



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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FERRY MERRY CHRISTMAS IN NORTH CAPE MAY

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'It is a way to express my feeling that there is not enough Christ in Christmas.'

— First Assembly of God of Cape May congregant Christopher Jones, who portrayed a villager

Cold Spring church creates its own little town of Bethlehem

Village, actors offer glimpse of life in ancient Holy Land

By BETTY WUND
Special to the Star and Wave

COLD SPRING — Four years ago, the congregation at First Assembly of God of Cape May decided they would have a living Nativity to tell the community more of the story of Christ's birth.

The vision was to offer an interactive walk through the village of Bethlehem leading to a Nativity scene, according to Geri Christy, one of the organizers of the event.

The presentation wouldn't be just a stable with Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus with a few animals and some shepherds. It would be the village of Bethlehem, with people acting the way they would have at that time, Christy said.

The actors would be dressed in costume. Visitors would be given coins to pay their taxes to the Roman government, and Roman soldiers would collect the coins, she said.

A living portrayal of life at the time of the birth of Jesus, the village is a reflection of the congregation's expression of the real meaning of Christmas. The birth of a savior among the oppressed Hebrew people is what we are to be celebrating when we celebrate Christmas.

Dressed in appropriate costumes, the participants' hard work of setting up the village brings satisfaction as villagers greet visitors during the evening. This year the presentation was Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 20 and 21.

After visiting village shops and finding Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus in the manger surrounded by live animals, visitors find a sign that



Betty Wund/Special to the CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The First Assembly of God of Cape May held its fourth annual Bethlehem Village on Dec. 20-21. The event recreates the sights and sounds of Bethlehem in the time of Jesus' birth. Above, Karen Fournier, Victoria Dodd and Caroline Olsen work the fruit shop. At top, Zac Seetoo-Ronk, Logan Barikian and Blaise McKown learn about dreidels from Brent Hand.

tells it all, "33 years later, we find the reason for the season." They are also welcome to pray individually or with members of the congregation at the prayer tent before leaving.

There are shops in the village that represent those that existed when the Hebrews traveled from all over into Bethlehem for the census and to pay their taxes to the Ro-

mans. Visitors found wood and pottery making shops, an oil shop where they learned about the oils used in the community

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Wichterman bids adieu to City Council

Urges new board to continue school funding-formula fight

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Deputy Mayor Jack Wichterman urged three councilmen taking seats in January to continue the city's fight to change the funding formula for Lower Cape May Regional School District.

Wichterman, who did not seek re-election, attended his final meeting Dec. 16. He thanked Cape May's voters for "backing the mayor and council" in their actions to change the regional school-funding formula.

Wichterman said the city received a 70 percent affirmative vote in both the Nov. 4 and Dec. 9 ballot questions. The Nov. 4 ballot question asked if the regional school-funding formula should be changed to reflect student

enrollment, while the Dec. 9 question asked if Cape May should withdraw from the district.

"We have done all we can do as this mayor and council," he said. "It now relies upon the council of next year to carry this thing forward, and I would remind the three new people that the candidates all said they would be guided by the votes of the people."

"I would say that a 70 percent plurality, which is what we received on both questions, was quite significant. So I would hope you would keep that in mind for next year because I think we're going to be successful," Wichterman continued.

He said that was the one reason he was sorry he would

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West Cape May gets funds to fix homes

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — The borough was awarded \$125,000 from the state Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to help local low- to moderate-income property owners rehabilitate their homes, according to Mayor Pamela Kaithern.

"We are appreciative of the DCA's award and very pleased that our application was so favorably received," Kaithern said. "This money

will improve our housing stock, over 75 percent of which was built before 1980, by helping a number of our residents bring their homes into compliance with local code."

The money comes from the DCA's Small Cities Community Development Block Grant program, an extremely competitive funding opportunity that provides grants to develop public facilities, improve public infrastructure,

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Joseph Salvatore, chairman of the NASW Foundation, talks about the new flight simulator that will be in place as an exhibit at the Naval Air Station Wildwood Aviation Museum next spring.

New year, new projects for Aviation Museum

Just because it is a little chillier in historic Hangar #1 doesn't mean that the pace of new projects and events slows down at the Naval Air Station Wildwood (NASW) Aviation Museum.

In fact, three new projects are being taken on during the winter months so they can be ready for visitors in the spring and summer.

Previously used as a storage room, a space that looks over the 26 aircraft displays and exhibits of military memorabilia is now the Hangar Cafe.

"We knew that it was a wonderful space that always had potential," NASW Foundation Chairman Joseph Salvatore

'We knew that it was a wonderful space that always had potential, but up until last year we never had any time to devote to a renovation project.'

— NASW Foundation Chairman Joseph Salvatore

said. "But up until last year we never had any time to devote to a renovation project."

The 52-foot-long by 12-foot-wide space was built in the 1970s as a way for administrators to oversee daily operations in the hangar, which at the time was used as a fixed base operator for the airport.

From the time they vacated

the hangar until last year, the room, which boasts an impressive view of the museum, sat underutilized.

The planning process began last winter to change that.

"We wanted to create a unique event space where we could also serve refreshments and snacks," Salvatore said.

The plan was to keep the

scope and price tag of the project as low as possible, but modern day code, particularly when dealing with a historic structure, kept everyone on their toes. Ten months of work and a lot of labor later, the doors are finally open.

In the gift shop, work is beginning on an expansion project that would increase the shop by one-third. Walls that separate the current shop from the museum's ready room are set to come down, which will make room for larger items and give the museum a much-needed area to sell books.

"Each year our gift shop in-

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