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# CAPE MAY COUNTY HERALD

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## Chauvin Conviction Brings Relief; Many See More Work Ahead

By BILL BARLOW

COURT HOUSE – By the sidewalk May 25, 2020, in a nondescript corner in Minneapolis, just over 1,000 miles from Cape May County, over eight minutes and 46 seconds, George Floyd died under a 19-year police veteran's knee. He slipped away not in a burst of fury or passion, but in what appears to have been profound indifference.

Floyd's death sparked protests, as have numerous other deaths of Black men after interactions with white police officers over decades, but this time was different.

Protests spread beyond Minnesota and around the world, to thousands of cities and more than 60 countries, involving millions of people, including Cape May County, where a peaceful protest, at the intersection of Routes 9 and 47, in June, produced indelible images of police and protesters gathered in prayer at the center of one of the region's busiest intersections (<https://bit.ly/3dB8OJE>).

Just under a year later, a jury deliberated for 10 hours before finding former police officer Derek Chauvin guilty on all three charges brought in Floyd's death, the most serious being second-degree unintentional murder.

"My initial reaction was relief," said Crystal Hutchinson, of Whitesboro, an organizer of several of the marches in Cape May County. "I was ready to organize again if it was not guilty."

She was already thinking about what that could look like locally if the verdict was not guilty, and how to organize a peaceful event despite the anger.

"I was very relieved. I thought that this is accountability for George Floyd," Hutchinson said, "but we still want justice for a lot of people, so there was a sigh of relief, but our work continues."

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Crystal Hutchinson, center, marches on the Boardwalk, in Wildwood. The above image was altered due to the use of expletives.

Bill Barlow

## Underage Drinking Enforcement 'Difficult' Under New Law

By SHAY RODDY

WILDWOOD - Memorial Day weekend could look a whole lot different this year, as Jersey Shore police departments are left with little authority over underage drinking, as much a tradition of the three-day weekend as the smell of barbeques and the sound of power washers.

The new marijuana legalization law Gov. Phil Murphy said was inspired by "social justice, racial justice, and economic justice" implemented a new, three-step warning system for those charged with underage drinking offenses, no longer giving police authority to make an arrest, issue a citation or fine a defendant in an underage drinking case.

In separate interviews with the Herald, the po-

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lice chiefs from Wildwood, North Wildwood, and Wildwood Crest condemned the law, criticizing the restrictions it places on officers.

### Why Include Underage Drinking?

"That's what threw everybody for a loop," said North Wildwood Police Chief Matthew Gallagher. "You can't get arrested for underage drinking, whether it's on public or private property."

The new law requires police to issue only a

warning for drinking underage on a first offense. On a second offense, they are to issue a warning and provide information on drug and alcohol treatment. On a third offense, police are to refer the subject to drug and alcohol treatment.

"They could never get it done legitimately, so they tucked it into a marijuana bill, which had nothing to do with the issue," North Wildwood Mayor Patrick Rosenello said, in an interview. "It

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## Businesses Urged to 'Keep the Pressure On' for J-1 Visas

By KAREN KNIGHT

COURT HOUSE - Local businesses were urged April 19 to "keep the pressure on" the Biden administration to fast-track visa appointments and applications for international students hoping to visit the U.S., in 2021, in the Summer Work Travel program.

New Jersey is the eighth-top state to host students, receiving about 5,000 in a "typical" year. Cape May County businesses, which use the

students to meet seasonal staffing demands, host 2,500-3,000 of those students.

In June 2020, President Donald Trump stopped the issuance of most of the J-1 visas, which are used by J-1 BridgeUSA programs that bring more than 300,000 international students and professionals to the U.S. to study, work, travel, intern, train and participate in cultural exchange, as a response to job losses caused by the pandemic, per media reports.

The Biden administration allowed that proc-

lamation to expire March 31. However, U.S. embassies and consulates are providing few, if any, J-1 visa applicant interviews, bringing the future of these cultural exchange and public diplomacy programs into question.

With the Cape May County Chamber of Commerce expecting a boom in shore communities this summer due to the Covid vaccine rollout and eased restrictions, President Vicki Clark indicated the need for the U.S. Department of State to implement changes quickly, so the J-1 students arrive for a "meaningful experience" by Memorial Day, or early June, when the typical summer tourist season begins.

"There has been a little movement, but not enough since the proclamation expired March

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Denise Beckson, who heads human relations at Morey's Piers and Beachfront Water Parks, in Wildwood, said her company usually hires 500 J-1 students for seasonal positions, but currently, only 15 have visas or a visa appointment.

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