

# Group offers weekly social outing for visually impaired

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

AVALON — The Blind Center of the Jersey Cape offers a weekly social gathering for the blind and visually impaired that often features a guest speaker or live music.

Phil Harrison, president of the board of trustees, said the nonprofit organization was founded in 2000 by Millicent Saraduke, who began to lose her sight when she was in her 50s.

The group met Tuesdays and Thursday for about three hours but has cut back to meeting only Tuesdays, from 10:30 a.m. to about 1 p.m. at First United Methodist Church in Avalon, due to a shortage of drivers for the county's Fare Free transit system that provides free rides to the meeting.

The center has two to four sighted volunteers who help with the meetings. Anyone who is visually impaired or legally blind is welcome to attend, Harrison said.

He said guest speakers present talks on a number of subjects including a monthly visit from Cape May MAC (Museums + Arts + Culture).

"We have music, we have the bell ringers coming in during December to play Christmas carols," he said. "We play bingo."

Most of the participants at the center's meeting are visually impaired but not totally blind, Harrison said.

Meetings on the third Tuesday of the month include lunch. Participants provide their own lunch during the other weekly gatherings. Soda and chips are provided.

He said while the Blind Center does not provide services for the blind and visually impaired, it can recommend services from the state, other organizations and doctors.

"You are talking to people who are familiar with issues, you are talking to people who are also blind and have the same issues as you but basically we are a social program," Harrison said.

For more information on the Blind Center of the Jer-

sey Cape, call (609) 788-0890.

Periodically, a staff member from the county library visits the meetings to assist the visually impaired with technology.

"On my computer I have an aural program that reads my emails to me and as I type them it will read back what I have typed," Harrison said.

Freedom Scientific offers a program called Zoom Text for the visually impaired, which greatly magnifies a computer screen, and an aural program called Jaws that reads computer screens aloud.

Harrison said he uses the Jaws program on his computer.

He said those who are blind from birth, or a very young age, are often taught Braille and attend summer camps for the visually impaired and may adjust better to lack of sight.

"But when you are a senior, you've been sighted all your life, it's hard to adjust to blindness and I think that's a problem, I think they are a lot of shut-ins. We would like to get them out coming to the Blind Center for some socialization and talk with other blind members," Harrison said.

A person who has lost their sight can receive assistance from the state Commission for the Blind in the area of life skills such as cooking and transportation and independent living.

Visually impaired persons may receive free books on tape through the Talking Books program. The state Library Talking Book & Braille Center (TBBC) provides no-cost, home-delivered services on behalf of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled to children, teens and adults in New Jersey who have difficulty reading standard print or trouble holding a book. They can be reached toll-free at (800) 792-8322 between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The National Federation for the Blind offers the KNFB reader, which photographs text and reads it aloud or turns it into

Braille. The KNFB reader can be purchased and

downloaded from the Apple App Store, Google Play

or the Microsoft Store.

The National Federation

of the Blind can be reached at (410) 659-9314.

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# City Council seeks input on artificial turf in yards

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council put off introducing an ordinance prohibiting the use of artificial turf to seek comment from the city's Planning Board.

At a Nov. 22 meeting, Councilwoman Maureen McDade asked that the ordinance first be sent to the Planning Board for guidance on lot coverage, type of material and placement.

She said the introduction of the ordinance should be held off until comments are received from the Planning Board.

Mayor Zack Mullock said he spoke with Planning Board Chairman Bill Bezaire, who had some concerns with the ordinance since it did not grant any exceptions. Mullock noted the city has miniature golf courses that use artificial

turf.

The proposed ordinance states Cape May is a National Historic Landmark city encompassing a nationally renowned historic district with numerous historic structures that are central to the city's reputation as a world-class destination resort.

It notes the city's Historic Design Standards provide that vegetation plantings should be native or indigenous and that use of synthetic grass in visible yards is not appropriate.

"Any installations of artificial turf existing in the city of Cape May at the time of adoption of this section may be maintained but may not be expanded in any fashion," the proposed ordinance states. "At the end of artificial turf installation's useful life, the artificial turf must be replaced by grass or other natural ground covering."

### TIDES: Dec. 6-13, 2023

DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
6	2:41	2:39	8:21	8:54
7	3:31	3:32	9:19	9:35
8	4:16	4:21	10:12	10:15
9	4:59	5:08	11:01	10:55
10	5:40	5:53	11:47	11:35
11	6:21	6:38		12:33
12	7:03	7:22	12:17	1:18
13	7:46	8:08	1:01	2:05

### MOON PHASES

New moon, Dec. 12 • first quarter, Dec. 19



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