

Cape May Star and Wave

157TH YEAR NO. 12 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, March 23, 2011 50¢



INSIDE



SPORTS

PAL girls shine
in 36-3 year, **B1**

Rugby Club wins
season opener, **B1**

Rodia: Catching stripers
at Cold Spring Jetty, **B1**

CAPE MAY

Community Events, **A4**

TIDES

March 2011

Eastern Standard Time

	High	Low		
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
23	11:35	5:22	5:29	
24	12:04	12:31	6:19	6:25
25	1:03	1:34	7:21	7:26
26	2:06	2:44	8:26	8:33
27	3:14	3:55	9:31	9:40
28	4:20	4:58	10:33	10:43
29	5:18	5:52	11:26	11:38

Moon Phases

New Moon, March 4
First Quarter, March 12
Full Moon, March 19
Last Quarter, March 26
Apogee, March 6
Perigee, March 19

Firefighters respond to commissioners' budget

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY – Deputy fire chief Steve Nelson of the West Cape May Volunteer Fire Company responded to comments made by Mayor Pamela Kaithern and Deputy Mayor Peter Burke concerning the amount of money the fire company receives from the borough each year and how firefighters spend the funding they raise.

Nelson said at the Wednesday, March 9 meeting that he and the rest of the VFC were “shocked” by statements Burke and Kaithern

‘That’s only \$72,000. What comprises the other \$38,000?’

– Deputy Fire Chief Steve Nelson
West Cape May Fire Company

made at the prior Feb. 23 budget meeting, which he read in local newspapers. Kaithern had been quoted saying the VFC receives \$110,000 each year from the municipality, but Nelson disagreed.

He said the borough had \$40,000 in the budget for

equipment and equipment testing, gear and vehicle maintenance. Nelson said the fire hall also receives \$22,000 for the fire house building and grounds used for utilities and inspections, as well as \$10,000 for insurance.

“That is only \$72,000. What comprises the other \$38,000?”

he asked the commissioners.

Kaithern said the fire company free Comcast cable and internet costing around \$720 courtesy of the borough as well as trash disposal, which amounts to \$1600 a year. Electric bills average between \$16,000 and \$17,000 for the fire hall and insurance is \$9,236 while landscaping services cost roughly \$1,000. Kaithern provided a list of tax funded capital expenses that shows figures from 1999 to 2010. Over that time, more than \$468,000 in spending included a roof replacement and renovations of the building, a new fire truck, radios, a

hose and a heating and cooling system. That \$468,000 averages around \$36,000 annually over 13 years.

Kaithern said all those figures combined plus the figures Nelson mentioned, would total about \$127,000 annually for the fire company.

Nelson said if that \$110,000, which he also said may not be accurate, was taken and divided by 1,095 taxpayers in West Cape May, the fire company would cost borough residents 27 cents a day. He claimed as a Lower Township

Please see **Respond**, page A2

Township asking MUA for money

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

LOWER TOWNSHIP – Lower Township Council voted 4-1 to ask the Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority for 2.5 percent of the funds in their surplus account.

Mayor Mike Beck cast the only no vote in the council's decision to ask the LTMUA for \$163,500 or half of what the township is allowed to ask under New Jersey law. The LTMUA board will vote to either accept or reject the township's request.

Deputy Mayor Kevin Lare supported making the request in light of efforts to reduce the tax rate increase. The other council members voiced support for the measure. Councilman Tom Conrad said it was a way to reduce the tax burden.

“I think it's one of the ways to do it. I didn't like it last year, and I don't like it this year, but it's a way to reduce the tax rate,” he said.

“Asking for half is only reasonable,” Councilman Erik Simonsen said.

Councilman Glenn Douglass said the idea came up several years ago, and he was willing to ask for half of what the township could legally request.

“I wish I could agree with you,” Beck said, “But this is the worst idea this year.”

Beck said asking the LTMUA for money was an easy way to solve a budget problem, but not the correct

one. Beck said the surplus money comes from water and sewer rate payers, which does not include all the taxpayers in Lower Township. Residents who have wells and septic systems do not pay into the LTMUA account, but would benefit from the tax break created by LTMUA surplus funds.

Beck also said the surplus was the result of the LTMUA working hard to get a balanced budget, the first in 10 years, he said, and he didn't think it was right to take the fruits of their efforts. He said the LTMUA had gotten its house in order, and he said the township should do the same.

Beck also said the township was not in a position where it needed to take money out of the LTMUA's surplus. He said it is not like the township is trying to reduce a 5-cent tax increase and get below the spending cap. He said council is just trying to reduce a 1.7-cent tax rate increase down to 1-cent, when the township is already below the spending and levy cap.

Lare said he supported the idea of asking for the money because, for one thing, the township secures all bonds sought by the LTMUA. He said the township also help the LTMUA get a \$1.5 million grant, with the taxpayers putting out \$30,000 for the project.

He also felt there was an

Please see **Money**, page A2



Courtesy of Harry Bellangy and the Greater Cape May Historical Society

Great '62 Storm

Above is a 1962 photo of damage caused by the Great Atlantic Storm of 1962, also known as the Ash Wednesday Storm, or simply the 1962 Storm. This view is from Beach Avenue near Gurney Street. See more photos on page 10.

Great storm presentation attracts much local interest

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Many people have heard of the 1962 storm that destroyed the historic Convention Hall.

What many people probably do not know was it wasn't a single storm, but three low pressure systems that merged and hung around the Jersey coast for five high tides battering the shoreline.

The Greater Cape May Historical Society sponsored a video presentation, March 19, led by GCMHS President Harry Bellangy.

Bellangy, 67, was born and raised in Cape May, and remembers most of the sig-

nificant storms that left their mark on Cape Island.

Bellangy began the presentation by showing some video made in March 1941. On March 14 of that year, Cape May received a snowstorm that rivaled any in recent history. Cars were shown with two to three feet of snow on the roof and people stepping in waist-high drifts.

The presentation then highlighted the September 1944 hurricane that caused massive destruction along the beachfront, including wrecking Convention Hall.

On Ash Wednesday 1962, the area was getting ready for a northeast storm. No one was particularly concerned.

“As far as we knew we were getting another northeast storm,” GCMHS board member Carol Boyd said.

What happened next, however, was the collision of three low pressure systems that stalled for days.

“We saw rain, lightning, snow, everything you could think of,” Boyd said.

Things got so bad the National Guard shut down the town and wouldn't let people in unless they could show a deed.

“It was a winter storm, and they don't usually name winter storms,” Bellangy said.

This one, however, became

Please see **Storm**, page A10

Mahaney reads to CME students

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – City Mayor Edward Mahaney stopped by the Cape May Elementary School last Thursday to read to the second-grade class in support of the National Education Association's Read Across America program.

In light of St. Patrick's Day, Mahaney chose to read the students a story called “The Night Before St. Patrick's Day” by Natasha Wing. When he was finished reading, he had a discussion with the students about the Irish traditions of the holiday. The students then shared several imaginative and humorous stories about their experiences searching for leprechauns.

“This kind of thing really gets their imagination going,” Mahaney said.

According to second-grade teacher Kelly Helbig, the Read Across America pro-




Cain Chamberlin/Cape May Star and Wave

Above, Mayor Ed Mahaney visited Cape May Elementary to read to students on the occasion of Read Across America Day.

gram kicks off every March 2 on Dr. Seuss' birthday. A committee of four teachers at the school, including Helbig, came up with a project in

honor of the program. Kindergarten through third-grade students have a

Please see **Reads**, page A2



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