



Two wrestlers advance to state championships

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House of the week

B1



167th YEAR NO. 16 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21, 2021 \$1.00

West Cape has relaxed attitude toward pot

Borough Commission considering allowing multiple marijuana-related businesses

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — The borough could be the only municipality in the county that may permit marijuana-related businesses.

During a Borough Commission meeting April 14, Mayor Carol Sabo said municipalities have not received specific directions from the state regarding any restrictions on marijuana-related business licenses based on population. Licenses available to municipali-

ties include cultivation, manufacturing and wholesale, she said.

“Reading and rediscussing the definitions of those three seem to be something that one operation would be interested in doing together that would require three licenses as I understand it, but cultivation, manufacturing and wholesale might be something that would be done by one operation,” Sabo said. “I’m of the opinion that would obviously be the most appropriate in the R5 district where the farms of 5 acres

or more are located.”

Borough Commission may consider an ordinance that would restrict those three licensing abilities to the R5 district. Sabo said commissioners needed to have more discussion about the meaning of distribution which includes bulk transport and whether it would be appropriate in the R5 district because the marijuana would need to be transported from the place of cultivation and manufacturing to a wholesaler. She said the three licenses

would seem to have some overlap in what an operation may wish to do. Sabo said it would be difficult to remove one of the three functions. Commissioners previously discussed limiting retail marijuana sales to West Cape May’s commercial district.

Commissioner John Francis II said some towns are prohibiting marijuana-related businesses before the state has released any regulations.

Borough solicitor Frank Corrado said since the law states if

a municipality does not adopt an ordinance with 180 days to prohibit marijuana-related business, the state law automatically allows such activities to occur.

During public comment, resident Lynn Dudinsky said he saw hypocrisy regarding marijuana regulations.

“We have Willow Creek, they produce the grapes, make the wine, they sell the wine, they retail the wine,” he said, “We

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The inside of Allen AME Church in Cape May is littered with debris. Plaster damage is evident on the ceiling and vines are growing through one of the stained-glass windows. The city recently purchased the historic church and is planning renovations to use it as a theater or other type of art, culture and historical venue.

Church may become cultural center

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The former Allen African Methodist Episcopal Church, now owned by the city, may be quickly resurrected for use as a theater and space for art shows in conjunction with East Lynne Theater Company, Cape May MAC and the Center for Community Arts (CCA).

The city has been receiving bids to refurbish the exterior of the church building with a new bell tower that will replicate the original

tower destroyed by fire in 2018. Mayor Zack Mullock said the city has an \$80,000 grant that must be used by the end of June. The roof has been replaced.

“We want to get the whole outside of the building done right away for obvious reasons, but the grant money is the second reason,” Mullock said. “At the same time, we are applying to Green Acres for more of the interior.”

He said the building would be a community-based center. Mullock said the city is looking at available grants that may influence the ul-

timate use of the building, whether that is a museum or playhouse.

“I think we are all kind of leaning toward a playhouse,” he said. “East Lynne Theater has been looking for a home for many years now. If that’s something we can do, we’d love to do that.”

He said East Lynne is an Equity theater and has certain requirements that may prove difficult to meet. With plays presented at night, the building could have other uses during the day such as for art shows, Mullock said.

The 100-year-old pews

may be removed for a multiple-use building. The church building has a very high ceiling and a pipe organ. There is evidence of past water leaks with falling plaster. Ivy grows through one stained-glass window.

“One of the things we love about Cape May is we live in a small beach community, but we support our arts and culture,” he said. “Where else can you go see two different shows, you can go to Cape May Stage and East Lynne Theater, go out to the

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Business group expects foreign worker shortage

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

While a Trump administration prohibition of issuing visas for J-1 students expired in March, little time remains for foreign students to receive visas for what is anticipated to be a busy summer tourist season at the shore.

During a webinar sponsored by the Cape May County Chamber of Commerce on J-1 workers Monday, Tracy Doherty, an attorney with Alignment Government Strategies in Washington, D.C., said the summer work/travel program is run in partnership with the State Department and businesses. She said the purpose of the program is to create and promote greater understanding of American people and culture around the world.

Since the program began

in 1987, about 2.3 million exchange visitors have participated in the summer work program, Doherty said, adding that in a typical year, 100,000 university students participate from overseas.

In 2019, 108,000 students participated in the program.

“In 2020 with COVID, there were only about 6.7 percent of the usual amount,” Doherty said.

New Jersey is the eighth-most-popular state for the program, typically having 2,500 to 3,000 J-1 students working in Cape May County, she said.

Last June, President Donald Trump issued a proclamation that prohibited the issuance of J Visas and others enabling work. President Joe Biden let the proclamation expire last month, enabling

Foreign workers, A3

City accepting blame for water leaks, burst pipes in W. Cape May

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — A surge of water caused numerous leaks in the borough after the city of Cape May calibrated its master meters following the replacement of a major water transmission line.

In January, the borough received a huge water bill from the city that coincided with Cape May shutting down and relining its water transmission line from its desalination plant that crosses under Cape Island Creek to Lafayette Street.

During a Borough Commission meeting April 14, Mayor Carol Sabo said she met with Cape May officials and representatives from their water/sewer and public works departments. West Cape May received an inordinately small water bill in February, she said.

A catastrophic event occurred with leaks in West Cape May earlier in the

month. “I think there was a total of 34 different instances within the borough of pipes bursting and other related issues,” Sabo said.

She said she met two weeks ago with Cape May Mayor Zack Mullock and water officials and was pleased with the outcome of the meeting. Sabo said Cape May took responsibility for the problem.

“They are willing to accept responsibility for the emergency repair costs incurred by their error of this inordinate burst of water pressure that caused pipes to burst and other issues around the community,” she said.

West Cape May is in the process of collecting the bills that residents have incurred from their plumbers for emergency repairs. Sabo said the borough would review the bills and forward them to the city, which has agreed to reimburse them.

West Cape May’s water usage bill had returned to a normal rate in March, she said.

EMS response still issue in Diamond Beach

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Response time for emergency medical calls to Diamond Beach through Lower Township Rescue Squad has increased from 13 minutes to 17 minutes, according to Jim Sanford, president of the Diamond Beach Citizens Action Group.

During a Lower Township Council meeting

April 8, Sanford said he spoke with Township Manager Michael Laffey an hour prior to the meeting and Laffey confirmed the township was seeking a third-party emergency medical service to ease the burden of Lower Township Rescue Squad.

Sanford said it is now taking Lower Township Rescue 17 minutes to answer calls in Diamond Beach.

“Five EMS medical as-

sistance calls in January and December averaged 17.3 minutes,” he said. “I eliminated the carbon monoxide fire alarms, the arcing wires, all of that, strict medical out of Erma took 17.3 minutes for six responses and they were all medical assistance or rescue.”

At issue is the necessity of Lower Township Rescue vehicles crossing a bridge from the mainland to reach Diamond

Beach. Sanford said some Diamond Beach residents have reported response times of 20 to 24 minutes from Lower Township Rescue Squad.

Last year, Councilman Tom Conrad, who serves as captain with the Lower Township Rescue Squad, read a statement noting there was no mandate for an 8-minute response time. He said a study from

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Sensory-friendly Pediatric Emergency Care

Shore Medical Center, assisted by the Atlantic County Special Services School District, has gone to great lengths to create a sensory-friendly pediatric emergency space ideal for those on the spectrum. Shore's specially trained staff is dedicated to making the emergency room experience less overwhelming for patients and their families from door to discharge.

Shore Medical Center is committed to making every step of treatment easier.

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