

Cape May Star and Wave

161ST YEAR NO. 52 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2015 75¢



Authorities identify body as missing teen

Prosecutor says girl was murdered, left in crawl space of vacant home



ANGSTADT

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — Cape May County Prosecutor Robert L. Taylor announced that an autopsy revealed the body of a female found in a vacant house in the 100 block of Vermont Avenue in Rio Grande has been positively identified as 15-year-old Nicole Angstadt.

The teenager was reported

to Lower Township police as a missing person Dec. 1. According to the Southern Regional Medical Examiners' Office, the manner of death was listed as a homicide.

According to Taylor, on Dec. 14, detectives from the Cape May County Prosecutor's Office and Lower Township Police Department went to the vacant Vermont Avenue property and located the body in the crawl

space.

An ensuing investigation led to the arrest of three men for charges unrelated to the death of Angstadt. On Dec. 14, two men were charged with two separate armed robberies, one being committed Dec. 5 in Lower Township and the other Dec. 8 in Middle Township.

The investigation revealed two men were involved in the armed robbery of nine juveniles

at Mulligan Park in Villas. On Dec. 8, both were involved in another armed robbery in Rio Grande that involved a victim being struck with a handgun.

LaQuan D. Harris, 20, and Derrick Powers, 23, of the Economy Motel at 3172 Route 9 in Rio Grande, were both charged with two counts of armed robbery and conspiracy to commit armed robbery. Both are being held in the Cape May County Jail in lieu

of \$200,000 bail.

Taylor said it was learned Dec. 14 that Charles E. Mosley, 32, residing in the Silver Birch Motel at 1019 Route 47 in Rio Grande, had a sexual relationship with Angstadt. As a result, he was charged with sexual assault of a person at least 13 but less than 16 years of age, endangering the welfare of a

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Educators say PARCC scores are a baseline for the future

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The results of the first PARCC (Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) testing at Cape May City Elementary School were presented during a Board of Education meeting Dec. 17.

In Language Arts/Literacy, the school's third-graders scored higher than the state average, fourth-graders scored 11 points lower, fifth-graders scored 19 points higher and sixth-graders scored 15 points higher.

In mathematics, third-graders' scores mirrored the state average, fourth-graders scored 21 points below the state average, fifth-graders mirrored the state average and sixth-graders scored 5 points below the state average.

Superintendent Victoria Zelenak said parents will receive PARCC test results for their children by mail. Teacher Kim White said PARCC had five performance levels, with level 5 classed as exceeding grade-level expectations, level 4 as meeting grade-level expectations and level one not yet meeting grade-level expectations.

"This was a baseline year because, obviously, it's the first year we've taken it," she said.

See **PARCC scores**, Page A4



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

All lit up for Christmas

Christmas is just around the corner. The Mason Cottage, built in 1871, has seen many Christmas seasons on Columbia Avenue in Cape May. The home was built by Edward A. Warne, a Philadelphia entrepreneur, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Purchased by the Mason family in 1940, it soon became a guest house.

Moving sand would lessen beach slope, engineer says

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — A solution may be available to reduce the beach slope, which may be responsible for causing injuries to hundreds of bathers, but it may come with a steep cost: \$850,000 to \$1 million.

The city's contracted engineering firm, Hatch Mott MacDonald, was tasked with conducting a feasibility to see if a solution to sharp drop-offs in shallow water could be fixed before next summer. At a Dec. 15 City Council meeting, engineer Doug Gaffney offered a recommendation of moving sand with machinery to decrease the slope, with excess sand being placed on the dune line.

The project would move 168,000 cubic yards of sand from Philadelphia Avenue to the Third Avenue jetty, he said. The eastern section of Cape May's beaches has not been steepening at the same rate as the western section, Gaffney said.

He said the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers undertook such a project elsewhere in 2011 but no data was available to see the results.

"That gives us kind of optimism that if we were to go forward with something like this, maybe the state and federal government would be amenable to this idea," Gaffney said.

He said the work on the beach would probably not last very long, perhaps as little as a year. Gaffney said the beach slopes change from year to year due in part to storms. He said the project would need to be undertaken in spring when waves were coming from the southeast.

Gaffney discounted the idea that beach replenishment was responsible for injuries in the surf. He said the study concentrated on engineering and did not cover surf-related injuries.

A study in Delaware of spinal injuries from the past five years found the majority of beach injuries occurred on a weekend in July or August to bathers in 18 inches of water with 2-foot waves who were facing the beach rather than looking at oncoming waves, Gaffney said.

A city-issued news release stated, "The findings from Hatch Mott's feasibility study were that the existing beach slopes are primarily a result of the tide and wave climate and to a lesser extent, the sand grain size and the presence of groins. And although the sand grain size has become slightly coarser since the federal beach fills began in 1990, there was no evidence

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Engineer to present design plans for bay beach-access paths

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — The engineering firm of Hatch Mott MacDonald plans to present design plans for improvements to 33 beach access paths along Delaware Bay at Lower Township Council's meeting Feb. 3.

At a Dec. 21 council meeting, Hatch Mott MacDonald Senior Project Manager Steve Morey said photo documentation and survey work has been completed for the paths. He said 11 paths are south of Cox Hall Creek starting at Douglass Memorial Park stretching to Emerson Avenue in North Cape and the other 22 paths are from Hollywood Avenue to Ocean Avenue in Villas. Morey said potential emergency

access paths to the beach were found at Emerson Avenue and Village Road.

"They're wide enough and they already have what looks like a firm roadway there," he said.

Township Council approved a contract Dec. 7 with Hatch Mott MacDonald to design plans for improvements to beach access paths and for the firm to apply for a Coastal Permit for Maintenance Permit from the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) that lapsed.

The project would place gravel roadbed on the paths with split-rail fencing on either side. The improvements would replace roll-out mats placed on beach paths that can become slippery and caused a

lawsuit against the township.

Villas resident Ed Butler asked if the proposed project had been approved by the state DEP. He suggested the proposed 8-foot-wide beach access paths would damage sand dunes.

Councilman Tom Conrad said no dunes would be destroyed or cut into to make new pathways.

"These are the existing access ways," he said. "They are going to try to make them so people can get down there safer and easier and keep people off the dunes."

Butler said some beach access paths currently are narrow trails. Conrad said not all beach access paths would be widened to 8 feet.

In other business, council tabled a resolution to award a five-year

lease of township-owned land located at the intersection of Rochester and Seaview avenues in Diamond Beach to Hotel Icona. The annual lease fee would be \$10,000.

Mayor Michael Beck said language in the lease agreement stated "It is understood by the Township of Lower that the intended use of the leased property will be to park vehicles of the guests of the hotel." He said the lease also stated the tenant may use the leased premises for any purpose provided the purpose complies with all municipal, state and federal rules and regulations.

"Is it possible, based upon on this language, that he could use it

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