

Cape May Star and Wave

155th YEAR NO. 12 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2009 50¢



INSIDE



ARTS

'Bye Bye Birdie' at Lower Cape May Regional, **A14**

CAPE MAY

Vendor rotation issue is settled, **A5**

Wind turbines will help power Coast Guard, **A5**

Three rescued off Cape May coast, **A5**

LOWER TWP.

Pranksters replace flag at LCMR, **A5**

Check out local events and programs, **A3**

People in the news, **A4**

WEATHER ALMANAC BY WAYNE ROOP

MARCH (Normals: 51°/35°, 4.28")			
	High	Low	Precip.
5	42°	15°	
6	37°	38°	
7	75°	44°	
8	78°	45°	
9	62°	41°	
10	45°	39°	
11	64°	41°	

Cape May council reduces tax rate increase

City introduced budget with proposed increase down to 1.26 cents

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Cape May City Council didn't go for the quarter-million dollars in cuts recommended by Mayor Edward Mahaney, but made enough reductions to reduce the proposed 2.1-cent tax rate increase to 1.26 cents.

Mahaney said city council had "agreed unanimously" on the content

of the budget as introduced. Mahaney introduced municipal auditor Leon Costello who praised the city for the 2009 budget.

"You've done a remarkable job without harming the future," he said.

Costello explained that the city did not raid its surplus as other towns have done. He recommended the city council introduce the budget, which is \$148,000 below the levy cap, and \$270,000 below the spending cap. He

said the local purpose tax levy was increasing 5.4 percent, but he compared that with a 12.6 percent increase in 2008, when the city was

only \$15,000 under the spending cap. City Manager Bruce MacLeod said

Please see Cape May budget, page A2

'You've done a remarkable job without harming the future.'

—Leon Costello, municipal auditor

Police chief vehicle not ready for Indy

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

LOWER TOWNSHIP – At Monday's Lower Township Council meeting, former mayor Jack Sparks criticized the alleged purchase of a vehicle capable of doing speeds up to 135 mph for the chief of police.

"The chief of police has a brand new vehicle that goes 135 mph. That's ridiculous. He should have the oldest car in the fleet – he's not going to chase anybody," Sparks said. Lower Township Police Chief Edward Donohue said the new vehicle is an SUV and won't do 135 mph.

"It's a 2009 Dodge Durango," Donohue said. "It's the same thing our detectives drive."

Donohue said Sparks might have been confused because the department is switching over its fleet from Ford Crown Victorias to Dodge Chargers, which he described as "pretty fast."

The reason for the change, Donohue said, was because the Charger is a little cheaper than the Crown Victoria, its engine is a little larger and can take more wear and tear, it has a larger frame and has the safest braking distance.

"Its claim to fame is it lasts longer," Donohue said.

Donohue said some of the patrol vehicles are Durangos. He said they can be paid for out of the operating and

Please see Police, page A2



Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave

A 30-foot-long cat chases a mouse on the Cape May beach on Saturday. The cat and mouse are kites flown by Tim Maruszczak of Wilmington, Del. The fabric fills with air as it catches the wind.

Someone say there's a cat on the beach?

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Those who are aware of the controversy concerning feral cat colonies in Cape May and the DEP's insistence they be kept off the beach might have chuckled to see a 30-foot-long cat-shaped kite being flown on the beach near Congress Hall.

Tim Maruszczak of Wilmington, Del., was flying a kite he calls "Mail Cat," so named for a real cat he owns who waits daily for the mailman to arrive.

Maruszczak said he has been flying kites in Cape May for decades and he

tries to come to Cape May about once a week. On Saturday he was flying Mail Cat despite rather cold temperatures. He said the cat would get airborne by itself, and a blue sail flying above the cat was mainly to keep the cat steady.

His 30-foot kite is considered a medium-size cat by its manufacturer. The full-size cat is 60 feet long.

"The full-size is too much for one guy to handle," Maruszczak said.

Passersby stopped to talk to Maruszczak about his kite asking, among other things, if the kite was inflated.

The kite is not inflated, but it does fill with air as it catches the wind. A couple of slits in the front of the kite allow the air in, and a small

Please see Cat kite, page A2

'It's worth whatever just to see the kids' faces when they see it flying.'

—Tim Maruszczak

Lower introduces budget amid calls for no tax increase

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

LOWER TOWNSHIP – Lower Township Council received comments telling them to consider a zero-tax increase as it voted 5-0 to introduce its \$24 million budget.

Municipal auditor Leon Costello announced that the 1.8-cent tax rate increase was the smallest in four years, but Lower Township Taxpayer Association vice president

Ed Butler said he'd like council to take an even tougher line.

"I'd like to come back to zero," he said. "Whatever has to be done as a last resort should be done."

'I'm at the dance, but no one wants to dance with me.'

—L.T. Mayor Mike Beck on regionalizing police services

Mayor Mike Beck said much of the 2009 budget was already determined last year and he asked the public to cut them a break.

"This year's budget was prepared last year. This budget was kind of dealt to us, so have a slight bit of mercy here," Beck said.

"The contracts passed in December killed us," Butler said.

Beck said Cape May was talking about a wage freeze and he was interested in seeing how that

played out.

But former mayor Jack Sparks said any tax increase was the last thing people needed.

