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November 2011  
Eastern Standard Time

High	Low
A.M.	P.M.
2 1:56	2:16
3 3:03	3:18
4 4:05	4:17
5 4:58	5:09
6 4:44	4:56
7 5:25	5:38
8 6:03	6:19
9 6:39	6:57

**Set clocks back an hour Saturday night**

## Candidates' debate gets testy over ad claims

By ERIC AVEDESIAN  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPEMAY COURT HOUSE - Incumbent Democratic First Legislative District Senator Jeff Van Drew and Republican challenger David DeWeese sparred during a debate sponsored by the Cape May County League of Women Voters on Oct. 26 in the Old Courthouse building here, squabbling over jobs, the economy and their past records.

The audience was divided equally among partisans who cheered for their appropriate side.

Van Drew, who has served

in the Senate since 2008, is a former assemblyman and Cape May County freeholder.

Van Drew said his support for Gov. Chris Christie's pension reform bill was "bipartisan," which prevented the pension system from failing.

Signed by Christie in June, the pension reform bill sets the retirement age from 60 to 65 for new employees, eliminates cost of living increase and doubles what teachers, firefighters and police officers pay into their health care benefits. It also temporarily removes union collective bargaining for four years.

"If we didn't do something very soon, the pension system

would collapse. That's unfair to the taxpayers, that's unfair to the people who receive the pension and it wouldn't be something we could maintain into the future," Van Drew said.

He said Christie and the legislators agreed the state should fund pensions, but doing so immediately would result in a tax increase. Van Drew said he would have preferred the pension bill and health care bill were separated, but Christie threatened to veto them if they were separate.

"For the first time in the recent history of the state, we made some really diffi-

cult decisions for reform that are going to help the state in future years," Van Drew said.

DeWeese, a former prosecutor and municipal judge in Wildwood, blamed the Democrat-controlled legislature for ten years of underfunding and borrowing money from the state's pension system.

"The New Jersey State Legislature, which was Democratically controlled, is solely responsible for what happened to the pension system in the State of New Jersey. We were put in a crisis situation because of that," DeWeese said.

DeWeese said the pension

reforms were "forced down peoples' throats." He supported collective bargaining benefits over legislative reforms.

Van Drew said it was both Republicans and Democrats together who created the pension problems in the state.

"Let's stop the nonsense of saying everything Democrats do is bad and everything Republicans do is good," Van Drew said. "I think you put a press release out when Hurricane Irene came saying I was partially to blame for that."

DeWeese noted unemploy-

Please see **Testy**, page A2

## Rainbow flag stir at coffee shop

Some residents call for boycotting the business

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY - Some members of the local gay community have expressed outrage over an incident involving a rainbow flag being taken down at a local coffee shop.

The Star and Wave received an email from a local resident who was urging people to boycott the Higher Grounds Coffee House. According to the email sent by Thomas Raniszewski, about two weeks ago, a group later identified as Out, About and Proud in Cape May was



having a regular meeting at Higher Grounds. Both Raniszewski and Higher Grounds owner Katie Panamarenko said the incident was over a rainbow flag the group put on the front door of the coffee shop. Raniszewski said Panamarenko's mother took down the flag, saying it was bad for business.

Panamarenko said she had opened up her business to the Out, About and Proud group as she had on six prior occasions. She said she did not charge the group to use her shop for gatherings. In the past, she said, the group had asked to hang a rainbow windsock, which she said was okay. On this particular night,

Please see **Flag**, page A2

## Freeholder candidates unopposed

By ERIC AVEDESIAN  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY - Cape May County Freeholder candidates Kristine Gabor and Will Morey don't face competition this year, but are still campaigning and meeting voters.

The two Republicans have different experiences and haven't delved into the foray of county politics before.

Gabor, elected to the Upper Township Committee in 2009, is a marketing representative at Coastal Agents Alliance. She previously worked as a real estate agent for Coldwell Banker Laricks and an insurance agent for J. Byrne Insurance.

Morey is president and chief executive officer of the Morey Organization, a family-operated amusement park business. The Morey Organization operates Morey's Piers and Beachfront Waterparks in Wildwood and also developed real estate, including Seapointe Village Resort in Wildwood Crest and The Starlux hotel in Wildwood.

Incumbent Republican freeholders Daniel Beyel and Ralph Sheets are not running for re-election. Beyel was

first elected to the county board in 1987 and Sheets in 1990.

Their departure marks a polemic shift in county politics, which began with the arrival of county Republican chairman Michael Donohue, who replaced former chairman David Von Savage.

The changing of county GOP leadership came during a contentious primary, which saw Freeholders Gerald Thornton and Susan Sheppard knocking off establishment candidates Ralph Bakley and John McCann.

"We really have open government, which is the way it's supposed to be," said Gabor, who is the vice chairwoman of the county GOP. "I wasn't looked upon very kindly because I spoke out." She came out early and backed Sheppard and Thornton when they decided to go against the party-supported Bakley and McCann.

Gabor said there is a shift in county government "in a positive direction." "Myself and Will are going in with fresh eyes. Neither of us have any type of agenda for ourselves personally other than we really want to serve and

Please see **Free**, page A2



Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave

## Debate gets interesting

Dennis Brown of 98.7 The Coast radio (in background) looks amused as District 1 Senate candidates David DeWeese (Rep.), left, and incumbent Sen. Jeff Van Drew (Dem.) face off over advertising claims. Election Day is Nov. 8.

## Assembly candidates face off

By ERIC AVEDESIAN  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE - First Legislative District Assembly candidates sparred in a debate sponsored by the Cape May County League of Women Voters at the Old Courthouse building on Oct. 26.

Democratic incumbent Assemblymen Nelson Albano and Matt Milam faced off against Republican challengers Sam Fiocchi and Suzanne Walters, debating issues such as taxes, business growth and tourism.

The audience was mostly packed with partisan supporters, who cheered or applauded after their candidates spoke.

The First Legislative District encompasses all of Cape May County and parts of Cumberland and Atlantic counties.

Fiocchi, a Cumberland County freeholder and retired businessman, said the past administrations of Democratic governors James McGreevey and Jon Corzine "killed jobs and hurt businesses in New Jersey."

"Private sector growth is really what we need to help incentivize businesses and have lower taxes in the state," Fiocchi said.

Walters, the mayor of Stone Harbor, said she would put programs in place to grow jobs in New Jersey.

"Business owners will not expand their businesses, they will not come to New Jersey until they know that this is a stable state in which they can do business and which their businesses can flourish," Walters said.



Sam Fiocchi



Nelson Albano



Suzanne Walters



Matt Milam

Albano, a union shop steward, noted the economy is bad throughout the country, with a high national unemployment rate. He said industry should relocate to the district, bringing with it decent pay and health care for employees.

"This country let jobs go overseas little by little until all of the industry was gone in this country. What we need to do is to fight to bring them back," Albano said.

Albano said he's working on a bill to give various tax credits to corporations and businesses who set up shop in vacant buildings,

provide health care and benefits for employees.

He blamed both Republicans and Democrats for the state's pension woes.

"It started with (former governor) Christie Whitman borrowing from the pension and not putting that money back and the Democratic governors after that not contributing," Albano said.

Milam, who owns a trucking business, said businesses are reluctant to grow because of the corporate

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