

CanalFest music festival to benefit Cape Assist

By **LYN MARTENSTEIN**
Special to the Star and Wave

for Cape Assist to combat substance abuse in the community.

The 2018 benefit drew nearly 500 people to the banks of Cape May Canal, where they enjoyed non-stop music, dancing, food and drink. This year's lineup includes 25 musicians, among them the Cape May Diamonds, whose popularity got the party started in 2013; Kate Delaney, Don Shough, Chris Gillin-Schwartz and Howard Street Ramble.

Ric and Kathleen Rutherford host CanalFest at their 2-acre home overlooking the canal on Seashore Road in Lower Township. The couple owns Rio Station restaurant in Rio Grande, and both are active in many local charities. Ric Rutherford has been president of Cape Assist's volunteer board since 2015. He is also one of the founders of the Cape May Diamonds.

Giving back

Rutherford added Cape Assist to the party mix in 2017, the fifth year of the festival.

"I turned the party into a benefit because I thought the gathering should have a grander purpose than partying, wine and music," he said. "It's the same event but now we're helping others."

Cape Assist has worked to prevent and treat substance abuse and related issues throughout the county for nearly four decades. It served 15,000 individuals last year, half of them children.

The 2018 CanalFest raised \$8,000 for the non-profit.

"Money from the community is the most important funding we receive because it helps us address needs right in front of us as soon as we see them," longtime

Cape Assist Executive Director Katie Faldetta said.

Other funding sources are less flexible. State and federal grants, for example, take several years to process, by which time other more pressing needs may have emerged.

"Issues like the opioid epidemic can become a crisis long before government can address them," she said.

Beginnings

The prequel to CanalFest was a reunion in 2013 for the fans of Cape May Diamonds. The group formed in 1973 when a meeting of minds and music brought together Rutherford, Rick Ferrente and Patty Pellegrino. For the summers of '75, '76 and '77, the folk-rock trio was the house band at Gloria's — Cabana's today — playing six nights a week from Memorial Day

through Labor Day.

The group's founding members continued to play local clubs and bars well into the 1990s, with other musicians rotating in and out over time, and diehard fans faithfully following the principals from gig to gig.

Things slowed down in the new millennium.

"By 2005, a lot of clubs wanted us on from 10 to 2," said Rutherford, "but a lot of our fans didn't want to stay up that late. I called it the 'Take a Nap Tour.'"

The Rutherfords set more boomer-friendly hours for their first canal party, starting festivities at 3 p.m. They also gave the event an adult name last year, CanalFest, to befit its larger role.

"CanalFest has grown into the event we all mark on our calendars a year out," said Howard Petschler, a former life-guard who has followed the band since its "Gloria's"

days. "It's a great music event that brings the entire Cape together."

"What started as a house party with lifelong friends and musicians has evolved into a heartwarming event that helps people in need in Cape May County," said Ed Dobbs, a musician who has played every year at the festival.

Join the party and support a good cause June 23 at 929 Seashore Road. Look for the driveway north of the canal on the east side of West Cape May Bridge. The event runs from 4 p.m. until just around midnight.

Tickets are \$25 in advance and \$30 at the gate, and can be purchased with cash, by check or with all major credit cards. For tickets or more information, call Cape Assist at (609) 522-5960.

Come on people now, let's get together and try to help one another right now.

'Avalon House' back together in Cape May

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



CAPE MAY — Dismantled in Avalon and stored in Egg Harbor Township for a year, the "Avalon House" is now fully reassembled in Cape May.

Adrienne Scharnikow had the first portion of the home, once owned by her grandparents, moved by truck March 15 and placed that section on a lot on Texas Avenue across from the Wawa market.

On June 11, the remainder of the home, the roof and turret, arrived by truck.

As with the first portion of the house moving, it resembled a short parade as the truck with a police escort moved down Broadway and up Beach Avenue in Cape May.

It drew the attention of beachgoers and others who have followed the progress of the house.

The house had been one of Avalon's oldest homes, built in 1895.

It is registered as a founding house of Avalon built by George W. Kates, the first tax assessor and the first builder in Avalon.

Scharnikow bought the house, which was slated for demolition, a year ago for \$1 and searched for an empty lot in Cape May.

She knew a lot about the house because she lived there as a child. The house was in her family from 1955 to 1996.

When both of her grandparents passed away, the house was sold.

Additional work is under way on the historic home as it gets a new lease on life.

Jack Fichter/
STAR AND WAVE

The roof and turret have been installed on this historic house.

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