

Cape May Star and Wave

163rd YEAR NO. 50 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2017 75¢



House of the week

Page B1



Lifelong passion inspiration for train store

Page A8



Christmas tree, wreath sales labor of love at Cape Island

Owners enjoy working hard, repeat buyers

By JOHN ALVAREZ
Special to the Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — Although the use of greenery to decorate one's home to celebrate the winter and the holidays can be traced back to the Romans and old European pagan sects, the image of what we would call the modern day Christmas tree first emerged in western Germany during the 16th century.

In those days, early Christians would take trees into their homes and decorate them with gingerbread, nuts and apples, some wrapped in dry tea paper so the treats would appear to be wrapped in gold. But it was Britain's Queen Victoria and Prince Albert who popularized the idea of decorating the whole tree when the first drawing of the royal family celebrating around a tree in Windsor Castle was published by the Illustrated London News in 1848.

From then on, Norman Rockwell images abound, showing families all bundled up with their scarves and mittens and winter coats, pulling sleds as they walk with sharp hatchets and warm cocoa into the woods to find the perfect tree to put in the corner of their living room. Or, if one



John Alvarez/Special to the STAR AND WAVE
Cape Island Home and Gardens co-owners Judi Bernard, left, and Cindy Franklin show off one of the Christmas trees at their business on Broadway in West Cape May.

was to be more accurate, it would be families jumping into their cars and driving down to the far off corner of a parking lot of a local department store that ends in the letters "m-a-r-t" to find the perfectly priced tree being sold by a man wearing mittens and a scarf as he sips hot coffee.

If a person is looking to find a fun and unique way to purchase a tree this year, they would only have to go to Broadway in West Cape May. There they will find co-owners Cindy Franklin and Judi Bernard of Cape

Island Home and Gardens. Not only would you have a wonderful selection of 200 trees to choose from, but you will also have big laughs and some great stories to tell your friends as they admire your purchase.

One story will definitely be why they have a sign with a number painted on it of the number of available trees.

"It pulled you in, didn't it," Bernard said with a smile. "Every year we change the number. Last year it took people a while before they realized it was

a prime number. We try to make it like a riddle every year."

This year the number they've written is "222,222.2." And the riddle: "Last year, I couldn't remember what the riddle was so I said just make it a bunch of twos," Franklin said with an easy laugh.

The camaraderie between Franklin and Bernard comes very easily for the two owners. It started long before they were working together. Franklin

Cape Island, Page A3

City considering median to slow traffic near base

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Although the city's plans for improvements to Pennsylvania Avenue are largely complete, there is still time to install traffic-calming features such as a median strip to slow down traffic in an area with Coast Guard base housing and a number of children.

The project has received funding from the state Department of Transportation, which would need to approve any alterations to the road.

During a City Council meeting Dec. 5, engineer Tom Thornton, of Mott MacDonald, reiterated three options to slow down traffic on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Option one would be the installation of landscaped, raised medians in the center of the road extending from Pittsburg Avenue to the entrance to Coast Guard Training Center Cape May (TRACEN.) The medians would measure 10 feet wide, be raised 6 inches from the roadway and contain grass and shrubs.

The plan would include barriers near the entrance to TRACEN that are in current use for security purposes. Thornton estimated a cost of \$522,000.

Option two would reduce the length of the median and use a painted centerline similar to Pittsburg Avenue,

he said. The raised median would be located at Pittsburg Avenue, a midpoint near Baltimore Avenue and near the Coast Guard base entrance. He estimated a cost of \$234,000.

Option three would use only 10-foot striping, similar to Pittsburg Avenue. He estimated a cost of \$73,000.

Coast Guard Commander Master Chief William Hollandsworth said he appreciated the work put into the proposal "and looking after our folks' safety."

"We agree that option two definitely suits our needs," he said.

Hollandsworth said the Coast Guard preferred the city not include chicane barriers in the design. Chicane causes drivers to slow by making them make sharp left and right turns in short succession. Should threat levels be increased, the Coast Guard would implement different safety measures that would be affected by chicane being built in on site, he said.

Thornton said the plan did not include the immediate entrance to TRACEN. He said chicane could be included as an alternate bid item and when bids are received, determine if it makes sense.

According to Hollandsworth, a very large population of school-age children is located along the road with 174 housing units, about two-thirds of which have one or two children.



Werner Tedesco/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Snowy owl, snowy weather

This snowy owl spotted Dec. 5 in Cape May Point must have brought the arctic cold with it, as snow and cold temperatures descended on the lower cape over the weekend. Although they make their home in the arctic north, multiple snowy owls have been spotted in Cape May Point over the past three years.

Water main project in Villas on track for spring/summer

By RACHEL SHUBIN
Special to the Star and Wave

VILLAS — The Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority is on track to start construction of Phase II of the East Villas water main improvements by late spring, early summer.

The MUA received an extension for an erosion prohibitor.

"We are just trying to sequester any iron there might be in the water," engineer Marc DiBlasio said. "Quality of water is a common issue in the area."

Documents were submitted to the state Infrastructure Trust to be reviewed, DiBlasio said.

Executive Director Michael Chapman said three wastewater pump stations were completed using MUA employees and a few subcontractors and are performing as expected.

"We are waiting for the

small city grants to be awarded. We have five stations in low- to moderate-income areas that are eligible for grants," Chapman said. "We will apply next year if they don't come through. We expect to replace two to three more pump stations next year, but they will need new wet wells."

Engineering will be required for the new stations because the stations are high and made of brick. The final lift to the top of the stations is metal superstructure that will not support the weight of a pump station.

"It will be easier to have a contractor come and dig a hole with a new pre-set structure for us to put our pumps in," Chapman said. "We have the forces to be able to do that and depending on grants we will have an additional person to start getting that work going."

Chapman reported that work on Shawcrest mobile

home park section of the township was under way, including taking videos of the sewer system.

"What we know is less than what we thought we knew when we started; there are no maps of the system," Chapman said. "It's a little messy over there and we are trying to find out where the water is coming from. The problem is with the pipes in the ground somewhere in the area of mobile homes, there is some substantial infiltration. With the number of trailers occupied this time of year, the numbers don't add up."

The video will reveal what's there, as it is submerged underwater, he said.

"Eventually we will have to start working with the owners of Shawcrest trailer park to continue the system of wells. We can review the trend graphs on flow and wa-

Water main, Page A2



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