

Montreal Beach Resort marks 50th anniversary

By **BETTY WUND**
Special to the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — His sons Larry and Joe say it was a gamble.

Harry Hirsch was a successful grocer in Wildwood in the early 1960s when he was told of a piece of property on Beach Avenue in Cape May that could be used for commercial purposes. Fifty years later, the Montreal Beach Resort is welcoming guests and looking to the future.

The third generation has produced Jonathan Hirsch, son of Larry and his wife, Miriam. Educated in hospitality and with career experience in other vacation destinations, he said he is looking forward to keeping the family-owned resort a desirable destination in Cape May and moving forward with the motivation to change to suit the needs of its guests. He is now the director of food and beverage operations.

"It's nice when you get to work your legacy," Jonathan Hirsch said. "I see people I grew up with and they are happy to see me and my wife (Allyson), and last summer they said they would be back to see our baby (Emma) this summer."

Planned events to celebrate the 50th anniversary are many and will take place all summer. To add to the resort's annual Fourth of July barbecue and concert, the resort will have a float in Cape May's

Fourth of July parade. The band at the resort will be the E Street Shuffle with a Bruce Springsteen tribute. The night will end with the city's annual fireworks display. On Labor Day, the Sensational Soul Cruisers will play. In between, guests will be treated to special ways to remember the past 50 years. Included is the opportunity for a photo at the anniversary wall.

Guests can also purchase the book "A Cape May Story" by Diane Stopyra, which tells the story of the Hirsch family, their guests and the resort, and intertwines them with the history of Cape May.

In late August, the Hirsch family will again hold a Shabbat service on the beach Friday, Aug. 26. It is the customary Jewish dinner celebrating the start of the Sabbath. Members of the community from all faiths and walks of life have attended since it was initiated two years ago. All are invited for the third year to join the family.

Many guests have vacationed at the Montreal for almost 50 years and are considered family. Over the years, they have brought family, extended family and friends to vacation at the resort. Some families are now into the fourth generation of guests at the resort. They are "family," according to the Hirsches. New guests are greeted and treated as family as well, they said. Many return every summer. It becomes part of



Betty Wund/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

The Hirsch family has owned and operated the Montreal Beach Resort since 1966. It was built by Harry Hirsch, whose sons Larry and Joe Hirsch have operated it for many years. Now the third generation, Jonathan Hirsch, is director of food and beverage operations.

their family tradition, the Hirsches said.

The story of the successful American life of the Hirsch family started after Harry's escape from the Auschwitz concentration camp in Germany. His future wife, Sofia, was a survivor of the Holocaust as well. She had served in the Polish partisan underground. They met in 1947 and married before leaving a deportation camp in Germany. In 1951, they left for America.

The couple settled in Philadelphia and soon started their family. The next step was to buy a farm in Corbin City where they raised chickens. Harry Hirsch

sold eggs and chickens to businesses in Philadelphia and the shore towns. He decided to leave the farming end of the business and sell eggs, chickens and produce from other farmers to his contacts.

Eventually the business became established in North Wildwood. Investment in a bar brought the Hirsches into Cape May. It was after the hurricane of 1962 that the idea of a motel became a reality. The property on Beach Avenue was to be sold at auction. The elder Hirsch bought it for \$12,200 in 1963.

A fellow businessman, a builder, gave him plans

that he used to build motels in Wildwood. He got approvals within two weeks of presenting the plans. With little capital, Hirsch was able to secure a mortgage and build a three-story, 27-room motel.

"Today it would have taken three years to accomplish this," Larry Hirsch said. "Today things have changed with codes and regulations."

As in everything else in their lives, Harry and Sofia shared the work of running the motel. The name was chosen because of the large influx of Canadians during late July and early August, according to their sons.

The family lived behind the small motel office for many years.

As the motel expanded to four floors and a restaurant, the family business interests in Cape May grew and are still growing. In 2008, Jonathan Hirsch joined the family business and the Montreal Inn was rebranded the Montreal Beach Resort. The family has added to its properties with the recent purchase of the Cape Winds Motel on Madison Avenue.

Sofia died in 1975. It was a difficult time for Hirsch and the family, as recorded in "A Cape May Story." Larry and Joe were set on their own career paths by then. Only with the help of loyal staff and his sons returning did Harry and the inn survive, according to their recollection.

As Harry's health declined, Larry and Joe Hirsch took on more of the responsibilities of the inn. A name change was in order for the restaurant, they agreed. It had been known as the Promenade over the years and was renamed Harry's Ocean Bar & Grille in 2010 to honor the founder of the Montreal Inn. He died in 2011.

The family business is only one legacy of the Hirsches. There is so much more to the Hirsch legacy as a family. The book ends with a quote, "From our family to yours ... May you enjoy gentle breezes, long summers and peaceful times."

DRBA

Continued from Page A1

in Atlantic City and seasonal nature of the county. As a result, young families move out of the county to find full-time work.

Freeholder Will Morey noted the research, uses and development of un-

manned aerial systems (UAS) at the airport "will also create many opportunities and that economic development begins with 10 jobs at a time, then 20."

The new building will be constructed on Ranger Road west of the intersection with Hornet Road.



James Salmon/DRBA

Cape May County Freeholder Will Morey said the research, uses and development of unmanned aerial systems at the airport 'will also create many opportunities.'

TIDES : June 2016				
DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
15	5:02	5:41	11:02	11:43
16	5:52	6:24	11:44	
17	6:38	7:05	12:30	12:25
18	7:22	7:45	1:14	1:04
19	8:04	8:24	1:55	1:43
20	8:45	9:02	2:36	2:22
21	9:25	9:40	3:15	3:02
22	10:05	10:19	3:55	3:43

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Lower Twp. police officer finishes leadership course

ERMA — Lt. Patrick Greene, commander of the Patrol Bureau with the Lower Township Police Department, recently graduated from the 48th session of the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police (NJSACOP) Command and Leadership Academy.

He joins Chief William Mastriana and Capt. Martin Biersbach as current Lower Township officers to have completed the program.

The 14-week academy was developed in 1993 by the NJSACOP in collaboration with the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. The highly competitive program aims to fashion officers into police leaders who can meet challenges in the law enforcement community. The primary focus of the program is on personnel and their work environments. Officers study theories on behavior and motivation, conflict management, decision-making and communication.

Throughout the course, officers are challenged to take the various leadership theories they were taught and devise real-world solutions to the complex problems presented to them.

Participation in the Command and Leadership Academy is based on applicants' successfully completing a competitive selection process.

Mastriana said more Lower Township officers will participate in the future.

Cape May Star & Wave
CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE (ISSN 519-020)
Volume 162 Number 23
Published weekly by Sample Media, Inc.,
801 Asbury Ave., #310, Ocean City, N.J. 08226
Published Weekly (52 times a year)
SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: By mail for \$39 a year; \$70 for two years; \$20 for six months.
Periodical Postage at Cape May Court House, N.J. and additional mailing offices.
POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to the Cape May Star and Wave,
846 Broadway, West Cape May, N.J. 08204.
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