



House of the week

Page B1



Point again discusses forming HPC

Page A4



166th YEAR NO. 2 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2020 \$1.00

Trump to hold rally at Wildoods Convention Center

By ERIC AVEDESIAN
Cape May Star and Wave

WILDWOOD — President Donald Trump is returning to the Jersey shore.

Trump will host a Keep America Great Rally at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 28, at the Wildwoods Convention Center in Wildwood.

Doors for the rally will open at 3 p.m. for general admission.

“President Trump has delivered for New Jersey, creating 129,000 new jobs, including 10,200 new construction jobs,” said Michael Glassner, chief operating officer of Donald J. Trump for President Inc. “President Trump looks forward to returning to the Garden State to celebrate his message of

“Promises Made, Promises Kept.” Trump was once the owner of Atlantic City casinos including the Trump Taj Mahal, Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino and Trump Marina Hotel Casino.

Wildwood is part of the home district of U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew, who changed his party affiliation from Democrat to Republican in an announcement in the Oval Office with Trump on Dec. 19.

At the meeting, Van Drew pledged his “undying support” to Trump.

A freshman congressman, Van Drew was elected in 2018 after a hard-fought race against Republican Seth Grossman.

In his announcement with Trump, Van Drew said he grew

disillusioned with the Democratic Party, and noted the Republican Party was a “better fit” for him.

In the past, Van Drew’s views inclined toward conservative issues, although he often voted with the Democrats. As a state legislator, he voted against raising the minimum wage and legalizing same-sex marriage, while opposing strict gun-control measures and supporting concealed carry for gun owners.

During the 2018 Democratic primary, Van Drew was criticized for his 100 percent rating from the National Rifle Association (NRA), and for a \$1,000 donation he received from that gun lobbying group in 2008. Van Drew’s office said he declined the donation.

In October, Van Drew indicated his opposition to an impeachment inquiry, noting it would “further divide the country, tearing it apart at the seams and will ultimately fail in the Senate.”

Van Drew made the party switch official the day after the House voted on two articles of impeachment against Trump. Van Drew was one of three Democrats to vote against the articles.

On Dec. 18, Van Drew joined Rep. Collin Peterson of Minnesota as the only two Democrats to vote against the abuse of power amendment, while Van Drew, Peterson and Rep. Jared Golden of Maine were the only dissenting Democrats to vote against the obstruction of Congress amendment.

Both amendments passed, making Trump the third president in U.S. history to be impeached by the House.

While Trump blasted the impeachment as a “hoax,” “scam” and “witch hunt” on Twitter, he heaped praises on Van Drew.

“Congressman Jeff Van Drew is very popular in our great and very united Republican Party. It was a tribute to him that he was able to win his heavily Republican district as a Democrat. People like that are not easily replaceable,” Trump tweeted Dec. 17.

There are multiple candidates who have announced their plans to run in the Republican and Democratic primaries for Van Drew’s House seat.

A look back at 2019 in Cape May area, Lower Township

In-fighting leaves future uncertain Township mayor for city’s new public safety building Simonsen earns seat in Assembly

JANUARY

— In his State of the City address on New Year’s Day 2019, Cape May Mayor Chuck Lear said the city was sound, stable and its prospects continue to grow and be strong. He noted occupancy tax revenues were up 5.28 percent over the previous year.

— U.S. Coast Guard personnel at Training Center Cape May were expecting they would not receive a paycheck Jan. 15 due to a partial federal government shutdown. They received a paycheck Dec. 31 as a stopgap measure. Community groups and churches organized drives to collect food, toiletries, baby formula and diapers to assist personnel. Coast Guard spouse Jessica Manfre led a food drive for the Jersey Cape Military Spouses’ Club. She ran a food pantry on base that received a large supply of food and toiletries from businesses and the community. Local restaurants responded by offering discounts to Coast Guard members.

— After bids for a new bulkhead for the south end of Cape May Point’s Lake Lily were received in the range of \$800,000 to \$1.2 million, Commissioner Robert Mullock said the project would be rebid and done in three phases. The project included a new sidewalk and landscaping. He said he did not believe the cost of the project would exceed \$600,000.

— Members of Cape May’s Beach Safety Committee expressed concerns about the delay in beach replenishment scheduled to begin in February. The delay was blamed on the absence of funding in the Coast Guard budget. The replenishment was rescheduled and completed in the fall.



Gov. Phil Murphy visits Coast Guard Training Center Cape May on Jan. 24 to deliver some food and talk with volunteers with the Jersey Cape Military Spouses’ Club, including Jessica Manfre, second from right, who led the drive to assist U.S. Coast Guard and civilian personnel who did not receive paychecks during the partial federal government shutdown.

