

Leave the car: Jitney easy way to get around

By JOHN ALVAREZ
Special to the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — For those who live in Cape May, driving around town in a car during the middle of the summer season can be a bit unnerving.

Most days have visitors who, in an attempt to fit a month of events into the span of a few days of vacation, will make you wonder if they forgot the rules and courtesies of the road they needed to pass a basic driving test.

Let's not talk about the parking situation either because during the summer, the situation is usually dire.

Riding a bicycle is an option unless you have to go grocery shopping or need to bring a change of clothes. And, to be honest, the last time many people reading this publication rode a bike with regularity was in high school. They may remember how to ride a bike but forgotten how to ride one well.

So what is one to do to get into town but avoid all the aggravation?

For the past few weeks, the city has employed the Cape May Transit Jitney Service (CMTJS), a free service within Cape May. The service, which started June 21 and continues until Sept. 2, runs from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. seven days a week.

The jitneys are air conditioned, 13-passenger buses that offer wheelchair lifts for anyone who may have a special need. Locals and tourists may ride around the city and be dropped off

to go shopping, dining or to the beach.

According to Dennis Gitsas, who is not only one of the supervisors of the CMTJS but also drives his own jitney, the service offers a stress-free way to get around. It also alleviates some of the traffic and parking difficulties in the city.

"I drove a jitney around Atlantic City for 17 years before working owning one of my own," Gitsas said. "We have experience with driving in crowded cities. We know how to find openings, so our passengers can get on quickly and safely. We don't get stressed because we know we will get where we are going."

Although there are many stops where a potential passenger can get on a jitney as it travels about, the one many consider the "main stop" is at Cape May City Elementary School at 921 Lafayette St. If someone enters the city from the Garden State Parkway to do some shopping or go to dinner, they can park in the school's parking lot for free as long as there is space available. And when they are finished, they just need to make a left out of the parking lot and head back toward the parkway.

The jitneys follow two loops. One is northbound throughout the Village Greene area, with stops along Texas and Pittsburgh avenues and one stop on Brooklyn Avenue near Coast Guard Training Center Cape May before heading down to Beach Avenue

and the Washington Street Mall area. The jitney goes to the Welcome Center on Broad Street before making its way back to the elementary school on Lafayette Street.

The southbound loop is the reverse path the northbound loop follows. The jitney leaves the school parking lot and heads to the Welcome Center, then to the mall, Beach Avenue, Pittsburgh Avenue, etc.

There is also a jitney designated to drive up and down Beach Avenue from Pittsburgh Avenue to the cove. This jitney usually picks up people walking along the Promenade that might have had a little too much sun or too much fun and need a ride to their hotel.

"Usually there is one person driving at 11 a.m. and they cover all the loops," Gitsas said. "Then about 2 p.m., two more drivers come and we break off into our routes. When it is expected to be a busy weekend, like the Fourth of July was, we would put on five jitneys and cover all the loops. If one jitney gets full, the driver gets on the radio to find out who can take over the loop until the full jitney empties out. And the full jitney will tell people at other stops another jitney is coming instead of just driving by the crowd. It is the courteous thing to do."

Courteous seems to be the best word to describe the jitney driver's attitude when on the job. Gitsas sees his part in a city like Cape May as one in the service



John Alvarez/Special to the STAR AND WAVE
Northfield resident Dennis Gitsas sits in the driver's seat of a jitney that provides free transportation to people in and around Cape May from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily.

industry, like a waiter, or bartender. To him, being courteous is just as important as keeping his eyes on the road.

"I like asking people how they are doing," Gitsas said. "I like saying have a nice day. It doesn't cost me anything to be nice in this job. And I make sure the drivers on my shift are nice too or they won't last long at this job."

So, if you need a ride, let

the Cape May Transit Jitney supply you with the lift you need.

Maps with the jitney stop location can be found at the Cape May Welcome Center, Convention Hall and the city's hotels and motels.

You can also download the "Jitney Surfer" all from Google Play and the App Store for locations. If you see a jitney, wave your hand and they'll pick you up. For more information, call (609) 884-9565.

WCM unhappy with recycling restrictions

By JOHN ALVAREZ
Special to the Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — Shredded paper and rigid plastic will no longer be recyclable as of October, a regulation not pleasing to Borough Commission.

During the a July 10 meeting, Mayor Carol Sabo informed all in attendance of a letter sent by the Cape May County Municipal Utilities Authority (CMCMUA).

According to the letter, dated July 1, the CMCMUA was serving notice of revisions being made to the county recycling program. The letter stated, in part, that due to limited end markets and increased contamination potential, effective Oct. 1, items such as bulky, mixed, rigid plastics and shredded paper have been removed from the county's "recommended" and "designated" recyclables lists and will no longer be accepted at the Cape May County Municipal Utilities Authority Intermediate Processing Facility.

This would include all hard plastics, regardless of size and color. Examples of such items are laundry baskets, toys and playhouses, broken or unwanted lawn furniture, empty trashcans and coolers. The letter also states that all bulky mixed rigid plastics and shredded paper shall be disposed of as trash.

"I am very concerned the limitations on recycling are becoming so restricted," Sabo said. "People are going to be

discouraged from recycling at all."

She also pointed out how municipalities in Cape May County and beyond all shred paper when they are getting rid of old files or duplicates of items that are not needed. She said the borough offers bulk shredding to residents of West Cape May and surrounding cities once a year.

"Where are we supposed to put this stuff?" she said. "They are limiting what we can recycle."

Commissioner John Francis, who is also a well-known American environmentalist, and first education fellow at the National Geographic Society, expressed his dismay at the CMCMUA decision.

"I forwarded this to the Environmental Commission for a discussion," Francis said. "This is where things are going to go because the market in China and Asia is drying up. The recycles from the United States aren't as clean as they would like to have it. This takes out their

profitability."

He said it may rely on individuals or businesses to help with recycling awareness. Francis noted Westside Market on Broadway is no longer offering plastic bags to customers in an attempt to raise awareness.

Sabo said other municipalities have passed laws either banning plastic bags or charging a fee. However, the mayor pointed out it's not so much about legislation than it is about education.

"Because the county is telling us they are not going to take these items anymore, the education part has to be with people not using the plastics in the first place," she said.

The mayor then added she will not allow this action by the CMCMUA to go unaddressed and encouraged the

members of the borough as well as the public to do the same. One suggestion was to write a resolution and see which other municipalities will join in with expressing to the CMCMUA displeasure at their action.

"The more they restrict things which have been able to be recycled, the less invested people are going to be in recycling all together," Sabo said. "The cost to the county is becoming prohibitive and they don't want to address it. But they have more options than we do. They need to be a little more invented at the county level."

Cape May County Municipal Utilities Authority is located at 1523 Route 9 North in Cape May Court House, NJ, 08210. Its website is cmcmua.com.

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