



West Cape invites cannabis shop owners to speak

Page A5



House of the Week

Real Estate Resource



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LCMRHS grad provides video for GMA series

Casella's scenes of Cape May used in 'Diving into Summer'

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Jeff Casella, a graduate of Lower Cape May Regional High School's television production class, apparently learned well from his course of study because last week "Good Morning America" (GMA) aired video he shot of Cape May.

As part of its series "Diving into Summer," visiting some of the best vacation spots in America, GMA's Janai Norman reported live from the Washington Street Mall. Casella's video of the beach, the Cape May Lighthouse and historic hoes was interspersed with Norman's reporting.

The name of his business, Casella Productions, was on screen through much of the story. He said his connection to GMA came through Kacie Rattigan, the city of Cape May's director of Convention Hall and recreation activities whose father was a longtime newscaster.

When an ABC crew came to Cape May to shoot

video for a July 10 story, the weather was dreary. Rattigan reached out to Casella to provide some "nice, beautiful footage of Cape May," Casella said.

"I didn't know if they would use a lot of it, but it seems like they used a ton of it," he said.

Casella said he shoots scenic video of the area on nice days, something he can use for a number of his video clients. A 2012 graduate of Lower Cape May Regional High School, he started his own video production business in 2019.

Casella is a certified drone pilot. That allows him to shoot video from the sky, something widely used by local real estate agents for their websites. Current technology allows him to use "virtual staging," which adds furniture to photos of otherwise empty rooms in houses for sale online.

If you have seen commercials for Cape May Brewing Co., you have seen the work of Casella. He also produces videos for social media such as

See Casella, Page A2

Lower school district hires Lasher as superintendent

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

ERMA — Gregory Lasher, former principal of Richard M. Teitelman School, began his position as superintendent of the Lower Cape May Regional School District on July 1.

Lasher replaces Joseph Castellucci, who retired after serving the school district for 27 years as an administrator and superintendent.

He began working in the district in 2001 as a math teacher, then was hired as assistant principal of the Teitelman School in 2007. In 2010, he was promoted to acting principal and in 2011 became principal of the school.

Born in Pittsburgh, Pa., Lasher also spent 11 years of his youth in San Francisco, Calif.

Lasher said he has witnessed a lot of change over his career thus far.

"The world has changed, so the kids and the times are evolving with the world," Lasher said. "I think we as a district have changed with the times and we've changed progressively with the times."

While Lasher was serving as principal, the Teitelman School was recognized as a New Jersey School to Watch, a national recognition.

"We earned the recognition in response to our cultural responsiveness, our diversity, our curriculum," he said.

Lasher brought about changes to the schedule and discipline programs at Teitelman.

The school district is currently installing new roofs and air conditioning systems. Lasher said some outdoor work remains, such as replacement of lights and bleachers at the football field.

Three teachers recently held a professional development workshop for staff on artificial intelligence (AI). Lasher called AI a concept the school district would embrace in an appropriate manner.

As the permanent population shrinks in the Lower Cape area, the schools will have to decrease in kind, he said, noting more than 50 percent of tax bills in Lower Township and Cape May are mailed to another state.

"It's a hard thing to have to accept as you become superintendent. We have to shrink some more and

See Lasher, Page A2



Jerry Meyers/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

A couple of Flippers

Dolphins roll in the wake of a tour boat. Thunder Cat Dolphin Watch is located at 1001 Ocean Drive in Wildwood Crest, offering tours, parasailing and personal watercraft rental.

Paving projects set for fall in Lower Twp.

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — A number of county- and state-funded road repaving projects are scheduled to take place in Lower Township beginning this fall, stretching to 2030.

At a July 5 Township Council meeting, Township Manager Mike Laffey said the township has been awaiting the paving of Fishing Creek Road from Bayshore Road to Tabernacle Road, a two-phase project that the county will put out to bid in the next few weeks. Work is anticipated to begin in late summer to early fall.

He said paving the section from Tabernacle to Academy Road involves state funding and is likely to start in spring 2024.

County maintenance paving projects in the township for fall 2023 and spring 2024 construction include New England Road, Bayshore Road, County Road 607 from New England Road to Sunset Boulevard, and Shunpike Road from Breakwater Road to Tabernacle Road, Laffey said.

Grant funding is involved in the projects for New England Road, Bayshore Road and Shunpike Road.

The Sunset Boulevard

project is under design and in the permitting phase with work anticipated to begin in 2027, he said.

Laffey said the Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority has paving obligations this fall for portions of Shunpike Road, Seashore Road and Breakwater Road to address opening the roads for utility installations.

Federally funded paving projects include Seashore Road from Route 47 to Breakwater Road, which is under design with construction anticipated to begin in the spring of 2025, he said.

Seashore Road paving phase two, Breakwater

Road to Tabernacle Road, is scheduled to begin in spring 2026.

He said phase three of the Seashore Road project covers Tabernacle Road to Sandman Boulevard and is expected to begin in spring 2027.

Paving of Townbank Road from Clubhouse Drive to Bayshore Road is anticipated to begin in 2030, Laffey said.

Deputy Mayor David Perry said he requested Laffey contact the county engineer to have Townbank Road paved sooner than 2030.

"There's a fire station on

See Paving, Page A4

Food, music, crafts at West Cape farm market

By CAROLINE DUPREE
For the Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — With live music in the background last week, patrons of the West Cape May Farmers Market strolled around its many stands, ranging from fresh vegetables and fruit to barbecue, lemonade, honey and even home decor and clothes.

"It's just a great spot for the community," said Lauren Vitelli, who ran the market for about 10 years and is an assistant director in West Cape May's Finance Department.

She emphasized how the farmers market is the perfect place for "spending time with your neighbors" and for featuring local musicians and artists.

"It is nice to give everyone a spot where we have local musicians, artists and, of course, the farm," Vitelli said.

The Rea family of Rea's Farm Market were the driving force behind

starting the West Cape May Farmers Market when in 2001 they applied for a Jersey Fresh grant through the state of New Jersey.

While it started with Rea's Farm and nine other vendors, it quickly grew to 55 vendors at its height prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Many patrons, such as Hutchie Cummin — who likes the market's "homey atmosphere" — visit nearly every week.

Last week, Rea's Farm Market stand occupied one of the spaces surrounding an open green dotted with picnic tables shaded by umbrellas. Rea's stand was filled with produce — tomatoes, basil, herbs, zucchini and more — that Carol Rea Flynn had risen at 5 a.m. to pick.

In addition to vegetables, the stand was full of fresh-cut flowers and honey from their farm, as

See Farm, Page A4



Caroline Dupree/FOR THE STAR AND WAVE

Kelly Keppel and Carol Rea Flynn work the Rea's Farm Market booth during the West Cape May Farmers Market.

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