

Cape May Star and Wave

153rd YEAR NO. 36 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 2007 50¢

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31	10:44	11:04	4:17	4:49
1	11:33	11:55	5:02	5:45
2		12:28	5:51	6:47
3	12:53	1:29	6:46	7:54
4	2:00	2:38	7:48	9:06
5	3:15	3:51	8:57	10:17

Theater foundation lays out plans for public

By LESLIE TRULUCK
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY - The Beach Theatre Foundation (BTF) held an information session on Aug. 26 at Congress Hall where Foundation President Steven Jackson presented and discussed the history and plans for the complex with some 50 attendees.

City loan pending, the foundation has ambitious plans to preserve and enhance the

Beach Theatre complex making the theater a year-long establishment for creative arts, including a stage, art gallery, educational programs in collaboration with Stockton College, while providing a diverse selection of independent, foreign, and animated movies. Jackson said there would be some first-run films but they would be limited to those by independent filmmakers.

Upon receiving the

\$100,000 city loan with final decision to be made at the City Council meeting Sept. 4, the foundation plans to lease and run the theater portion of the complex for one year expected to begin Oct. 1. The surrounding 13 retail stores will continue to operate on their leases with Frank Investments.

Throughout the lease time the foundation will seek a buyer of the \$12 million complex and assign a purchase

option that has the new owner leasing the theater portion back to the foundation which they make payments on for 50 years. Based on negotiations, the foundation anticipates the new owner to pay for some or all of the restoration of the theater portion. Jackson said there are no potential buyers yet.

BTF believes the theater would have a direct cultural and financial benefit to the city.

Based on the 26,000 who attended the theater last summer and the current \$9 ticket price, Jackson said the theater could bring \$1.8 million in local spending, \$140,000 in local and state taxes and fees, and create as many as 50 full-time jobs. BTF promises to lower ticket prices and bring in more customers.

Once returned to the original 860-seat theater, the founda-

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Dancing Saturday nights

By LESLIE TRULUCK
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY - "This is the best kept secret in the world," director Fred Hall said referring to the free dances every Saturday night at Convention Hall.

The Fred Hall band plays for children and adult dance sessions from July up to and including Labor Day weekend.

Family participation dances begin at 7 p.m. and adult ballroom dances start at 9 p.m.

The night commences with a grand march during which children are invited to get on microphone and

state their name and school as they form a circle parading around the hall. Next everyone is welcome to join in the Mexican Hat dance, hokey pokey, and the chicken dance.

"It's the perfect family venue, I wish more people knew about it," Hall said. Bill and Wanda Myers have come and ballroom danced together for 30 years.

"I've been coming here since 1948," Wanda said.

Pat and George Rementer have attended faithfully every week for the past ten years.

"It's been going on for a long time but it's surprising

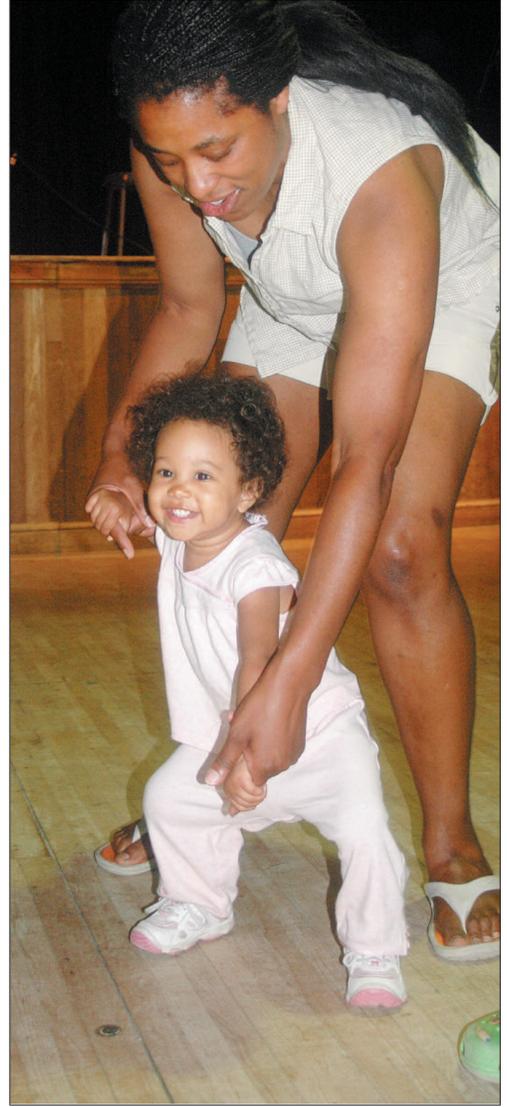
how many people come for the first time and say they never knew," Hall said.

The Fred Hall Band named for the vocalist, bandleader and director consists of two saxophones, a cordovox, keyboards, and drums. The band is sponsored by the City of Cape May.

Band members Carmen Vitanza, Mike Puglise, Marty Portmoy, Tony and Dee DeLuca travel from various regions to perform each week though they occasionally rotate if a bandmate cannot attend.

"It's essentially the same

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Taxpayer's Association looks at storm preparedness

By LESLIE TRULUCK
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY - Water was a major theme at the annual meeting of the Taxpayers Association of Cape May, Inc., held Aug. 17 with the analogous topics of not enough (drinking) water versus too much water (flooding.) The association discussed storm preparation in light of Avalon's success.

