



Bob Elwell and Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave
LOWER TOWNSHIP – Above, firefighters work to quell an early evening blaze at the Harbourside Cafe, attached to the South Jersey Marina building. Crews worked for an hour to get the fire under control, but Route 109 was closed for about three hours due to the fire. Inset below, the Harbourside on Sunday afternoon.

Saturday fire closes local restaurant

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
LOWER TOWNSHIP – According to Town Bank Volunteer Fire Company Chief Lew Megonigal, the cause of a fire that broke out Saturday evening at the South Jersey Marina is still under investigation. Megonigal said his firehouse received the call at 6:50 p.m. and arrived on scene just behind the Cape May Fire Department and Coast Guard Fire Department. He said there was heavy smoke

the incident with water tankers. Megonigal said given the position of the fire in the ceiling and the heavy smoke, it took well over an hour to get the blaze under control and completely extinguished. The Veterans Memorial Bridge into Cape May was closed from 7 to 11 p.m. to minimize traffic in the area. Traffic coming on and off the island was redirected to the West Cape May bridge. Mark Allen of the South Jersey Marina's Marketing and Tournament Department,



coming from the roof of the restaurant section within the building. According to Megonigal, it looked as though the fire began in the ceiling among mechanical components and equipment. "It could have been a number of things that started it," he said. Engineers have been called into investigate further. Firefighters faced water supply issues when they first arrived due to a hydrant malfunction, but were quickly able to fix the problem. "We called in more tankers, but we fixed the hydrant within five minutes," Megonigal said. "We didn't need the water but we still needed the manpower." Villas, Erma, Rio Grande, Green Creek, Stone Harbor and Cape May Court House were called and responded to

said the fire luckily had no effect on the Mid-Atlantic 500 Marlin Tournament being held this week. "It was chaos to have it happen just before the tournament, but thankfully nobody was hurt and no boats were involved," Allen said. He said the ship's store neighboring the restaurant lost all of its merchandise in the fire. Allen said smoke and heat damage ruined many of the retail products, especially clothing, that were from sponsors in this week's tournament. Megonigal said the building was relatively saved, aside from interior smoke and heat damage. He said only the restaurant sustained fire damage, while the rest of the involved areas in the building were only subject to smoke.

Sun to power LCMR

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave
ERMA – School district officials are counting on a 1.8 MW (megawatt) solar field, scheduled for completion in December, to help reduce energy costs by about \$48,000 per year at Lower Cape May Regional High School. Project manager Ted Pettinelli of Marina Energy, LLC, an affiliate of South Jersey Gas, said the project involves 7,500 solar panels

that could potentially provide 90 percent of the energy needed to run the school. The Lower Township Zoning Board approved the project in December 2010. Pettinelli was also the project manager for the Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority (LTMUA) 1.2 MW solar field. Those panels went online at the end of last year. Amusement Partnership USA, which has owned and

Please see Sun, page A5

Cape May taxpayers: Do you get what you are paying for in property taxes?

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – As the economy attempts to recuperate from a recession, it's no surprise people question whether they're getting what they pay for each year in taxes. By the end of 2012, Cape May residents will pay \$23,055,757.91 in taxes, with only 35.6 percent of that amount going to the city for local purpose tax. The remaining sum goes to the county general-purpose tax, county library, county open space fund, the regional school district and the Cape May Elementary School. City Manager Bruce MacLeod said since 1998, Cape May City has had a tax

collection rate of 98 percent or better, which is a high rate of collection. He said in 2003 and 2007, the collection rate

In many cases, people pay their taxes in conjunction with their mortgage. Cape May property owners pay a

The \$8,216,038 raised by local purpose tax in 2012 will be used for operating costs of services within the city and applied toward the current municipal budget of \$15,580,538. MacLeod said the balance of the money needed for the current budget comes from other sources of revenue like grants, state aid, surplus revenue, meter fees, construction fees, delinquent taxes, license fees, permit fees and more.

