



Testa spent first year in Trenton dealing with pandemic

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House of the week

B1



167th YEAR NO. 1 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2021 \$1.00

Small businesses adapted, survived

Throughout Cape May and Atlantic counties, owners had to revise strategies for 2020, are hopeful about new year

By RACHEL SHUBIN
Special to the Star and Wave

The importance of shopping small found a new meaning this year.

Small businesses are known for their creative abilities, and staying open during a pandemic is no easy feat. In addition to increasing cleaning procedures and complying with state-mandated restrictions, small businesses have found innovative ways to adapt to all the changes 2020 brought.

Sue Lotozo has been screen printing clothing by hand since 1990. Her West Cape May store, The Flying Fish Studio, is located at 130 Park Blvd. Lotozo had a website before the pandemic but never considered it an essential part of her business.

"When I realized that no one would be shopping in the store, I added everything I could to the website with inventory of sizes," Lotozo said. "Up to this point, my website had only the items I knew we would have in stock."

The Fish is known for its designs featuring beach scenes, local wildlife, vegetables, positive messages and homages to the annual festivals, that normally occur in West Cape May.

"Mid-April, I launched the 'I Love Cape May' collection, which allowed the person

shopping to decide which of the seven area cultural non-profits they would like me to send \$5 to," Lotozo said.

This campaign increased Lotozo's website traffic, with purchases allowing her to raise and donate over \$4,000.

"Our community means so much," Lotozo said. "I am proud that we managed to raise almost \$8,000 for others in our area through four different fundraising methods."

Stores received word doors would be allowed to open for in-person shopping in June; Lotozo decided to upgrade her point of sales system to tie into her website.

"This [change] was something I had resisted doing for years," she said. "I thought it was overkill, but now I absolutely love it."

Small businesses in Cape May place wholesale orders for clothing and accessories from The Fish. Lotozo said she is having a good season with retail being up, but wholesale printing decreased.

"I am most proud of my longtime staff who stepped up to the plate and did whatever was needed," Lotozo said. "We all had to learn new ways of doing things after many years of doing sales in a rather old fashioned

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Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Above, Bella U employee Jackie Ade in the Ocean City shop. At right, Jehovanny Nuñez, owner of Antojos in North Cape May. Below left, the Marmora crew of Tiffany Nails. Below, Evan behind the guard at Flying Fish in West Cape May.



Mullock takes over as mayor of Cape May

Sheehan named deputy mayor at city reorganization meeting

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Zack Mullock was sworn in Jan. 1 as Cape May's new mayor by retired judge Raymond Batten.

City Council held its first in-person meeting in more than six months with members separated by small frames of plexiglass and participants wearing masks.

In order to become mayor, Mullock resigned his council seat. Council appointed Lorraine Baldwin to fill the open seat until the general election Nov. 2.

Mullock said Baldwin was a member of the Dennis Township Planning Board for 20 years, a member of the Dennis Township Environmental Commission for six years and the Dennis Township Board of Education for three years. He said she also served the Dennis

Township Zoning and Planning Board as secretary.

Councilwoman Stacy Sheehan was appointed deputy mayor.

Chris Bezaire received his oath of office as a councilman. Bezaire was also appointed as liaison to the board of directors of the Washington Street Mall Business Improvement Co. and liaison to the Historic Preservation Commission and Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee.

City solicitor Frank Corrado was replaced by Chris Gillin-Schwartz. He has served as borough solicitor for West Cape May. Gillin-Schwartz's contract with the city specifies an hourly rate of \$185 with a yearly fee not to exceed \$195,000. He was formerly employed by Corrado's law firm.

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CAPE MAY YEAR IN REVIEW

Public safety building, virus top issues in 2020

JANUARY

In a 3-2 vote, City Council reappointed Patricia Hendricks as deputy mayor during the annual reorganization meeting Jan. 7.

Mayor Chuck Lear, Hendricks and Councilman Shaine Meier voted in the affirmative while Councilwoman Stacy Sheehan and Councilman Zack Mullock voted "no." Sheehan had nominated Mullock for the position. The council split into 3-2 votes to reappoint Frank Corrado as solicitor and appointing Hendricks to the Planning Board. Council squabbled over appointments to various boards and commissions.

Cape May Point Chief

Financial Officer Jim Craft reported the borough was in good standing with \$236,000 of surplus generated last year. Overall, the borough's surplus account held more than \$700,000.

President Donald Trump held a campaign rally Jan. 28 at the Wildwoods Convention Center. Thousands converged at the site — Republicans, dignitaries, reporters and protesters. Trump spoke to a crowd of more than 7,000 in the convention center while hundreds more watched outside on television screens. He brought U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew (R-NJ) on stage, who earlier had

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Tourism took a beating in 2020

Marketing south Jersey's market taking a different form in 2021

By RACHEL SHUBIN
Special to the Star and Wave

In a year that was anything but typical, beach communities came up with creative solutions to create a safe tourist environment. While the year saw a decrease in seasonal numbers from the 2019 season, the tourism season continued well into the offseason.

"Overall we were down about 25 percent from our 2019 numbers," Cape May County Chamber of Commerce President Vicki Clark said. "Given everything, all the factors, that's really pretty good."

In Atlantic County, the pandemic

hit very hard. At Stockton University, the Lloyd D. Levenson Institute of Gaming, Hospitality & Tourism (LIGHT) examined the tourism patterns in 2020.

"Traffic into Atlantic City via the Pleasantville Toll Plaza of the Atlantic City Expressway declined 30 percent from May through September 2020 compared to the same period in 2019," LIGHT institute coordinator Dr. Jane Bokunewicz said.

The decline in tourism from the pandemic can be attributed to decreases in consumer demand and restrictions placed on operators to control the virus's spread, Bokunewicz said.

It also contributed to industrywide job losses and very narrow profit margins for operators.

The tourism product had to evolve to survive in 2020, and companies had the opportunity to examine their business models and determine how to best serve their customers.

"Operators embraced technology at a much faster rate than they may have otherwise," Bokunewicz said. "They developed new products and services that are likely to continue into 2021 and beyond."

During the offseason, the Cham-

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