



## HOUSE OF THE WEEK

Real Estate Resource



## WAS 1927 DEATH MURDER, SUICIDE? NOBODY KNOWS

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# 'How could you live through that? But you do'

## A mother shares struggles of coping with son's addiction, getting him help

*Editor's note: The newspaper conducted in-person interviews, but the names have been changed to protect the identities of those involved.*

By **KRISTEN KELLEHER**  
Sentinel staff

CAPE MAY COUNTY — When a phone rings, Lisa still shakes inside. It's a residual effect from loving a recovering addict.

Her son Matt's voice and an assurance that he is still doing well allows the shaking sensation to subside.

What it doesn't do is erase the

memory of countless other phone calls — calls from a hospital after her son overdosed, from Matt's friend when her son drank all of the alcohol in her home.

Her 28-year-old son is four years sober and thriving. He owns a fencing company, rents a home about two hours north of his native Cape May County, and attends and leads Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.

Now, he is thriving. This success is preceded by years of darkness, what Lisa called a journey "to hell, from hell, and back."

She still worries about that



misery becoming their lives again.

Lisa attends support group meetings for family members of loved ones struggling with addiction at Christians United for Recovery (CURE), an addiction recovery ministry through The

Lighthouse Church in Cape May Court House.

She said she has heard people speak about being clean for 10, 15 years, and then relapsing.

She can't understand that. "Why on Earth would you choose a chance at killing yourself?" she said.

"How could you throw it away?"

Though she has lived with it, there are aspects of addiction she does not understand.

"Even to this day talking to people, I don't comprehend how (substances) affect you. How

could you possibly do that? You have everything in life. How could you throw it away?" she asked.

She answers her own question. "It's just the drug itself," Lisa said. Some people can't control it.

Her son is one of those people. Lisa raised her family in Cape May County.

For a while, "life was wonderful."

They were "the absolute perfect family" — a husband, wife and two children, a girl and a boy.

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Dave Callahan/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Dave Callahan captured this image of a bald eagle perched along the South Cape May Meadows Nature Preserve on Feb. 11.

## County budget down nearly 4 percent, tax rate up slightly

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — The Cape May County Board of Chosen Freeholders introduced the 2017 budget Jan. 24.

The proposed \$146.3 million budget is down 3.6 percent from the adopted 2016 budget of \$151.2 million.

Total operating expenses are \$69.6 million, reflecting a decrease of about 8 percent overall due to an accounting change. Total salaries and wages increased to \$51.5 million.

The amount of money to be raised by property taxes to support the bud-

get is \$106 million, compared with \$103 million for 2016. The amount of revenue other than property taxes used to support the budget is \$39.3 million.

The budget uses about 50 percent of the county's surplus, specifically \$9.5 million of the available \$18.6 million.

The county equalized tax rate for 2017 will be 21.8 cents per \$100 of assessed value, an increase of less than a half-cent. Although it will vary depending on the ratio of assessed value to true value in each of the county's 16

municipalities, an average taxpayer will pay \$218 for \$100,000 of property assessment.

A public hearing on the budget is scheduled for 4:30p.m. Feb. 28 in the Freeholder Meeting Room at the County Administration Building. Public comment and recommendations are welcome.

In addition to being available at the Office of the Clerk of the Board at the Administration Building, this proposed budget will be accessible on the county website at [cape-maycountynj.gov](http://cape-maycountynj.gov).

## Meier suggests city try temporary parking lot

### Would use park staging area for summer

By **JACK FICHTER**  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Deputy Mayor Shaine Meier is proposing a temporary parking lot for the summer season be created at the current site of a staging area for JCP&L's remediation of the former manufactured gas plant off Lafayette Street.

The remediation is scheduled to conclude by Memorial Day, which will leave behind a large area covered in gravel that was used to park trucks and heavy machinery.

At the opening of a Feb. 7 City Council meeting,

Councilman Roger Furlin asked to have discussion of a temporary parking lot removed from the agenda of the work session. He said he was concerned about the impact of discussion on grants the city has received to construct future phases of Lafayette Street Park.

"We're talking about a \$7, \$8 million project and if possible I'd like to get James Rutala here also to discuss it and answer any questions we have about the grants that we've received for that



MEIER

area," Furlin said. Rutala has acted as a grants consultant for Cape May.

Meier said he wanted to get discussion started at the meeting, noting the parking lot would be on a temporary basis.

Councilwoman Bea Pessagno said the concept was not vetted through all of council and the parking lot would be the heart of the park's recreation area.

"You should not really propose something to the

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## Cape May explores use of app to let people feed the meters

By **JACK FICHTER**  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Got quarters? Soon it may not be necessary to break into your piggy bank to bring quarters to Cape May to feed parking meters. Under consideration is the use of a smartphone app to put money in the meter even while you're dining in your favorite eatery or sitting on the beach.

At a Feb. 7 City Council meeting, Dan Shustack, the city's purchasing agent, said Parkmobile is an app-based parking meter system that allows drivers to use their smartphones to pay meters rather than have to pay with quarters in the old-fashioned meters or put dollars or a credit card in a kiosk on the Washington Street Mall.

"You pull up to the parking spot, you either scan in the QR code or punch in the sticker number that's on the parking meter head and you're able to add time as much or as little as you want via your phone, which connects to either your Paypal account or credit card account and you can go on your way," he said. "You don't have to worry about carrying change with you."

Shustack said the Parkmobile app will send a message to a phone 15 minutes be-

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE  
Cape May is considering letting people pay for parking using a smartphone app as is done in Ocean City.

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