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Lear wins in Cape May mayoral election

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Chuck Lear was elected as mayor Tuesday with Patricia Hendricks likely to win the lone council seat in her second run for council. Terry Swain did not seek reelection. Mail-in ballots could impact the council race expected to number around 300. As of 9 p.m. in the mayoral race: Lear: 731, Mahaney: 404. In the council race: Hendricks 548, Mullock: 220. It was Lear's first run for mayor. The combination of Lear and Hendricks on council could bring change in how the city is oper-

ated on a day-to-day basis. Lear promised during his campaign, if elected, the governing body would act as a five-person council rather than a mayor-dominated council. He said the city manager would handle much of the day-to-day business of the city. Votes on issues could go 3-2 with Lear, Hendricks and Councilman Shaine Meier voting as a bloc putting Councilwoman Bea Pessagno and Councilman Roger Furlin on the short end of votes. It is likely City Solicitor Tony Monzo would be replaced by the new council. It is also likely City Manager Bruce MacLeod and City Clerk Louise Cummskey will

retire on Dec. 31. With the power of three votes, a number of issues can be visited by council. Lear is likely to find harmony on council to settle and reduce lawsuits and the city's growing legal bills. Lear campaigned on giving citizens a bigger voice at council meetings and listening to the input of the city's many talented and experienced residents. During her campaign, Hendricks stated she would seek to build a handicapped accessible ramp on the Cape May Post Office and open Convention Hall for more use by community groups, issues with which Lear has con-

curred. She has not ruled out using an unfinished portion of Lafayette Street Park for a parking lot. The new council may be able to take more forward action on the surf zone and its resulting injuries. Hendricks stated during her campaign "to deny or turn your back on the issue is irresponsible." She also took issue with blaming the Center for Community Arts for not finishing the Franklin Street School when the city was not willing to be a full partner in the project. Hendricks said the Franklin Street School needs an investor and grant funding. She has called for opening the

financial records of Convention Hall to determine if it turns a profit or loses money, another issue in which Lear concurs. Mahaney congratulated Lear at 8:50 p.m. He said although he didn't know the number of mail-in ballots or disposition, he assumed he would not overcome Lear's lead. Mahaney also congratulated Hendricks for her lead in the machine generated votes. He said he would do everything he could to offer a smooth transition for Lear. The terms of Meier, Pessagno and Furlin expire Dec. 31, 2018.

Monarch butterflies visit cape on annual migration

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT — This year's migration of monarch butterflies through Cape Island had the fourth-lowest number in the 26 years of record keeping, according to naturalist Lindsey Brendel of the Monarch Monitoring Project of New Jersey Audubon. An annual census is taken by driving a route three times a day while counting monarchs during migration season, she said. Brendel said census figures were low in part due to many days of winds from the east, which blows the monarchs farther inland. "It's going to be interesting to see what kind of numbers get reported from Mexico when they census there in December," she said. The monarchs migrate through this area to wintering grounds in Mexico. Brendel said her goal is to visit the winter home of the monarchs this year. "Overall this is a species



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

On Monday, Nov. 7, naturalist Lindsey Brendel, of White Lake, Mich., tags and releases the final monarch butterfly of the season hatched at the Cape May Bird Observatory. Brendel is in her third season of counting and tagging monarch butterflies for New Jersey Audubon. in decline, 90 percent in the last 20 years," Brendel said. She said monarch butterflies are under consideration for the endangered species list. Brendel said there is concern that migration could cease if the East Coast population of monarchs gets too low. The monarch census is taken in September and October, the peak migratory time through Cape May. "Something that we've seen with our data is that migratory peak is coming later and later each year," Brendel said. She said she tagged the largest number of monarchs

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City scores high on state's review

