



Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave

First ever Cape May Opry

CAPE MAY – Above, local musicians participated in Barry's Cape May Opry, billed as "Nashville comes to Cape May." The show was coupled with a dinner held before the event at the First Presbyterian Church of Cape May. The Opry was produced by the East Lynne Theatre Company. Above are musicians Tom Naglee Jr. on fiddle, Barry Tischler, M.Q. Murphy and J.M. Kearns. See more photos on page A10.

Columnist Lou Rodia celebrates 60th year

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE – Lou Rodia is what most would call the ultimate outdoorsman. He has spent the last 60 years writing columns encompassing his adventures, aquired knowledge and nostalgic hunting and fishing experiences.

Rodia, 85, has written for numerous publications since starting out as a copy boy for the sports department at the Philadelphia Inquirer in 1948. After graduating from Temple University in 1950 with a degree in journalism, he began writing outdoor columns for the Wildwood Leader, but wasn't given a by-line until 1952.

His columns have appeared in the Independent Record, Cape May County Gazette, The Press of Atlantic City, The Sun in Absecon, the County Record in Denton, Md., the Philadelphia Daily News and

several Pennsylvania newspaper publications.

Rodia wrote a monthly column that appeared in Eastern Boating Magazine and he has free-lanced for Salt Water Sportsman, Outdoor Life and the Fisherman Magazines. Presently, he writes a monthly column in the New England Woods and Waters magazine. He once belonged to six outdoor writers groups at one time.

For over a decade, he has been writing columns featured in Sample Media, Inc., the Cape May Star and Wave, Ocean City Sentinel and Sure Guide. At the peak of his writing career, Rodia said his columns appeared in numerous publications reaching nearly 750,000 readers in the summer months.

"I guess you have a couple of basic philosophies, and one of mine is you get your name in the paper when you're born and when you die



Lou Rodia in his early days

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Lower Township: Do you get what you are paying for in property taxes?

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

LOWER TOWNSHIP – They say only two things are certain in life, and one of them is taxes.

Collectively the residents in Lower Township will pay \$18,147,058.16 in taxes toward the 2012 municipal budget. This figure does not include the fire district tax, county tax, library tax, one-cent open space tax, and the two school district taxes.

In Lower Township, the tax collection rate was 97.86 percent, which is a high rate of collection. These days many people pay their taxes along with their mortgage, and the mortgage company makes the

tax payments.

Lower Township homeowners are being taxed at a rate of .443 per \$100 of assessed

2012 Lower Township budget of \$24,535,193.19. The balance of the budget not raised by taxation comes from any-

delinquent taxes.

According to Township Manager Mike Voll, the budget funds all the services residents see in Lower Township, including a 40-member police department. The township has 36 police officers currently working in the department, with one officer on active military duty, and three officers going into the police academy. The township is also authorized to hire 12 Class II officers over the summer, and Voll said they have hired the full contingent of Class IIs. The Lower Township Police Department staffs a Public Safety Building located at the airport and a substation in

'We're trying to do more with less. We are cutting and looking at every area...'

– LT Manager Mike Voll

value, which represented a zero tax increase from 2011.

Lower Township properties are assessed at \$4,095,467,792.

The \$18,147,058.16 raised by taxation is applied to the

thing from interest on taxes, interest from bank accounts, the fund surplus, license fees, permit fees, recreational fees, payment in lieu of taxes, state aid, cable fees, construction fees, grants, fire safety and

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LT manager warns dog owners

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

LOWER TOWNSHIP – Township Manager Mike Voll has put dog owners on notice that they have to take responsibility for their dogs on Delaware Bay beaches.

"We plan on strictly enforcing violations for the inconsiderate dog walkers who leave dog waste and allow (their dogs) to run loose on the beach. We have had many complaints that people have allowed their dog to discharge waste, and then cover it over with sand," Voll said in a press release.

Voll said there has also been a problem with dogs running loose and harassing other well-mannered dogs, and said this would not be tolerated. He said by township ordinance all dogs are required to be leashed and handlers must pick up the waste and bag it.

