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CAPE MAY COUNTY HERALD

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Analysis

Are Large Numbers of Evictions Looming?

By VINCE CONTI

TRENTON - Trying to figure out where the Garden State stands concerning Covid rental assistance programs and the thousands of eviction filings is no easy task. The state does not make data readily available. New state laws governing evictions are complex and provide little insight into the magnitude of the problem in specific areas.

New Jersey has over 60,000 eviction cases filed since the state moratorium barring evictions was promulgated in March 2020. This mountain of cases led the state judicial system to issue special procedures for handling landlord-tenant matters. Those procedures went into effect Sept. 1.

Meanwhile, New Jersey has been spending millions of dollars of federal relief funds in rental assistance programs that tenant advocates say have only scratched the surface of what is needed. As of Sept. 1, the state says it distributed \$232 million to 26,000 households.

Within the state, Cape May County is the seventh least expensive in terms of the required annual income needed for a two-bedroom unit at fair market rent.

While it is difficult to put that number in context, the U.S. Census report on rent-occupied households in New Jersey, as of Aug. 31, shows 226,230 households "not caught up in rent." It further shows that most of those households have a combined income of less than \$50,000.

The Household Pulse Survey reports that almost 26,000 households report it is very likely they

will have to leave their home because of eviction in the next two months, while 45,000 say it is somewhat likely.

What's the Rental Picture in Cape May County?

In Out of Reach, a 2021 housing report by the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), New Jersey is shown to be one of the most

expensive states in the nation when considering the wage needed for average rental properties.

Within the state, Cape May County is the seventh least expensive in terms of the required annual income needed for a two-bedroom unit at fair market rent. That size household in the county requires an annual income of \$54,440.

The report also states that Cape May County has one of the lowest county percentages of households that are permanent renters, at 22%. Hudson County leads that list, at 68%. Sussex County is the lowest, at 17%.

The gross numbers may suggest that the problem in the county is not as severe as elsewhere in the state, but it is difficult to confirm that hypothesis.

As of the beginning of summer, there were over 300 eviction cases filed in the county, but how that number relates to the full breadth of the problem in the county is unclear.

Relief Funds

The Covid Emergency Rental Assistance Program Phase II (CVERAP-II) poured over half a bil-

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Church Celebrates 180 Years with Cemetery Tour



Rebecca Fox

James Selby's grave after the performance of taps and the laying of a flower bouquet to pay homage for his service, during John Wesley United Methodist Church's cemetery tour Sept. 11, 2021.

By REBECCA FOX

SWAINTON - John Wesley United Methodist Church sponsored a historic African American cemetery tour Sept. 11, as part of its continuing 180th-anniversary celebration.

The tour began at the church, at 60 Goshen Swainton Rd., in Swainton, where guests were met by an interpretive talk, given by a person portraying John West, a runaway slave who founded the church in 1840.

The interpretive talks were created using primary sources to give a sense of what that individual was like and painted a picture of what life was also like during the church's origins.

The church is not the original church founded in 1840. The new church was built at its present location in the early 1900s by West's descendants, which is down the road from the original.

After the introduction and a peek at John West's life, the tour continued outside, on the church's grounds, where the tour "met" Mary Ann Selby through another interpretive talk. The

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Cape May Scraps Early End to Outdoor Dining Flexibility

By VINCE CONTI

CAPE MAY - Cape May City Council's Sept. 7 agenda contained an ordinance introduction that, if adopted, would've ended the ability of local businesses to use public rights of way or parking lots for the support of outdoor dining in October.

The ordinance's sponsor, Councilman Chris Bezaire, said he placed it on the agenda to promote discussion. Instead of making the item one

for discussion, Bezaire elected to place a fully prepared ordinance before council as a potential action item, provoking cries of betrayal from some business owners.

Bezaire led off the discussion by saying he spoke to several business owners and heard no substantial objection to ending the use of the rights of way early. An earlier ordinance that established

the ability of restaurants to use public space or to expand into their parking lots had set a sunset date of Dec. 31. Bezaire's ordinance moved that date to Oct. 13, a date he said he was persuaded to change to Oct. 31.

Business owners who spoke argued that any

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Op-ed

Spreading Confusion About CRT – and Democracy

By TED BRYAN and CHARLES M. PAYNE

We write regarding Tony Monzo's op-ed, purportedly about critical race theory (CRT), published in the Herald Aug. 11 and 18. We were both educated in the schools of this county. Theodore Bryan is a retired teacher and former chair of the history department at Middle Township High School, where he taught their popular African American history course for over three decades. Charles Payne has chaired African

American studies departments at Northwestern and Duke universities. We have both won awards for teaching.

In a manner worthy of a latter-day McCarthy, Monzo hurls charges of a grand, decades-long Marxist conspiracy in local schools without a shred of evidence, unless one wants to count the two "opinion pieces" he cites.

The accusation verifies itself. Teachers must

be either unwitting dupes or conspirators in the destruction of their county. Beyond attending a Lower Township School Board meeting, there is no indication that Monzo has talked with principals, teachers or students. Still, he is comfortable concluding that the efforts of the state to promote teaching that stresses "diversity, including economic diversity, equity, inclusion [and] tolerance"

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Sept. 4-10, 2021

CAPE MAY COUNTY COVID-19

New reported cases: **257**

| Active cases: | Hospitalizations as of Sept. 13: | Deaths this week: |
|---------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 491 | 21 | 4 |

Herald Seeks Reader Support

RIO GRANDE - The Herald's website has transitioned to subscription-only access to news content, urging readers to join the cause and support local journalism.

Herald website users must now have a sub-

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HOME & GARDEN

Get ready for summer with tips from local pros! Page A34



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