"People have lost 40 percent of their property value," he said. "People between 50 and 70 (years) have lost 40 percent of their savings."

He said a tax increase would make null and void any givebacks the state had in mind, and asked council to take pity on some of the poorest members of the community.

"There are a lot of kids who go to school just to eat," he said.

Sparks said there was still a lot of fat that could be cut from the budget, and talked about what he considered excessive spending in the police department, including certain vehicles. Sparks said the Lower Township Police Department handled 6,000 fewer calls than the Middle Township Police

Department last year, and it includes going out on ambulance calls as a police run. Beck said cutting 1.8 cents off the tax rate to get to zero would cost the

Please see Lower budget, page A2

COAH unit requirements could decrease in Point due to lack of public transportation

By JANICE BROWN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT – As is common early in the calendar year, the Board of Commissioners of Cape May

Point borough had several routine items on their monthly agenda, such as some ordinances for public hearing, adoption of minutes, vouchers and the Treasurer's report.

Commissioner Anita Van

Heeswyk spoke about ongoing meetings with COAH (Council on Affordable Housing), noting that there seems to be some willingness from state government to negotiate down their expectations for the number of required housing units, especially since the borough doesn't have public transportation, businesses within walking distance within the borough, etc. She and Commissioner Joe Nietubicz both reported on safety matters, particularly bicycle safety, and they advised the residents that striping, with bicycle stencils, is planned on certain streets, in hopes of slowing down traffic.

Also, some stolen but unclaimed bikes have been recently donated to ARC Thrift Shop in Rio Grande and can be purchased there.

Mayor Schupp stated that he and Commissioner Van Heeswyk attended a recent meeting at the USCG Training Center regarding the upcoming installation of renewable wind power energy; later in the meeting Resolution

Please see Point, page A2

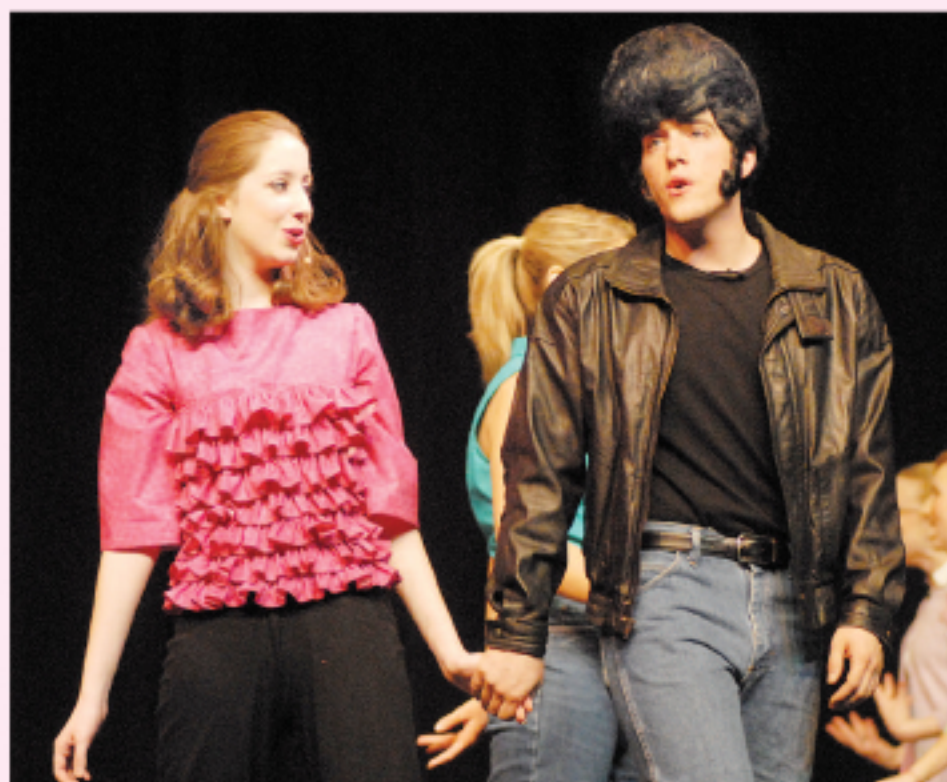
Ocean Drive Bridge over Middle Thorofare is closed for repairs

LOWER TOWNSHIP – The Ocean Drive (CR-621) Bridge over Middle Thorofare, locally referred to as the "Two-Mile Bridge," between Cape May City and Wildwood Crest in Lower Township will be closed to all vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic for 10 days starting Wednesday, March 18, for repairs. The detour route for northbound traffic to Diamond Beach consists of Garden State Parkway or Route US 9 North to Route NJ 47 to New Jersey Avenue to Rambler Avenue to Pacific Avenue. For southbound traf-

fic the detour is reversed. Orange construction signs will be posted indicating the detour route.

The county plans to temporarily support the toe end of the movable span; remove deteriorated concrete about the area where the movable span girder seats; reconstruct the movable span girder seating area; install new steel plates atop the existing tooth joint; and reconstruct a 5-foot portion of the deck to create a smooth transition over the

Please see Bridge, page A2



Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave

'Bye Bye Birdie' opens tonight at LCMR

Susie Booth and Andrew Wampler play the leads in "Bye Bye Birdie," which opens tonight, Thursday, March 19, at 8 p.m. and runs through Sunday at 2 p.m. For more photos, related story, see page A14.