"We've had a lot of complaints and the animal control officer said he's seen such an increase in violations," Voll said. "Other communities are telling people to go to North Cape May because we allow dogs on the beach. We are trying to keep our beaches clean and people are just covering up their dogs' waste with sand, or some people are bagging it and tossing the

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USLA National Championships wet and wild

CAPE MAY – Above, contestants ready at the starting line of one of the women's 2k race events held Saturday during the USLA National Championships in Cape May. Cape May had the distinction of hosting the National Championships for the second year in a row. See more photos on page B3.

School tax meeting announced

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Deputy Mayor Jack Wichterman and officials from eight other New Jersey municipalities plan to meet Sept. 19 in order to discuss pressuring the state to change the expensive regional school funding formula.

Wichterman has been working to alter the formula saying Cape May residents are currently paying \$72,000 per student sent to the Lower Cape May Regional School District. Lower Township, which has the majority of students in the district, spends \$11,000 per pupil.

School taxes are based on property values.

Wichterman has said some municipalities like Seaside Park have an even bigger problem than Cape May, spending as much as \$120,000 per student sent to its regional school district.

Last month, Wichterman wrote letters to the mayors in nine towns that are sending students to regional school districts at high cost per child. Eight of the nine mayors, with the exception of West Cape May, have responded and would like to have a meeting, Wichterman said. He believes the meeting will likely be held in Long Beach Township as it is a central location for all the municipalities involved.

He said the eight mayors

have all made individual efforts to change the state regional school funding formula and as a group, they could have more success.

"I believe there's strength in numbers," Wichterman said. "If we can sit down and come to a decision as to how we want to handle this as a group and approach the state, I think we might be much more effective..."

Wichterman said officials expected to attend the meeting will be from Surf City, Seaside Park, North Haledon, Ship Bottom, Beach Haven, Long Beach Township, Harvey Cedars and Barnegat Light.

He said the eight mayors

CM revenue figures down in rainy July

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Cloudy and rainy days in July might have been the cause of a slight decline in beach tag sales, City Manager Bruce MacLeod said.

Last year, the city for the first time sold over \$2 million in beach tags and had record high occupancy tax revenue. MacLeod announced the current revenues for 2012 at the

Aug. 7 city council meeting.

In 2011, the city sold \$1,410,584 in tags through July 31 and this year has sold \$1,402,562 through the same point. MacLeod said it's just a half of one percent decline.

"One of the reasons, we believe, for that has been the weather this year compared to last year," MacLeod said. He said in July 2011, there were six days of rainy weather throughout the month but this year there have been 11.

MacLeod said beach tag sales were around \$62,000 ahead of 2011 at the end of June, but July numbers were not nearly as strong as the city had hoped they would be.

Parking meter fee revenue, however, is on the rise from 2011, MacLeod said. As of July 31, 2011, the city had collected \$538,792 and in 2012 through the same point has collected \$563,195. This

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Residents letter on winery events discussed by WCM commission

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY – Residents who sent a letter to the borough asking it to investigate all approvals received by the Willow Creek Winery attended the Aug. 8 Board of Commissioners meeting for an update on their request.

A number of the residents who are neighbors of the winery on Stevens Street, are concerned with the operation of the winery and want to ensure it is following the legal process before opening. Those who signed the letter asked the borough to confirm whether or not Willow Creek Winery is in

compliance with parking regulations, sewage flow, building codes and other issues. The same residents have addressed concerns about the winery causing potential noise and excessive traffic when it opens.

Director of Willow Creek Winery, Kevin Celli, told the Star and Wave he met with the Police Chief Diane Sorantino, the West Cape May Volunteer Fire Company and the Cape May County Health Department prior to the letter being sent to the borough.

"We're doing everything the way they would like us to do it," he said.

During public comment, Curtis Bashaw, owner of the

Beach Plum Farm neighboring Willow Creek, said he was one of the concerned citizens who signed the letter.

"I think the neighbors that signed are not obstructionists to a really nice winery, they're just worried about the impact because there's not a public process like you would normally go through if you were building a 12,000 square foot facility," he said.

Willow Creek Winery constructed a 12,000 square foot facility, which Bashaw said is not subject to standard zoning and planning board processes because as a farm marketing facility and a par

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