



House of the week
Real Estate Resource



First-graders share scoop on St. Nicholas
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164th YEAR NO. 51 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2018 \$1.00

County says homelessness not its problem

Freeholders say they will not operate shelter, municipalities responsible for Code Blue

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — Don't look for the county to open or build a homeless shelter. According to county Board of Chosen Freeholders Director Gerald Thornton, the responsibility of opening a center would fall on a nonprofit organization.

During a freeholder meeting Dec. 11, he said the county has \$200,000 in the bank to support a nonprofit with a viable plan and location. Thornton said the county

would not operate a homeless shelter.

"Believe me, when you start taking about government in Cape May County, then you're talking about Civil Service and you're talking about rules and regulations and state and federal and everything else," he said.

Denise South, director of Cape Hope, said the organization was in its fifth year of going before the freeholder board. She said the organization has been working with the county's homeless population.

She said Cape Hope has volunteered to host Middle Township's warming center at Cape Community Church. South said 43 percent of Cape Hope's clientele are not living in the woods, do not have substance-abuse issues but are single parents with children.

"They have either been abandoned or suffered some sort of trauma in their life and they just cannot make it," she said.

South said the way to end homelessness is by giving someone a home.

Thornton said as the county

searched for warming center locations, the freeholder's meeting room was filled with residents complaining the county was opening "drug centers."

"Not in my town' is what we get," he said.

West Cape May resident Hugh Blair said he was the convener of a group called A Voice for the Homeless. He said his members have been actively involved with the homeless and issues with Code Blue.

Blair said the purpose of Code Blue legislation was to prevent

the death of homeless persons. He noted on Jan. 1, the current arrangements for Code Blue shelters will change.

"How does it happen, so we are told, that motel vouchers will be available for women and children but not for men?" Blair asked.

He asked how homeless children and teenagers, particularly those without parents, would be sheltered and how old must a male child be before he is ineligible for a motel voucher.

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Macedonia Baptist Church's parsonage to tell Tubman tale

Mullocks to create abolition museum

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The historic parsonage of Macedonia Baptist Church on Lafayette Street has sat empty for 30 years, and by all appearances seemed doomed to a date with the wrecking ball.

But on Dec. 16, the church signed a lease agreement with the Mullock family who intend to restore the building. Plans call for the home, of which portions may date back to 1799, to become a museum honoring Harriet Tubman and the Rev. Robert O. Davis, who was pastor at Macedonia Baptist Church for 47 years before his death at the age of 90.

Church members and city officials gathered in the church for the signing of the 18-month lease to protect the building and to raise funds to undertake the restoration.

"We're really excited to begin this project as a church. We're happy to be able to keep the parsonage and use it in the capacity of an historic site," said Lynda Anderson Towns, a member of the church's trustee board.

The goal is to have the parsonage restored by 2020, about 200 years after Tubman's birth.

Davis had a collection of items from the slave era he took to area schools that will be placed in the new museum, Robert Mullock said.

Barbara Dreyfuss researched the church and neighborhood, which in-



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Lynda Anderson Towns and Robert Mullock sign a lease agreement for the parsonage as Mayor Chuck Lear looks on. Macedonia Baptist Church's parsonage will be restored and used as a museum honoring abolitionist Harriet Tubman and the Rev. Robert O. Davis.

cludes the Stephen Smith House and Allen A.M.E. Church.

"This corner, Franklin and Lafayette streets, was the heart of discussion and debate by leading abolitionists from Philadelphia," she said.

Smith, whose summer home is across the street from Macedonia Baptist Church, was born in slavery and became one of the richest black men in America in the 1830s and 1840s. Dreyfuss said Smith was an Underground Railroad leader in Pennsylvania. She said leaders of the Underground Railroad would come to Cape May and stay at the former Banneker House Hotel, located in the same block as Smith's house.

A white church was located across the street. One of the founding members was Joseph Leach, a political leader and editor of the Ocean Wave newspaper, a predecessor of the Star and Wave, Dreyfuss said.

"He wrote accounts of



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The Macedonia Baptist Church parsonage has been boarded up and fenced in for many years. Now it will be restored for use as a museum.

people fleeing slavery over across Delaware Bay in the newspaper," she said.

Tubman was in Cape May in 1852, confirmed by interviews she gave to the media.

"She worked here to earn money so she could go back to the Eastern Shore and bring more family and

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Parents, school teachers angry contract stalled

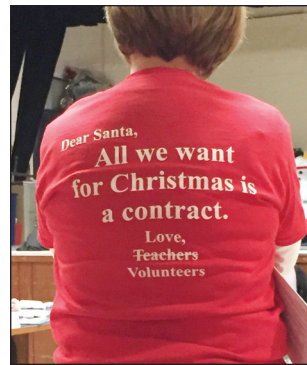
By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's elementary school teachers have been working with an expired contract since June and want the community to know about it.

Many Cape May City Elementary School teachers attended a Board of Education meeting Dec. 13 wearing red T-shirts bearing the message: "Dear Santa, All we want for Christmas is a contract. Love, Teachers Volunteers."

A parent asked how long the board could reasonably expect the teachers to "put their best foot forward." Board member Edward Connolly said that was a matter of professionalism regardless of the circumstances surrounding the contract.

School board solicitor



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

A Cape May City Elementary School teacher wears a shirt implying she is working for free amid negotiations.

Robert Fineberg read a statement on the issue and collective bargaining in general: "As most of you

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Lower Cape May's superintendent to retire at year's end

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

ERMA — Lower Cape May Regional High School District Superintendent Christopher Kobik announced his retirement last month after serving the district for 30 years. He will finish the school year.

While he may be equally at home on a charter boat or playing saxophone as part of the Jersey Shore Pops, Summer Club Orchestra or backing Martha Reeves and the Vandellas at Convention Hall, he has been a fixture at Lower Cape May Regional where he was once a student.



KOBIK

His parents were teachers and education was often the topic at the dinner table, he said. His father was an industrial arts teacher and

his mother taught and was a speech therapist in the East Brunswick school system.

In addition to his parents, his teachers inspired him to become an educator, Kobik said.

"I had teachers who took the time to get to know me as a person and work with me from where I was and help me get to where I needed to be, and that inspired me," he said.

He cites Ed Jurewicz,

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