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CAPE MAY COUNTY HERALD

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Cape May Councilman Remains in Jail; Mayor Responds

By VINCE CONTI

CAPE MAY - Chris Bezaire, 43, a realtor and Cape May City councilman, was arrested June 16 and charged with cyber harassment, stalking, disclosure of sexually explicit images of another person without their consent and contempt of court.

Bezaire was deemed a no-bail offender. He is inmate 47372 at the Cape May County Correctional Facility, as of June 21, where he awaits a June 23 detention hearing.

Since Bezaire is an elected official, he holds his office even while in jail. If he misses three consecutive meetings, the council could consider taking action to remove him, but they are not required to do so. Since he attended the June 15 meeting, the day before his arrest, any potential action by council could not come before mid-August. It appears that, for now, the council is waiting to see how things play out over the coming weeks.

The arrest is linked to accusations that surfaced in October 2020, when Bezaire was a candidate for council.

In early October 2020, an ex-girlfriend of Bezaire posted a statement alleging a violent domestic incident involving a person running for council. Bezaire was not directly named, but many in Cape May could not mistake the association.

Soon after, a political flyer appeared in city mailboxes with a picture of Bezaire on one side and a photo of a woman with a blackened eye on the other. Despite that, Bezaire won his seat on the governing body.

Later in 2020, Bezaire was in court battles attempting to stop four women from posting negative statements about him concerning claims that he abused one of the women in 2015.

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Juneteenth Celebrated



Tim Hawk

A reproduction of the flag of the 22nd U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment, who fought for the Union Army in the Civil War, is ceremoniously presented June 19 to the descendants of the regiment from Cape May.

By KAREN KNIGHT

WHITESBORO - Juneteenth celebrations in Whitesboro and Cape May June 19 commemorated emancipation, celebrated African American culture, and reflected on the meaning and history of the day.

At the Martin Luther King Center, in Whitesboro, the Cape May County NAACP sponsored the Second Annual Juneteenth Celebration, which brought hundreds of residents together to hear poems, songs and readings about freedom, register to

vote, get information about several organizations and services in the county and enjoy games, food and camaraderie.

In Cape May, the Harriet Tubman Museum's organizers, as well as community leaders, celebrated the museum's inaugural season with a grand opening event (<https://bit.ly/3gKUtMm>), which officially opened the museum to visitors.

The museum, at the Howell House, 623 Lafayette St., had a virtual opening June 19, 2020 (<https://bit.ly/3iYEewQ>), due to Covid pandemic

restrictions.

Juneteenth celebrates the end of slavery and commemorates June 19, 1865, when Union Gen. Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, and informed enslaved African Americans that the Civil War ended and they were free.

Granger's message came more than two years after President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. The 13th Amendment was ratified a few months later, in December 1865, formally abolishing slavery in the U.S.

President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law June 17, officially making June 19 a federal holiday and giving national recognition to a day commemorating emancipation. It is the 11th federal holiday and the first new federal holiday since Martin Luther King Jr. Day was created, in 1983.

Heralded as one of the 10 most anticipated museums in the world by Smithsonian Magazine and one of the 10 best new museums by USA Today's 10Best Readers' Choice awards, the Harriet Tubman Museum shares the "inspiring story of an American hero, the rich history of abolitionist activism in New Jersey, and the enduring legacy of the African American community in Cape May County," according to the museum's website, harriettubmanmuseum.org.

During the grand opening event at Rotary Park, about 300 people heard remarks from museum organizers, as well as community leaders, reflecting on Juneteenth's meaning and history.

There was a ceremonial march and presentation from the 22nd U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment re-enactors to descendants of Civil War veterans, including Emily Dempsey, founder of the Center for Community Arts, in Cape May, and founding supporter of the History Committee of the Harriet Tubman Museum.

Music and dancing were presented by the Pan

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Cards, Encouragement Sought for Father, Son with Cancer

By KAREN KNIGHT

RIO GRANDE - A customer service manager at a local grocery store is asking people to send get-well cards and words of encouragement to a family whose father and 14-year-old son have cancer.

Mimi Cruz, of Wildwood, works at ShopRite, in Rio Grande, where Dan Dougherty, a meat cutter there, has renal carcinoma. Dougherty had part of a kidney removed last year, and while nodules are again growing on his kidney, he is waiting to see how fast the cancer progresses.

He has a follow-up appointment in November, where doctors will determine the next actions: Removal of the kidney, chemotherapy or something else.

In the meantime, his son, Colin, was diagnosed this past spring with Ewing's Sarcoma, a cancer

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Ferry Plans for New Fleet

By VINCE CONTI

NORTH CAPE MAY - The Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA) June 17 held a public presentation and discussion of its developing marine master plan. The planning process, launched in early 2021, is intended to define options for modernizing the fleet. A final report, expected before the end of the year, will make recommendations on capital investment and fleet configuration for a new fleet of ferries.

Before the presentation, the assembled DRBA team was asked if the planning process would include the consideration of a bridge over the 17-mile expanse of the bay as an alternative to new investment in ferries.

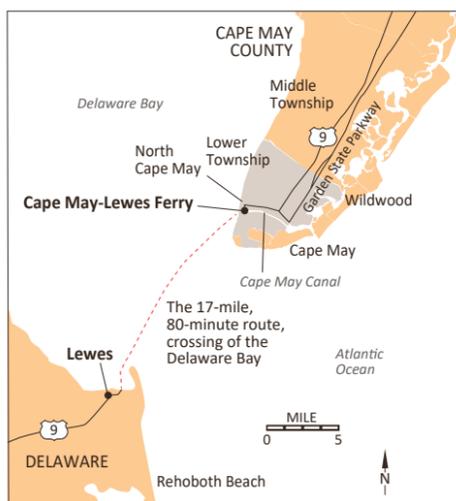
Heath Gehrke, director of ferry operations, responded by referencing a 40-year-old study, from 1980, that concluded cost and traffic did not warrant investment in a bridge.

Gehrke added that the regulatory environment today would make a bridge an even greater challenge.

"There are many barriers to a bridge," he added, citing a bridge toll that would need to be near \$100 for a vehicle crossing. He gave no source for that figure.

The Present

Currently, four 100-car vessels ferry vehicles and passengers on a 17-mile, 80-minute crossing of the Delaware Bay between Lewes, Delaware, and Cape May. The ferry has been in operation since 1964 and has carried 43 million passengers. The ferry constitutes a portion of Route 9.



Herald graphic/ Krishna Mathias

Assumptions

The presentation's focus was on fleet configuration. Assumptions influencing the analysis include designing a fleet to meet current demand, which DRBA expects will continue with small growth over the next 40 years. In effect, the authority is planning a fleet for zero to a modest increase in demand over four decades.

The plan also assumes that the fleet will continue to serve passengers and vehicles on every crossing. There are no plans for passenger-only ferries.

Plans also assume that the crossing will be at or slightly better than current trip times. No one should expect that the new fleet would cross the bay much faster than ferries do now.

Future vessels must fit the current terminal infrastructure. They must be designed to maintain or lower current operating costs, with the two major factors being fuel use and crew optimization.

The assumptions make clear a planning context that is largely one of modernizing what DRBA has now. The present, in many ways, becomes the future, with a newer fleet.

There were good reasons for each assumption, yet their combination says the major change the public can expect is more modern vessels. The

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