

Cape May Star and Wave

161ST YEAR NO. 37 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2015 75¢



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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A B-24 ride over Cape May Point

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Late-summer sunset



Edward O'Neill/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Christian Paulhus and Anne Pichette enjoy a late summer sunset on Town Bank beach. The couple from Chambly, Quebec camp in Green Creek each year and promised to return here next year.

After spinal injuries, some hope for slope? Changing beach angle now a possibility

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – More than 200 spinal injuries have taken place on the city's beaches since 2001, according to resident Dennis Desatnick, whose son Chad suffered such an injury 15 years ago.

At a Sept. 1 City Council meeting, Dennis Desatnick spoke of a 17-year old summer resident who on Aug. 5 suffered a broken C5 vertebra here in the ocean and remains paralyzed. He said it was the worst such injury he could remember and council must take action.

Sharp drop-offs at the shoreline called a shorebreak were thought to be responsible for a number of injuries to body surfers and boogie board riders who run into a wall of sand. Cape May's beaches have been replenished with sand from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers since 1999. Replenished beaches have been

the sites of C-Spine injuries in several states. Desatnick asked if the city's agreement for beach replenishment prevented the moving of sand laterally.

"The agreement specifically says no grading of any of the beaches," said City Solicitor Tony Monzo. "The agreement also requires the city maintain the beaches pursuant to the state regulations issued by DEP (Department of Environmental Protection)."

Desatnick said the Army Corps has stated municipalities are allowed to maintain beaches during emergency and safety issue situations. Monzo said beaches were regulated by DEP, not by the Army Corps of Engineers. He said when the city was offered a 50-year plan of beach replenishment, a master agreement was entered into in 1988 that specifically prohibits any grading of beaches.

See Spinal Injuries, page A2

Public questions why city manager had 9 bikes confiscated on Promenade

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Nine bicycles were removed from the Promenade Aug. 24 that were illegally chained to a bench or signpost with tickets issued to six bicycle owners, according to City Manager Bruce MacLeod.

The event triggered a firestorm of negative comments on social media and attracted the attention of a Philadelphia television station in part because the locks were cut by city personnel.

At a Sept. 1 City Council meeting, Councilman Jack Wichterman called the incident a "debacle." He said the

city had so many ordinances "which are not adhered to."

Wichterman said bicycles are ridden on the Promenade after the 10 a.m. cut-off time as well as dogs walked and skateboards ridden despite regulations prohibiting that activity. He said he saw bicycles and skateboards ridden on the Washington Street Mall as well as dogs being walked and has pointed that out to police officers.

Wichterman suggested warnings rather than \$100 tickets for bicycle infractions.

During public comment, former councilman Bill Murray said sufficient notice was not posted on the Promenade. He said signage only indi-

cated no bicycle riding on the Promenade after 10 a.m. with no mention of parking regulations.

Patricia Hendricks, a candidate for City Council, asked MacLeod if he alone ordered the bicycles to be removed from the Promenade.

"I take responsibility for the removal of the bikes," he said. "It's already been reported on that I was out there for another purpose but came across a couple of bikes that were attached to a park bench."

"In discussion with our public works superintendent, I made the decision to ask

See Bikes, page A4

BUSINESS AT THE SHORE IN 2015:

A GOOD SUMMER

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – An informal survey shows tourism was solid for Cape May in 2015.

Cape May Chamber of Commerce President Ron Goldstein said the city seemed like "standing room only," beginning the third week in July. Responses from a survey of chamber members in late July found a season "as good as last year or slightly better." He said the chamber brings travel writers into Cape May for stays and attend travel shows which pay off.

Despite the continuous run of near-perfect beach weather, which always hurts non-beach attractions, Mid Atlantic Center for the Arts and Humanities experienced a pretty strong, if not record-breaking summer 2015, according to Director Michael Zuckerman.

He said while the weather helped produce bumper crowds at the Cape May Lighthouse and MAC's Cape May trolley tours, it contributed to depressed attendance at the World War II Lookout Tower and the Emlen Physick

'What was really different this year was we had only one rainy day so it was really a great, outdoor beach season. In terms of the crowds, the crowds were here and they all seemed to be happy.'

–David Craig, Lucky Bones

Estate whose children's programs at the Carriage House Café and Tearoom were particularly hard hit.

The biggest MAC success story continues to be August's Craft Beer & Crab Festival at the Physick Estate, which set new records in its fourth anniversary.

Cape Regional Medical Center in Cape May Court House saw no increase in emergency room traffic over 2014, but did see an 18 per

See Good Summer, page A5

County: Fewer Canadians, more traffic

By ERIC AVEDESIAN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE – Cape May County Chamber of Commerce President Vicki Clark said 2015 was "a very good summer" based on the majority of opinions she's received.

"I think we still have some of the same challenges we've had in the past with mid-week vacancies in the lodging sector, but overall people are telling me, whether it's been restaurants or amusements, that it's been a very good season," Clark said. According to Clark, the favorable summer weather attributed to the success of the season.

She said her inquiries to businesses included how their businesses fared this year as compared to last year.

"I've had many (businesses) tell me they were up 10 percent, maybe more. Some have said it was the best summer ever. Some have been

cautious and say it was good," Clark said. County businesses run the gamut from restaurants to retail to lodging including hotels and campgrounds, according to Clark.

"There's been more traffic, more people on the boardwalk than there has been in the last few years," Clark said.

Despite an influx of visitors, the number of Canadian visitors to Cape May County in 2015 is "definitely down this year," Clark said.

"Canadian visitors have not been as much a part of this summer season because the rate of exchange hasn't been in their favor," Clark said. "Some of our Canadian visitors did not make the trip this year."

She said the increased tourist traffic from elsewhere could be attributed to falling gas prices, clear weather and tourism promotions.

"We do have such a loyal customer base from a two- or three-hour driving distance that there were a lot of factors in place to really encourage people to make the trip at least one during the summer, if not more than that," Clark said.

TOURISM PERSPECTIVES FROM AROUND THE AREA

Upper Twp.: Season out of our hands; weather rules

By KRISTEN KELLEHER
Sentinel staff

UPPER TOWNSHIP – Imagine a paycheck dependent on something knowingly unpredictable.

At the southern New Jersey shore, summer success in many seasonal resort communities hinges on the weather.

Whether the weather is cold or hot can make the difference for some local businesses, some of which depend on the summer's performance to make it through the sparsely-populated winters.

This summer may have been as close to an answer to a prayer for good weather

See Weather, page A5

Summer was solid up north in Ocean City

By ERIC AVEDESIAN
Sentinel staff

OCEAN CITY – As summer 2015 winds down its inevitable last days, and tourists pack their bags and head across the causeway, local merchants reflect on the sultry season.

The general consensus in America's Greatest Family Resort is a slow-starting summer, due to a wet beginning, and humid ending. Dry weather dominated in July and August, giving merchants abundant customers, who flocked to the New Jersey shore in record numbers.

Early indicators show Ocean City businesses experienced a better than av-

See Resort, page A8

Somers Point a year-round town living by the shore

By KRISTEN KELLEHER
Sentinel staff

SOMERS POINT – As a mainland community with bay access, Somers Point is in the unique position of having a relatively year-round population and enough second-home owners and seasonal traffic to significantly boost business in the summer.

Michael Bray, president of the Somers Point Business Association (SPBA), said while Somers Point is not considered a seasonal community, its neighbors (including Ocean City and Longport), are.

"We take advantage of

See Year-Round, page A8

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