



## Caper Tigers all set for fall sports season

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## House of the Week

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169th YEAR NO. 35 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2023 \$1.00

## Fun in the blazing sun comes with big responsibilities for ocean lifeguards

### The best and worst parts of being on the beach all day

By **DAVID NAHAN**  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT — Being a lifeguard comes with the perks of summer but also includes some not-so-glamorous aspects.

The women and men who protect the beaches in South Jersey weighed in this summer on why being a lifeguard is the best job a person could have, even if it comes with a few downsides.

"I love just being by the water and communicating ocean safety and the importance of respecting the ocean, as much as it is about enjoying the ocean, and spreading that in the community," Avalon Beach Patrol lifeguard Alyssa Sittineri said, adding she also loves protecting people.

The six-year guard from Cape May Court House acknowledges the downside as well.

"I think training is difficult, as it should be, but I think what is really difficult is just sitting there on days that aren't the perfect beach days, so early in the season, when it's super windy and cold and you don't necessarily want to be there," Sittineri said, "but knowing that it's all worth it and you're there to protect the people."

Sittineri is starting a teaching job in her hometown this fall. As Avalon Lt. Danielle Smith puts it, that's the teach-and-beach combo— a nine-month job that allows the other three months for guarding.

"I think the best part of the job is camaraderie, the brotherhood and sisterhood that you gain throughout this experience," said Smith, of Wilmington, Del. "It's fabulous. It's an amazing job where you're protecting people, but at the same time you're making friendships for life."

This is the 10th summer for her, a health and physical education teacher at St. Mark's High School in Wilmington, right by the University of Delaware. Her family has a house in Stone Harbor "and a bunch of my friends were trying out so I decided to try out. I said I'll give it a go and see what happens. I made it. My plan was to stay for one year and here I am 10 years later and the first female lieutenant (on the ABP)."

She agreed with Sittineri about the not-so-pleasant times to be on the beach.

"Like Alyssa said, the nasty days. People, when they picture lifeguards, they picture sunny, beautiful beach days, but we're always there even when it's really bad out, when it's storming, we're still watching the beaches," Smith said. "You're wet, you're cold, it's windy — those are challenging, but you know the better days are ahead."

Longtime lifeguard Dan Casey, who is now a deputy chief on the Ocean City Beach Patrol, said there are a lot of great aspects about being a lifeguard.

"There are so many. Wow. As a guard I would say you get paid to be on the beach. The feeling of protecting the bathers while making sure they all go home safe," he said.

"We are ambassadors to the city. We might be the only city employee

'It's an amazing job where you're protecting people, but at the same time you're making friendships for life.'

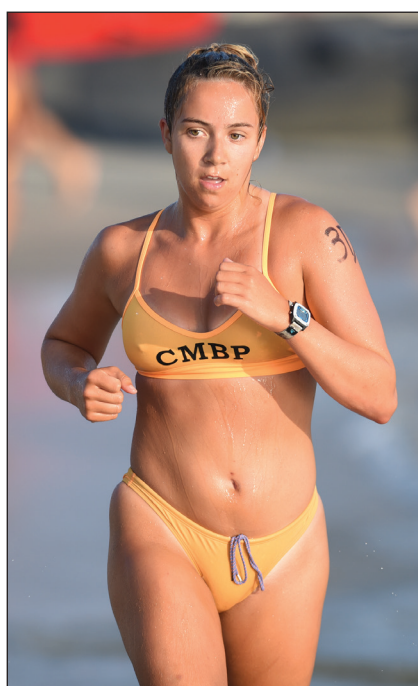
—Lt. Danielle Smith,  
Avalon Beach Patrol



**David Nahan/STAR AND WAVE**  
Sisters Meredith and Grace Steele are lieutenants on the Upper Township Beach Patrol. Emma DiMario, right, is a guard on the Cape May Beach Patrol. Below, Danielle Smith is a lieutenant on the Avalon Beach Patrol.

that a person comes in contact with when they come to Ocean City. As that, we take pride in making sure their experience is the best and we make them feel like they want to come back and have a good time here," Casey said. "If we're the only person they come into contact with, that could make or break their experience. We're giving them that positivity, that sense of, 'Oh, they care about us.' That means a lot because we're here to serve the beach patrons."

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## County ignores pleas, moves to privatize facility

### Crest Haven Nursing Home employees, resident families voice concerns ahead of vote

By **JACK FICHTER**  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — Despite hearing the impassioned pleas of nursing home employees, worried family members and a veterans advocate, County Commissioners turned a deaf ear and issued a statement explaining their desire to privatize the county-owned Crest Haven Nursing Home will continue.

At an Aug. 22 meeting, the Cape May County Board of Commissioners listened to an hour and 15 minutes of pleas not to issue a request for proposals to privatize Crest Haven, but 30 minutes after the meeting issued a news release from Commission Director Len Desiderio stating it would seek proposals for privatization.

Desiderio stated the county found that from 2018 through 2021, the nursing home operated at a total taxpayer-covered deficit of more than \$26 million.

During public comment, employees and customers of the nursing home said bills were issued to patients haphazardly, often not for months at a time and the billing department was of-

ten unstaffed.

"The Board of Commissioners' responsibility is to all the taxpayers, and it is clear that the long-term care facilities in Cape May County are able to provide the care that is needed in our community," Desiderio stated. "It is no longer feasible for taxpayers to shoulder the amount it costs to operate Crest Haven. As so many other New Jersey county governments have concluded, the operation of long-term care facilities is best left to the private sector."

He stated a contract would be awarded only to a company that has the dedication and ability to continue to provide the best care to Crest Haven residents. No resident will be turned out and the county will assist every family throughout any facility transition, he stated.

"The employees of Crest Haven are also of paramount concern to the Board of Commissioners. With that in mind, any contract will have to include a commitment to retain as many current employees as possible," Desiderio stated. "The county is also retaining a

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## Cannabis dispensary neighbors concerned about traffic volume

By **JACK FICHTER**  
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — The principles of the county's first recreational cannabis dispensary answered questions for more than an hour from the public during a Borough Commission meeting, with potential traffic problems taking the forefront.

On Aug. 23, Tom Nuscis, chief operating officer of Shorehouse Canna, said the inspection by the state Cannabis Regulatory Commission has been completed and he expected another four to five weeks before doors open for business.

Nuscis, who said he started the endeavor 10 years ago as a medical marijuana business, noted he is ready to hire employees.

During public comment, Pacific Avenue resident Ellen Donohue asked how heavy traffic at the dispensary would be man-

aged since it will be the only cannabis store in the county.

Nuscis said he would pay for extra police to direct traffic if necessary.

Operations Manager David Christian said he attended grand openings of other recreational cannabis dispensaries in the state, and he expected more traffic in the first few days of operation.

He said they are trying some innovative ways to deal with demand, including a walk-up window for orders placed in advance online.

"We've also installed nine point-of-sales in the store and nine preorder stations inside the store so that we can expedite that order transaction and make it very quick for customers who come in and out," Christian said.

He said if 100 customers were present, they could be handled 10 at a time by

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