page A3

N. Cape May soldier gets hero's welcome

Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Spc. Ryan Lewis received a hero's welcome and celebration Sept. 20 at Villas VFW Post 5343 after completing his first tour in Afghanistan.

Lewis, 21, of North Cape May, joined the Army after graduating from Lower Cape May Regional High School. He is the son of Lower Township police officer Kevin Lewis. Lewis will enjoy some much-

deserved time off in Lower Township for two weeks before returning to Fort Bliss in Texas.

A procession made up of the Lower Township Police Department, local fire companies, rescue squads and motorcycle groups picked up Lewis Sept. 20 at his home and transported him to the Villas VFW Post 5343.

Friends and members of the public gave Lewis a hero's welcome.



Sandy Malone/Special to the CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Spc. Ryan Lewis, 21, center in green shirt, stands with his family after returning to North Cape May following his first tour in Afghanistan with the U.S. Army.

Historic panel: Neon doesn't fit city image

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — In a National Historic Landmark city, neon signs don't blend well with Victorian mansions and Colonial-era homes, according to the city's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).

At a Sept. 22 meeting, the HPC asked its attorney Robert Fineberg to draft a letter to Mayor Edward Mahaney and City Manager Bruce MacLeod asking for enforcement of neon sign violations. The HPC will review and vote on the letter at its next meeting.

HPC Chairman Warren Coupland said a sandwich shop and a retail store on the Washington

See Neon signs, Page A2

LUCKY BONES BACKWATER GRILLE

OPEN DAILY FOR LUNCH, DINNER & LATE NIGHT

Serving Lunch & Dinner from 11:30am

Organic Beef & Chicken • Best Gluten Free Menu • Thin Crust Brick Oven Pizza

Lucky 13 \$13 SPECIALS ALL DAY til 5pm

Coldest Beer in Cape May 14 on Tap

Now Offering a Complete Gluten-Free Menu From Appetizers to Desserts

1200 RT. 109 SOUTH CAPE MAY, NJ • 609-884-BONE (2663) • WWW.LUCKYBONESGRILLE.COM

