

Cape May Star and Wave



House of the week
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Szczur signs with Phillies minor squad
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165th YEAR NO. 51 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2019 \$1.00



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas in Cape May area

Cape May's many hotels and bed & breakfast inns are all lit up for the holidays. They include the Albert Stevens Inn of West Cape May, above; the Blake House on Hughes Street, below left; the Abbey on Gurney Street, below right; and the Mainstay Inn on Columbia Avenue, bottom.



Van Drew opts to switch party to Republican

Southern N.J. congressman currying favor with Trump

By ERIC AVEDISSIAN
Sentinel staff

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Multiple media sources have reported that U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew, a Democrat who represents New Jersey's Second Congressional District, would switch party affiliation to Republican.

According to published sources, Van Drew, 66, met with President Donald Trump on Dec. 13, when the president reportedly urged Van Drew to switch parties. Van Drew later informed his legislative staff of his decision to leave the Democratic Party.

The district encompasses all of Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Salem counties, Bass River Township and Washington Township in Burlington County, Waterford Township in Camden County, and municipalities in Gloucester and Ocean counties.

Van Drew, a freshman representative sworn into office in January, won a heated race in 2018, defeating Republican attorney Seth Grossman of Atlantic City. The final vote was tighter than expected, with Van Drew leading with 52 percent to Grossman's 46 percent.

In Congress, Van Drew became a member of the Blue Dog Coalition, a faction of conservative-leaning Democrats. He repeatedly stated that an impeachment inquiry against Trump was counterproductive to the bipartisanship he was trying to build.

According to the House Intelligence Committee's report, the impeachment inquiry found that Trump "solicited the interference of a foreign government, Ukraine, to benefit his re-election" when he allegedly asked Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to investigate Hunter Biden, the son of Democratic presidential contender and former vice president Joe Biden. Hunter Biden served on the board of Burisma Holdings, a Ukrainian natural gas producer. The report alleges that Trump withheld a White House meeting Zelensky wanted and U.S. military assistance for the Ukraine in exchange for Zelensky's help with investigating Hunter Biden.

"The president engaged in this course of conduct for the benefit of his own presidential re-election, to harm the election prospects of a political rival, and to influence our nation's upcoming presidential election to his advantage. In doing so, the president placed his own personal and political interests above the national interests of the United States, sought to undermine the integrity of the U.S. presidential election process, and endangered U.S. national security," according to the report.

The House's impeachment vote is scheduled for Dec. 18. Trump derided the impeachment proceedings as a "witch hunt," and blasted

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Lower Twp. staff bids mayor adieu

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — It was billed on the agenda as a presentation about shared services Monday night, but what really appeared on Lower Township's large new video screens was a salute to departing mayor Erik Simonsen, who won a First District Assembly seat in the November election.

Township Manager Jim Ridgway hosted in an 11-minute video highlighting Simonsen's career and offering good luck wishes from township staffers. Ridgway said Simonsen was a standout on

Lower Cape May Regional High School's wrestling team as a student and continued at the College of New Jersey.

Simonsen also made a name for himself at college as a rock musician in his band 12:01, becoming a mainstay act in New Hope, Pa., he said. Ridgway said Simonsen started his career in education at the Cape May County Alternative School.

"While at the Alternative School, he made a difference in hundreds of children's lives as a teacher, also as a musician," he said.

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