MacLeod said \$2,050,000 of the 2011 surplus was used to support the 2012 budget. There was a surplus of approximately \$3,250,000 at the end of 2011, which means the city utilized around 63.08

Please see Taxes, page A2

'About half of everything (Cape May) does is covered by taxation.'

– City Manager Bruce MacLeod

was above 99 percent. "If there are any tax payments not received timely, then the local government bears the burden of those delinquencies," MacLeod said. "Fortunately, residents in Cape May have been very timely in making their tax payments through the years."

tax rate of 29.4 cents per \$100 of assessed value, a 1.1-cent tax increase from 2011. Cape May properties are currently assessed at \$2,797,157,881. MacLeod said in 2011, Cape May had the seventh largest ratable base out the 16 municipalities in Cape May County.

Township says goodbye to Kammer

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

LOWER TOWNSHIP – Municipal clerks from Cape May County on Monday attended Claudia Kammer's final council meeting as a municipal clerk.

Kammer retires at the end of the month after working for Lower Township for 37 years. Terry Tighe, former municipal clerk for Sea Isle City said she had just one more year of service before she retired.

"I had the distinct honor of hiring Claudia," former mayor Jack Sparks said. "She was the last person I hired and you can't do any better than that."

Kammer fought back tears throughout the early part of the meeting as Mayor Mike Beck and others made remarks thanking Kammer for her service.

Municipal clerks from around Cape May County attended Monday's Lower Township Council to honor Kammer, who retires at the end of the month. Lisa Stefankiewicz from Stone Harbor, handed Kammer a bouquet of flowers on behalf of the Cape May County Municipal Clerks Association. County Clerk Rita Fulginitti spoke, saying she had learned a few things from Kammer in her career. Councilman Tom Conrad said, "We will severely miss you. From the time when I



Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave

LOWER TOWNSHIP – Above, Mayor Mike Beck reads a letter from New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie congratulating Municipal Clerk Claudia Kammer (seated) on retiring after working for Lower Township for 37 years. Kammer went to work in the tax office immediately after high school and worked her way up the ranks, even filling in for the township manager for a brief time.

started with the township in the early 90s you were always there and had the answers." "Enjoy yourself (in retirement)... you deserve it," Conrad said. Former mayor and current Ward 2 Councilman Walt Craig thanked Kammer for all the assistance she gave

him as an elected official. "You were the consummate professional," he said. "I knew you had some rocky times, but you never wavered. You were always fair and impartial." Councilman Glenn Douglass said in first met Kammer in the 80s when he was a special

police officer. "I was told then if I ever needed anything to go to Claudia," he said. "You always maintained an atmosphere of professionalism." Beck, who served as councilman before being elected

Please see Goodbye, page A2

Train museum a labor of love for conjoined twin brothers

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Childhood interests often wane as we get older, but the love and passion Tyler and Stefan Delp have had for trains since they were toddlers has only flourished. After two years of hard work and the help of their parents, Tim and Nancy, the brothers have opened their own train museum called Cape May Model Trains.

The model train exhibit located at 525 Elmira Street has 30 trains and tracks inside on multiple layouts, combining for over 1,000 feet of track. Some of the trains and displays were donated to Tyler and Stefan's locomotive mecca by family friends.

"They are true train fanatics," said Nancy of her 20-year-old conjoined, autistic twins. "It's such a blessing



Cain Chamberlin/Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Twin brothers Stefan and Tyler Delp have been fascinated by trains since they were toddlers. Parents Tim and Nancy Delp have helped them create the Cape May Model Trains on Elmira Street.

they never wavered in their love for trains. This has been such a great project for the

kids." She said Tyler and Stefan have been captivated by

The two also gained much of their knowledge by going on trips with Tim and Nancy across the country to experience some of the nation's most famous railroads for

Please see Love, page A5



Award Wining Wines

Open Daily 12 – 6 for Tastings • 17 varieties to taste
Winery Tours at 3 pm • Daily

Great Selection of Cheeses & Cured Meats
to have a picnic on our deck or patio

"We Have the Oldest Roots in the County"



711 Town Bank Road, N. Cape May, NJ • 609-884-1169
www.CAPEMAYWINERY.com