

Fall sports season heats up amid humid conditions

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House of the Week

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169th YEAR NO. 37 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2023 \$1.00

Mighty hurricanes have struck county in past

All eyes are on Lee as it makes its way up Eastern Seaboard this week

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — While all eyes are on Hurricane Lee, some locals will tell you Cape May County avoids direct hits from severe hurricanes. Unfortunately, history proves them wrong.

No one is alive today to recall it, but Cape May experienced a Category 4 hurricane in 1821. Old newspapers and military logs carry accounts of the event. Hurricanes were not named

in the 1800s, but the 1821 storm is referred to as the Norfolk and Long Island hurricane or the Great September Gale.

Prior to Superstorm Sandy in October 2012, the 1821 hurricane was the last major one to make a direct hit on New Jersey. The storm struck Sept. 3 with winds of 135 mph.

According to Hurricaneville.com, hurricane winds extended as far as Philadelphia, with some wind gusts reaching 200 mph. The storm followed a path simi-

lar to a driver going north on the Garden State Parkway, hugging the coast to New York City. It originated off the coast of Africa.

The hurricane of 1821 struck Guadeloupe on Sept. 1. It then turned north, passing the Bahamas. At that point, it was believed to be as intense as a Category 5. In their logs, captains of ships near Grand Turk Island in the Turks and Caicos made mention of the hurricane. Moving at great speed, by dawn Sept. 3, it was off Cape Hatteras, N.C.

Remarkably, the hurricane reached Delaware Bay by mid-afternoon the same day and New York City by 7:30 p.m. The storm's forward motion was estimated at 50 mph. It was likely the eye passed directly over Cape May since calm winds were reported for a period of 15 to 30 minutes during its passage over Cape Island.

The worst-case scenario occurred when water from the ocean crossed land and flowed into the bay. Fortunately there

were few residents here to report the damage from the storm.

One newspaper account said Cape May was physically cut off from the rest of the county by storm surge of more than 10 feet.

Writer Robert Roy Britt for LiveScience.com stated storm surge pushed the tide up 13 feet in one hour in New York City and inundated wharves, causing the East River and the Hudson Riv-

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Lower Township marks 9/11 anniversary



Boy Scout Troop 87 stands at attention as Giana Ikey sings 'God Bless America' and the 'Star Spangled Banner' during Lower Township's Patriots Day ceremony Sept. 11 at Naval Air Station Wildwood. At left, the ceremony was held inside the NASW Aviation Museum's historic hangar at the Cape May County Airport.

U.S., state cash to fund \$6.3M. school project

Cape May elementary will get new roof, HVAC system, boiler

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The school district will be undertaking major renovations at the elementary school without raising the local tax rate, according to a news release.

The district's plans call for replacing the 23-year-old roof, heating and cooling system and 18-year-old water boilers at Cape May City Elementary School with the help of state and federal funds.

The cost of the project is estimated at \$6.3 million, of which the state would contribute \$2.5 million.

According to the news release, the school will neither bond nor raise taxes to fund the project, but instead will use a combination of Impact Aid funding, reserve (capital) and COVID relief funding.

Superintendent Zack Palombo said because of School Business Manager John Thomas' "fiscal conservatism," the school was able to secure a state grant for 40 percent of the cost.

Palombo said the district has been building up

its surplus fund, one of the requirements to obtain the grant.

"As state taxpayers, we've already contributed to this, so we might as well get some of the money back for the maintenance of our school," he said.

On Sept. 7, the state Department of Education (NJ-DOE) and the New Jersey Schools Development Authority announced the approval of nearly \$450 million in school construction funds to address critical facilities needs in 261 districts.

Of that, \$350 million will come from the state's Debt Defeasance and Prevention Fund, which was established two years ago to help pay down existing debt and avoid incurring new debt by funding projects outright rather than incurring new borrowing.

The move is expected to save the state and taxpayers about \$350 million in total as opposed to issuing 30-year bonds at current interest rates.

"This funding is part of a state and local partnership

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Voll faults Baldwin for way she handled his retirement

Says announcement created wrong impression

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Deputy Mayor Lorraine Baldwin announced City Manager Mike Voll's retirement during City Council's meeting Aug. 15 before he had made it official, which gave some of the public the idea that he was being fired.

He set the record straight on Sept. 5, expressing displeasure with the way Baldwin went about it. Voll said during his many years in government, the majority previously always ruled.

"Lorraine Baldwin on her own decided to disrespect the majority of council's decision and announced at the last council meeting. Her announcement had all my employees upset thinking I was being fired, and also many called from the public asking, 'Why are you leaving? You're doing a great job.'"

He said he met weeks ago with Baldwin and Mayor Zack Mullock, before the last council meeting, when Baldwin stated she wished to advertise for the city manager position because Voll's contract was ending at the end of the year and it took Cape May three months to replace its chief financial officer (CFO).

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City Council OKs additional funds for Franklin St. School

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council approved an additional \$147,889 for architectural services from Michael Calafati for the renovation of the Franklin Street School.

The historic school is being repurposed as a branch of the Cape May County Library System, with funds coming from multiple sources.

On Sept. 5, engineer Paul Dietrich said the city would pay one third of the cost since the county and

county library system are partners in the project. He said most of Calafati's fee was not for his direct services but includes lead testing.

"His original contract stipulated a 10-month construction period, and this was obviously before the project was bid, but it ends up obviously being a little bit longer, so it accounts for extra meeting time for them to oversee the project," Dietrich. "He anticipates that it will be at least 34 to 40 project meetings."

He said the city has a \$2 million commitment

to the project and would authorize the remaining \$300,000 it set aside for the library renovation.

City resident and former council member Stacy Sheehan said the cost has increased from an initial estimate of \$5.8 million to \$9.1 million. She asked if Calafati's fee would increase from \$468,000 to \$729,000.

Sheehan said the county wanted more exterior lighting for the building and asked if council was aware of changes in the project.

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PIG AND PIGSKIN SPECIALS

EVERY Sunday at the Nail from 2pm-9pm. Score Big on Sundays at the Rusty Nail with Jimmy's Smokin' Pig Roast, \$10 Buckets of (6) Miller Lite Ponies, and \$2 off Wings, Nachos, Shrimp & more!

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