



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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VILLAS WOMAN DELIVERS ADDRESS AT CALDWELL

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John Cooke/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Capt. Owen L. Gibbons, left, salutes and relieves Capt. Todd Prestidge as commander of Coast Guard Training Center Cape May on Monday, June 20, with Rear Adm. David G. Throop presiding.

Gibbons takes over command of Training Center Cape May

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Capt. Owen Gibbons relieved Capt. Todd Prestidge as commanding officer of Training Center Cape May (TRACEN) during a change-of-command ceremony June 17.

Rear Adm. David G. Throop, commander of Coast Guard Force Readiness Command in Norfolk,

Va., presided over the ceremony. He called Prestidge a great commanding officer and a tremendous leader with an extensive record of championing equal opportunity employment and civil rights principles, which resulted in him receiving a 2015 Civil Rights Senior Leadership Award.

“During his tenure, over 7,500 young men and women came from the civilian ranks into the Coast Guard,

joining 1 percent of our nation in uniform, ready to serve,” Throop said.

He said under Prestidge’s leadership, TRACEN’s line of fire weapons training, without any additional resources, was put together in just eight weeks.

Throop lauded Prestidge for his work making the county and Cape May a

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Council vote opposes changes at post office

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — In a move described by Councilman Shaine Meier as “slapping him in the face publicly,” City Council passed a resolution opposing changes to the city’s post office and not endorsing any individuals who are seeking alterations to the building. Meier has been attempting to get a ramp built at the post office to allow access for those in wheelchairs or who have trouble navigating steps.

A resolution passed at council’s June 20 meeting states the mayor and council support the continuation of the post office building in Cape May “as it currently exists without any changes other than those required by law or desired by the United States Postal Service and whereas the mayor and council of the city of Cape May do not support or endorse the efforts of any individuals who are seeking alterations to the United States Post Office building in Cape May nor does it agree with any assertions that the United States Post Office building in Cape May is not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or any other applicable law.”

An hour before the coun-



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Councilman Shaine Meier talks with wheelchair-bound residents outside the post office in Cape May, which is not handicapped-accessible.

cil meeting, U.S Rep. Frank LoBiondo dedicated four benches donated by the city in front of the post office in a public ceremony attended by a number of people in wheelchairs or on scooters. Mayor Edward Mahaney said the post office was built in 1938 and was not subject to compliance with ADA, based on the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968.

“The one problem we have is that if there are improvements started to be

made here, the whole building will have to come into compliance,” he said. “If that happens, there is a very good reality that the post office will move this branch to Rio Grande, where they’ve built a bigger post office.”

Mahaney said he would work with residents to bring post office services to their homes on a more regular basis. He said the post office is essential to residents,

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Ex-police Lt. Lear will seek election to mayor position

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Recently retired police Lt. Chuck Lear announced his bid Monday to seek election as mayor in November’s general election.

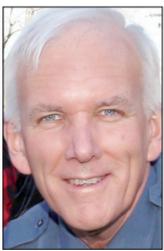
Lear, a life-long Cape May resident, served 37 years with the Cape May Police Department and retired this past December. He worked his way up from patrolman to lieutenant.

Lear was an instructor at the Cape May County Police Academy. He served as Senior Vehicle Operations instructor and Domestic Violence Prevention instructor. In addition, he assisted with the initial training for the Cape May Fire Department’s Fire Police unit.

According to a news release, Lear is also currently active in Cape Community Church, where he serves as deacon and treasurer. He and his wife, Karen, have

been married for 35 years and have three sons and one grandson.

“A number of concerned Cape May residents have encouraged me to seek public office,” Lear said.



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“They urged me to present a new and positive message about our community and its future. I approached my law enforcement career with honor and respect for our community, and our citizens viewed my service as marked by professionalism, common sense and proper decorum. Using my experience, knowledge and skills, I will build a new community of teamwork among city employees, residents, visitors and businesses.”

Lear said he looks forward to meeting with local residents and business owners to share a vision and plans for Cape May’s future. He said he is enthusiastic about serving the community in a new and important way as mayor.

Committee ponders definition of ‘seat’

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — What type of seat at a restaurant, hotel or bar should count towards calculations for mercantile licenses and site plans?

The city’s Outdoor Seating Committee held its second meeting June 14 at City Hall Auditorium. It’s tasked with making recommendations to City Council on how to regulate the increasing number of seasonal outdoor seats at hotels and restaurants, in particular seats not included on mercantile licenses and site plans.

City Manager Bruce Ma-

“Once you back all that stuff out, what you have left are all the other seats in these establishments but you try to narrow it to those seats where food or beverages can be or will be consumed on the property where there is a principle building that serves food or beverages.”

—City Solicitor Tony Monzo

Leod said neither the BOCA (Building Officials Code Administrators) Code nor the Uniform Construction Code provides a definition that was directly applicable to Cape May’s use.

City Solicitor Tony Monzo said he came up with a definition of seats based on a proposed draft ordinance with some adjustments.

“Also, I think it’s im-

portant to specifically say what’s not included in that definition,” he said.

Monzo said if seats have previously been approved by the city for a business, they would not be lost. He said seats at establishments that do not attract customers may be just resting areas where neither food nor alcoholic beverages are consumed.

The city is concerned with seats where customers sit for a period of time consuming food or a beverage or listening to music, said Monzo. Seats not under consideration are hotel lobby seats or benches used for customers waiting for tables, he said. Monzo said poolside seating at hotels was limited to guests of the hotel which is figured into site plan approval as far as impact on parking.

“I’ve tried to exclude those types of seats from the definition of seating,” said Monzo. “Once you back all that stuff out, what you have left are all the oth-

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Lower adopts county’s Hazard Mitigation Plan

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — The township is participating in a county Hazard Mitigation Plan that may open the door for grant money for measures to prevent flooding.

At a June 20 Township Council meeting, Superintendent of Public Works Gary Douglass said the township was participating in a county emergency management plan and

strategy required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

“It lists projects that can be mitigated to save the federal government from repetitive losses,” he said. “After (Superstorm) Sandy, a lot of mitigation funds became available and if the county doesn’t have a plan and the municipality doesn’t adopt a plan, you’re not eligible for the grants that come along with it.”

Douglass said the town-

ship received a grant a few years ago for generators for the Recreation Center and Department of Public Works.

The township’s project to improve storm water drainage in the Roseann Avenue area with new pipes and a pump station are included in the plan, he said.

“We didn’t have that many repetitive losses other than power outages, so that’s why we got the generators,” Douglass said.

After Sandy, a lot of the money went to acquisition of properties in North Jersey and for raising the elevation of homes. Councilman Tom Conrad said the township may be eligible in the future for grants to install bulkheads or build berms to stop flooding instead of the township bearing all the cost.

The plan includes measures such as zoning and

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