



Girls lax team upsets Bernards, faces Haddonfield

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DeSatnicks: Don't ignore surf zone dangers

Recovered spinal cord injury patient, father have been advocating for safety for years

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Chad DeSatnick, who suffered a spinal cord injury in 2001, is urging City Council to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to create a demonstration beach project.

The hope is the project would eliminate a sharp slope in the surf zone that has been blamed for C-spine injuries to swimmers and bathers.

While surfing at Poverty Beach in 2001, DeSatnick shattered C6 and C7 vertebrae. Neurosur-

geons performed an 11-hour surgery to repair the damage.

He began lobbying City Council to bring awareness to the public, resulting in creation of a beach safety program to educate students about the dangers and benefits of living in a coastal community and signs warning of a dangerous shore break being posted at every beach.

DeSatnick said Cape May released a statement two weeks ago on its Facebook page noting the city is going to ramp up its efforts on beach safety education, beach access and water quality. He said while he be-

lieves those issues are extremely important, he said he wished to read to council the original mission statement of the Beach Safety Advisory Committee.

"Whereas the city places the highest priority on preserving its shoreline and maintaining its beaches through beach replenishment projects and on ensuring that its beaches are safe for swimmers, surfers and other beachgoers," DeSatnick read.

He said beach replenishment in Cape May started in 1991. Afterward, injuries began to occur at an alarming rate.

"Former fire department ad-

ministration members came to me with a dire plea to help get the word out," he said.

Serious injuries have occurred, DeSatnick said.

"Then it was 'someone is going to break their neck or back,' that happened to me," he said. "Then it was 'someone is going to become paralyzed.' That happened to Dave Taylor."

DeSatnick said he was warned that someone would become a quadriplegic from the beach slope.

"That happened to Dennis Myles and Archer Senft," he said. "Then it was 'someone is

going to die.'"

In the past two summers, a 56-year-old man was tumbled in the surf at Steger's Beach, his lung was punctured and he was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital. A 16-year-old city employee was involved in an on-duty accident that resulted in his death.

"I received a text message from the ER doctor that this was the most catastrophic spinal cord injury to ever occur on a Cape May beach in the surf zone and there was a really good

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Coupland: HPC ruling reversals warrant censure of Zoning Board

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Following the reversal of two rulings of the Historic Preservation Commission by the Zoning Board, HPC Chairman Warren Coupland recommended a censure of the board.

During an HPC meeting May 16, Coupland said the Zoning Board is supposed to overturn the HPC only if the commission made a mistake or its decision was arbitrary and capricious.

"In both of those appeals, we didn't make a mistake. The issue was stated clearly in the standards. There was no interpretation, there was no gray area, it was quite clear," he said. "In addition, in both of those cases, we were willing to make some accommodations to the applicant."

He said being willing to make accommodations demonstrates the decisions were not arbitrary or capricious.

HPC Commissioner Jim Testa said the city has an

ordinance that specifies the standard of review for an HPC action. He said the Zoning Board did not seem to understand the definition of arbitrary and capricious.

Testa said the HPC has no standing to take a case further when it feels the Zoning Board has wrongfully reversed one of its decisions.

Coupland said when in question, the due deference should go to the HPC. He asked Councilwoman Lorraine Baldwin, liaison to the HPC, to bring the issue to City Council.

"I believe that the Zoning Board should be censured, I presume not by City Council but by the city solicitor, that they should in a written format receive a letter that clearly states what their responsibilities are with regards to appeals..." he said.

In the first appeal of an HPC decision, there were differences of fact, "what was discovered, what wasn't discovered,

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David Nahan/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Caper Tigers bare their teeth

The Lower Cape May Regional High School girls and boys competed Friday at the Cape May County Track and Field Championships at Ocean City High School. These four took time out to smile for the camera as they warmed up for the 4x400 relay. From left are Josie Saquella, MaryKatelyn West, Jules Mendo and Leslie Avila-Palacios, who took second place in the event. All went home with medals. More photos from the championship meet are online at ocnjsentinel.com, sister newspaper to the Cape May Star and Wave. See story, Page A10.



Frank Scott/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Back together again

A reunion of alumni from Cape May High School classes from 1949 to 1964 was held May 20 at the Grand Hotel in Cape May. It was very special day for Cape May High School alumni Ellen Piacentine, who was celebrating her 99th birthday.

City hoping survey provides a better view of beach slope

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — While the city has hired the Stockton University Coastal Research Center to restart a series of beach transect surveys across the dunes, dry beach and into the nearshore twice per year, it has more to do with sand loss for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requirements than correcting a sharp dropoff in the surf zone that has produced C-spine injuries to beachgoers.

Stewart Farrell, director and founder of the Coastal

Research Center, reported to City Council on May 17 the work that he and his staff would undertake.

In 1989, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began beach replenishment in the city. Farrell said he was on the beach in 1986 setting up a series of survey lines following Hurricane Gloria in 1985. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) denied all recovery funding because the state could not prove the losses, saying they had no data, he said.

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NAILED IT. Rusty Nail

The Rusty Nail is back! Our famed surfer bar and restaurant is back open for the 2022 season. Stop by for breakfast, lunch and dinner—as well as delicious cocktails and the coldest draft beer in Cape May (as verified by Exit Zero Magazine).

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