TPA Board Director Bill Murray invited Avalon Council members Joseph V. Tipping, David B. Ellenburg, Avalon Borough Engineer Thomas Thornton, and Business Administrator Andrew Bednarek to present an outline of the improve-

ments and success of their storm-preparation measures that has earned their borough a 20 percent discount on flood insurance.

"Perhaps we can learn from their success," Murray said. Mayor Jerome Inderwies, City Manager Lou Corea, and Council member Linda Steenrod were among attendees.

Avalon earned a class six designation from the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS.) The CRS was established in the year 2000 and has since rewarded communities for voluntarily reducing flood risks beyond the minimum requirements of the NFIP.

Avalon's 20 percent discount on flood insurance provides \$600,000 in borough savings which figures to \$114 annual savings for the residents, Bednarek said.

Corea said Cape May has a CRS class eight ranking and already receives a five percent discount, but the city can only expect to achieve a maximum of ten percent because Cape May doesn't qualify for the same discounts as Avalon due to differences in sea level.

Engineer Thornton explained that Avalon made improvements in storm water pump stations, installing visible LED lights, sealed manholes, flood vents, and raising bulkheads and

dune systems.

Ellenburg said the rewards for good standing in the CRS enabled Avalon to provide better quality of life for their residents in the ways of revitalization. Ellenburg stressed the improvements were part of a 15-year process requiring extensive planning and teamwork in cooperation with the Army Core of Engineers and the Department of Environmental Protection.

Plan initiatives were to improve tax rate base, attract retail commerce, increase employment, improve aesthetics, gain partnerships with civic groups, and improve public safety in regards to pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Ellenburg discussed the economic facilities' improvements noting the installation of a \$2.6 million baseball field and the \$1.25 million Avalon Avenue structure completely funded by grant and loan sources. Other improvements include an \$8million school and community library which received \$1.6 million in state aid and Avalon spent \$775,000 refurbishing the boardwalk in 2005.

"I think Cape May has accomplished 90 or 95 percent of what Avalon has done, though they are slightly ahead in revitalization," Corea said.

Avalon has made many successful improvements Cape May City resident James Wyatt says, "We've got something Avalon doesn't have: we are the oldest seashore resort."

Residents filibuster zoning changes

By LESLIE TRULUCK
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY - City Council unanimously declined an ordinance set to change several blocks to commercial zones because of an overwhelming opposition from the community.

There were few empty seats in the City Hall auditorium as residents relayed for the podium in a last minute filibuster-style symposium.

Residents opposed the change out of fear the impact it would have on the community. Among concerns were noise pollution, community identity, and inability for input. One resident suggested the zoning amendments could bring a McDonald's to the historic district.

Christine Miller of Bank

Street said the designation would "wreck the neighborhood because then anything could come along."

Resident Kate Emerson brought maps of the areas of concern and pleaded against the changes saying the most beautiful residential streets in Cape May are at risk of being thrown to the whims of big business.

Dick Landon of Decatur Street said prior to the city's designation as a National Historic Landmark, a bank drive-through at the corner of Hughes and Decatur streets caused traffic congestion and said, "The lots facing Hughes and Decatur should be homes." There are currently vacant lots in that area.

Mayor Jerome Inderwies said the zoning plans were in the works for over two years.

Many residents agreed that they were not aware of the proposed changes until they received a certified letter prior to the public hearing.

"City Council is not the forum to discuss the Planning Board," Deputy Mayor Neils Favre said, suggesting the Planning Board "start over." Councilmember Linda Steenrod urged residents to attend Planning Board meetings to constructively convey their input before ordinances are presented to council.

Planning Board member Bill Bezaire requested the residents continue public comment because of the lack of feedback the board receives and he agreed there is need for further discussion.

Anne Landon of Decatur Street said, "Tourism drives Cape May, but it is not the

beaches, T-shirts or fudge that bring people here, they come for the beautiful houses and the ambiance of romance which are our greatest assets. Don't cannibalize our greatest assets for the financial gain of a few individuals."

Mark Sucher of Carpenter's Lane said he listened to the recordings of the Planning Board meeting where they decided to amend city zoning. "We need to understand the thought process," he said requesting the city use modern technology to outline and archive city plans online for residents who are unable to attend meetings.

Steenrod said on behalf of the planning board there was no malicious intent behind the zoning amendments and the community feedback was appreciated.

31 suspects arrested for cocaine in Cape May County

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE - County Prosecutor Robert L. Taylor reported Aug. 23 that 31 suspects in Cape May County have been arrested and charged with the third degree crime of conspiracy to possess a controlled dangerous substance, cocaine. A majority of the suspects are from southern Cape May County.

Detectives from the Prosecutor's Office, Narcotic's Task Force, and officers from Lower, Middle, Cape May, and North Wildwood police departments participated in the early morning arrests Aug. 23.

All suspects arrested were released on their own recognition with the exception of John J. Pisieczko, who was lodged in the Cape May County Correctional Center in lieu of \$15,000 cash bail.

The arrest resulted from a narcotics operation report involving the alleged drug distribution network of Steven Grasch, operating in southern Cape May County.

The Cape May County Prosecutor's Office and Narcotics Task Force initiated an 18 month investigation on the activities of 29-year-old Steven G. Grasch of Green Creek, and his father 59-year-old Albert T. Grasch Sr., of North Cape May.

The investigation resulted in the interruption of the sale of over four ounces of cocaine by Steven DiCristofaro of Medford to Steven Grasch in the evening of Sat. Aug. 18. Consequently, forty members of the Cape May Regional SWAT Team spread out throughout Middle and Lower Township to simultaneously execute search and arrest war

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