



## Occasional roundup of Floridians behaving badly

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## House of the week

B1



168th YEAR NO. 1 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2022 \$1.00

# Lower Township schools go fully virtual

## Rising COVID numbers in school, region, child care issues drive decision

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

ERMA — Lower Cape May Regional High School switched to virtual classes for one week beginning Jan. 3 while Lower Township Elementary School District will hold only virtual classes from Jan. 3 to Jan. 15. “I have considered this fact as I analyzed virus data in the county, township and our district, and weighed the impact of returning to a virtual learning schedule on

our students against the potential benefits of keeping students and staff out of the buildings. Unfortunately, my hand is being forced to some extent by the ongoing issues we are having at the Teitelman School with water and staffing shortages resulting from increased COVID positives and child care issues due to elementary school and day care closings,” Lower Cape May Regional School District Superintendent Joseph Castellucci stated. The district was operating un-

der a virtual schedule from Jan. 3 to Jan. 7 due in part to a water issue at the Richard M. Teitelman School and staffing issues as a result of COVID and child care problems. Each school will operate under their normal schedule, starting and ending the day as usual. The high school will run a Tiger schedule each day in which students attend all of their eight periods during normal meeting times. The Teitelman School will run all classes under their

normal period times. All students are to check into their teachers’ Google Classroom for instructions and links for logging into live-streaming lessons. Students may check the emergency lesson plan links for each teacher on the district webpage. School activities and athletics will be permitted to continue as appropriate and practical. Coaches and activity advisers will communicate directly with their students regarding activity schedules and meeting times.

Students who are experiencing even very mild symptoms should not attend any practice, game, match, meet, or activity and should notify their coach/adviser if they are not feeling well. School lunches will be provided according to the following schedule and at the following locations: 9 a.m. to noon Thursday: outside the high school cafeteria and at Sandman and Memorial schools.

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# Number of active COVID cases up

## County sees jump of 70% in 10 days

By DAVID NAHAN  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — The number of active COVID-19 cases jumped 70 percent between Dec. 24 and Jan. 3, according to the Cape May County Department of Health. Four deaths attributed to the coronavirus were reported during that 10-day period.

On Jan. 3, the number of active cases was 1,820. On Dec. 24, that number was 1,071 — and those numbers had quadrupled since near the end of November.

“The Omicron variant is spreading throughout the United States at record levels, so what we are seeing here in Cape May County is not unique,” Cape May County Board of Commissioners Director Gerald M. Thornton said. “We ask everyone, especially those in higher-risk categories, to get vaccinated to protect yourself and your families.”

Middle Township, Lower Township and Upper Township are still leading the county with the greatest number of active cars.

Active cases in Middle doubled, from 247 10 days ago to 510 reported Monday. Lower Township climbed from 294 to 448 cases and Upper Township increased from 140 to 223.

Ocean City’s number of active cases doubled from Dec. 24 to Jan. 3, going from 88 to 179.

Cape May still led with the number of active nonresident cases with 40, up slightly from 37.

Other active cases include Dennis Township with 110; Wildwood, 91; North Wildwood, 55; Wildwood Crest, 52; Woodbine, 39; Cape May, 31 (among residents); Sea Isle City, 26; Avalon, 20; West Cape May, 17; Stone Harbor, 11; and West Wildwood, 8.

There are 24 active cases in nursing homes, including 15 in Middle Township, seven in Ocean City and two in Wood-

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## YEAR IN REVIEW 2021: CAPE MAY, WEST CAPE MAY, CAPE MAY POINT

### JANUARY

— Zack Mullock was sworn in as Cape May’s new mayor on Jan. 1. City Council held its first in-person meeting in six months due to the COVID pandemic. Lorraine Baldwin was appointed to the council seat Mullock vacated in order to become mayor. Stacy Sheehan was appointed Deputy Mayor. Chris Bezaire received his oath of office as councilman.

— In a unanimous vote, City Council awarded a \$350,000 contract to architect Rob Conley to design a 14,000-square-foot fire station to be built on the site of the current fire station. In November 2020, voters approved a referendum to build a \$5 million fire station and preserve the fire museum.

— January saw the largest spike in COVID cases in Cape May County since the pandemic began in March 2020. A total of 5,000 doses of vaccine had been administered in the county since they became available.

— Councilman Chris Bezaire participated in a City Council meeting from a bed at Cape Regional Medical Center, where he was being treated for COVID-19. The councilman made a full recovery.

— Cape May Elementary School temporarily returned to virtual instruction during the week of Jan. 11 after three students tested positive for COVID. At that time, 24 students and nine staff members were quarantined.

— During a Jan. 19 virtual meeting, City Council unanimously approved a \$5 million bond to construct a new fire station. In May 2020, councilpersons Zack Mullock and Stacy Sheehan voted against a \$14.2 million bond to finance construction of a public safety building to house both the fire and police departments, killing the project.

— As of Jan. 24, the county recorded 160 deaths from COVID, 90 in long term care and 70 persons in the communities. The county was receiving about 500 doses per week of vaccine.

— The state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) proposed



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The Cape May Fire Department’s 1928 LaFrance pumper returned to the firehouse June 26 after a five-year restoration in Harleysville, Pa., with Lt. Jeff Laag at the wheel. The restoration included an engine rebuild, new paint and gold-leaf striping.

new regulations to address climate change anticipating sea level rise by as much as 5 feet by the year 2100. Precipitation could increase by 35 percent by 2100, according to the DEP.

### FEBRUARY

— The Sisters of St. Joseph announced they were preparing to close St. Mary by-the-Sea Retreat House in Cape May Point permanently. In 2016, they announced plans to demolish the building after 2021 and let the property return to nature. The coronavirus pandemic hastened the process.

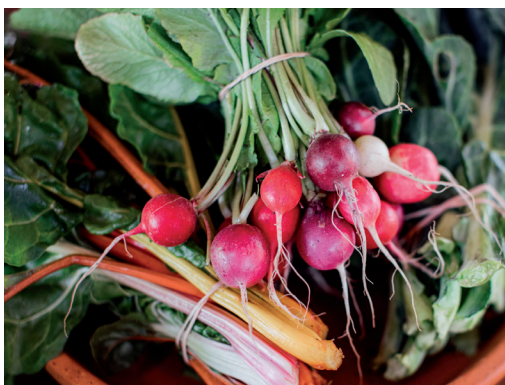
— At a Feb. 16 meeting, Cape May City Council approved new standards for flood adaption for homes in the historic district. The enabling ordinance states it is anticipated in future years the flooding exposure of Cape May will be increased as climate change contributes to in-



Dan Shustack/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

## Swearing in city’s top cop

Dekon Fashaw takes his oath of office Feb. 1 as Cape May’s new police chief from Mayor Zack Mullock. Tony Marino retired from the position effective Jan. 31.



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