— Gov. Phil Murphy visited a food pantry at Coast Guard Training Center Cape May on Jan. 24 and talked with volunteers with the Jersey Cape Military Spouses’ Club. The pantry opened Jan. 2 to aid Coast Guard and civilian employees affected by the partial government shutdown.

FEBRUARY

— West Cape May Borough Commissioner John Francis Jr. was featured on CBS’s “Sunday Morning” on Feb. 10 playing banjo and chatting with reporter Susan Spencer. Francis’ world extends far beyond Cape May County as he is known as the “Planet Walker.” He walked alone across America and took a

vow of silence for a period of time. Francis has been a United Nations Environmental Ambassador.

— Cape May Point awarded a \$353,000 contract to Harold Arenberg Inc. to repair a bulkhead and other work on the south end of Lake Lily on Feb. 12. The borough had a grant of \$427,000 for the project.

— Cape May’s Lafayette Street Park Advisory Committee revealed conceptual plans for the park at a Feb. 13 meeting. The baseball diamond was reoriented for better use of the southeasterly portion of the tract. A U-shaped parking lot would accommodate 80 unmetered parking spaces. The park would have two basketball courts, one tennis court and two pickle

ball courts. Phase IV of the park would have elevated walkways through a meadow and tidal marsh.

— On Feb. 19, Cape May City Council tabled an ordinance that would have made Bank Street a one-way road toward the center of town while creating 20 on-street parking spaces. Members of the public spoke against the proposal for 90 minutes. At issue, flooding on portions of Bank Street and Venice Avenue, the narrowness of Bank Street and losing a street favored by bicyclists for its safety.

— At some time in the past 160 years, the exact date of Cape May’s incorporation as a city was erroneously defined

See Cape May, Page A2

JANUARY

— On Jan. 2, Lower Township councilmen Tom Conrad, David Perry and Roland Roy took their oaths of office following their re-election in November.

— The owner of a medical marijuana company visited Township Council on Jan. 3 seeking a location in the county for a dispensary. Emmett Vandergriff, of Evergreen Curative LLC, asked council for a letter endorsing a dispensary location at the county airport. He made the same request in August 2018. Mayor Erik Simonsen told Vandergriff a presentation could be scheduled for a future council meeting.

— An area near Lepore’s Pits, off Route 9 in Erma, was described by neighborhood residents as a campsite for vagrants and drug users in August 2018. Lower Township police found a Villas man dead on the site the previous summer. By January, police surveillance was successful in keeping persons from living on the property, according to Township Manager Jim Ridgway. A locking gate was installed, leaving only one access point to the property.

— Lower Township Planning Board rejected an application Jan. 3 for a 140-unit self-storage center at 669 Townbank Road in a residential neighborhood of North Cape May. The property enveloped 2.2 acres and contained a single-family home. Self-storage facilities are not permitted in a residential zone.

— A therapy dogs program at Lower Township Elementary Schools brought two black lab mixes, Annie and Mollie, to the David C. Douglass and Carl T. Mitnick schools weekly. The dogs’ visits include group and individual reading sessions —

that is, students reading to the dogs.

— Lower Township police welcomed three new officers Jan. 23: Patrolman Kevin O’Brien, 26, Patrolman Steven Trunfio, 31, and Patrolman Michael Harkin, 24. The officers completed 22 weeks of training at the Cape May County Police Academy.

— Lower Township Council introduced its 2019 budget with a .9-cent tax rate increase. The tax levy was \$21.2 million, up from \$20.8 million in 2018. Township Manager Jim Ridgway said the tax increase was due in part to increasing the police department to 50 officers. In addition, solid waste disposal fees increased by \$50,000. Salaries and wages increased \$324,000 from the previous year.

— Lower Township announced it was again partnering with the Delaware River and Bay Authority to present eight free outdoor concerts at the Cape May-Lewes Ferry terminal in North Cape May. The township appropriated \$16,275 for its share of the costs. Perennial favorites such as the Sensational Soul Cruisers and the Nerds were booked for the shows.

FEBRUARY

— Firefighters rescued a teen who fell through ice and was stranded on an island in a pond Feb. 2 in the Cox Hall Creek Wildlife Management Area. Villas and Town Bank volunteer firefighters were dispatched to the scene. Two rescue swimmers suited up and retrieved the victim with a rescue board.

— Engineer Mark Sray, of Mott MacDonald, promised Lower Township Council the Roseann Avenue street

Lower Twp., Page A10



CONCERT SERIES



SUN 26 JAN

SUNDAY SUPPER AND OLD-TIMEY HYMN SING

SUN 23 FEB

BROADWAY MUSICAL SING-ALONG

SUN 19 APR

BOBBY DARIN SHOW W/ DANE ANTHONY & THE SONS OF THUNDER

Learn more about the Concert Series at caperesorts.com/concerts