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city will receive its full share of state aid after scoring well on a state Best Practices inventory. During a Nov. 1 City Council meeting, Cape May's Chief Financial Officer Neil Young gave the results of the Best Practices inventory review. Participating municipalities are required to complete a Best Practices survey and send it to the state Division of Local Government Services in order to receive the final 5 percent of their annual state aid payment. He said Best Practices encourages municipalities to embrace practices that promote financial accountability, sound management and transparency. Questions the city answered on the survey covered general management, finance and audit, procurement, budget preparation and presentation, health insurance and personnel, Young said. The city addressed 30 questions on the survey, answering "yes" to 23 questions and "no" to four questions; three questions were not applicable to Cape May, he said. Young said the city scored 26 points, or 87 percent, plac-

ing above the threshold of 22 points to receive its full state aid, which totals \$337,000. The city answered "no" on a question of having adopted a written policy prohibiting personal use of municipal vehicles except for commuting to and from work as an added fringe benefit. Council passed a resolution during the meeting inserting a use of vehicles article into current personnel policy. Mayor Edward Mahaney said there could have been an opportunity to hastily pass a resolution covering employee vehicle use before the deadline for the Best Practices survey but it was wiser to wait and look at the state recommendations and review what other municipalities have done with the issue. He said the new policy specifies which employees are allowed to use city-owned cars, when the vehicles may be used and who gives approval for the use of the cars. City Manager Bruce MacLeod said criteria for the Best Practices survey indicate the majority of the questions are termed "curable." "So if you're not able to

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Welcome Center parking, school pool approval near

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Delayed all summer, a project to offer parking on unused railroad tracks at the Welcome Center is closer to a start date. City Engineer Tom Thornton told City Council during a Nov. 1 meeting that he was able to contact Todd Hirt of the state Department of Transportation (DOT) to address changes to the project he had requested. Thornton said he was unable to contact

Tony Macrie, president of Cape May Seashore Lines, which holds a lease from the state on the tracks. "It appears we are on the verge of a getting an approval, there was nothing in the comments I received from DOT that indicated otherwise," Thornton said. Railroad tracks will remain in the parking area. Mayor Edward Mahaney said the DOT, Cape May Seashore Lines and NJ Transit

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Simonsen wins Lower mayor's seat unopposed

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Erik Simonsen won the Lower Township mayor's seat Nov. 8 in an uncontested race. Frank Sippel was also unopposed in winning at a council-at-large seat in the township. Independents Mayor Michael Beck and Deputy Mayor Norris Clark did not seek re-election. Lower Township Council now has five Republican members. Simonsen was elected to council in the second ward in November 2010

in an uncontested race when Democrat Wayne Mazurek did not seek re-election. Simonsen resigned from council in December 2011 when he bought a home in the third ward. He ran again for council in 2014 and was elected to represent the third ward. Simonsen said he has his eye some projects for the township, a number of which are in progress such as the reconstruction of the Public Safety Building



SIMONSEN

at the county airport to house Lower Township police and the county Office of Emergency Management. The county took over dispatching Lower Township police last week. He said as more towns come on board with county dispatch, the cost would decrease to Lower Township. Design work is progressing on the Roseann Avenue drainage project to alleviate flooding, Simonsen said. "Our roads are definitely

an issue," he said. "We've been working with the county on that." He said bids have gone out for road improvements for Bayshore Road from Sandman Boulevard to Fishing Creek Road and Seashore Road, south of the Cape May Canal from the bridge to the Masonic Lodge. He said he wants to see a no passing lane and a reduced speed limit. The township has been seeking a solution to convince the Federal Emergency Management Agency

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REGISTER NOW TO SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY

5TH ANNUAL "SOLEMAN" 5K RUN AND MEMORIAL WALK

Please join us for this community event. Free coffee for those that bring a can for the food pantry. Raise awareness of the importance of character in people and to raise money for the Gene Sole Scholarship Fund.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12TH AT 9:00AM
CAPE MAY CONVENTION HALL

Registration is \$25 for 5K Run & memorial walk is \$15. Veterans are Free! Pre-registration guarantees each runner to receive a tee shirt. Information and registration at SolemanRun.com. Local Business support needed and always welcomed for scholarship fund.