



New Jersey E-bike regulations set to take effect in July

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House of the Week

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Angela Schwab, left, Richard M. Teitelman Middle School Principal Peter Daly, Cory Damiana and Ashley Eiler accept the award for being re-designated as a New Jersey School to Watch on March 18 during the New Jersey Association of Middle Level Education conference.

All eyes on Teitelman Middle Facility re-designated as state School to Watch

By RACHEL SHUBIN
Special to the Star and Wave

LOWER TOWNSHIP — Richard M. Teitelman Middle School has been re-designated as a School to Watch by the National Forum (for Advancing Excellence in the Middle Grades).

This program is sponsored by the New Jersey Association of Middle Level Education (NJAMLE). The National Forum is a nonprofit educators association dedicated to improving education and school-based supports for all young adolescents in the middle grades. Schools to Watch focus on serving the social, emotional and academic needs of students in culturally relevant and inclusive ways. Additionally, they continue to improve every year.

'It's challenging, but the goal is to try your best and make sure that you value every issue, every person, every class, others' concerns. Some count for lots and some count for a little, but everything counts.'

—Principal Peter Daly on the school mantra

In March, Teitelman was recognized for its re-designation at the NJAMLE Conference at Brookdale Community College. It is one of only four middle schools in New Jersey designated as a School to Watch in 2026.

The program recognizes 17 schools in the state and includes them as active members in the process.

Teitelman will be honored nationally at the National Forum's Schools to Watch conference in Washington, D.C., this June. Principal Peter Daly will accept the honor and

lead a presentation during the event.

Selection process

Teitelman was first designated as a School to Watch in 2022, under the purview of Superintendent Greg Lasher, the former principal. Daly said he wanted to keep the designation when he took over the top job.

The National Forum has established criteria that are the basis for the Schools to Watch program. The application process is rigorous and focuses on

school improvement efforts for continued success.

"It's an assessment done by the entire school, faculty and staff," Daly said. "They give you a very comprehensive online survey of what's going on in your school, and you get the perspective of all different stakeholders."

The scope of the data collected includes positive changes and programs, as well as potential areas for improvement.

"It's not designed to say you're a perfect school; it's designed to look at the good things going on and areas in which you can improve," Daly said, adding that the report includes a demographic analysis.

After the application is submitted and if the criteria are met, the school

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Group proposes new location for Jones memorial

Tribute to crew of U.S. warship would be close to lookout tower

By RACHEL SHUBIN
Special to the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The Jacob Jones Memorial Committee revealed a newly proposed location and design for the memorial: directly across from The Grand Hotel and its World War II observation tower.

This update was shared during a public Zoom Session on April 15 by committee chairman Myles Martel and Cape May resident and lead architect John Boecker.

The proposed monument, initially presented to City Council in April 2025 but generating pushback from neighbors, aims to honor U.S. Navy sailors who gave their lives amid the Battle of the Atlantic during World War II.

The Jacob Jones was the first U.S. destroyer deployed in the Atlantic Ocean to patrol for German U-boats. On Feb. 18, 1942, it was attacked off the coast of Cape May just days after it began its mission and less than three months after

Germany's declaration of war against America.

Previously proposed locations include Beach Avenue near Howard Street, The Cove, Wilmington Avenue and the east end of the Promenade near Poverty Beach. After seeking public feedback on the proposal, the committee returned to City Council in July and August 2025.

During a meeting Aug. 5, city residents dominated the public comment portion, raising additional concerns about the proposal.

The committee then took time to regroup and create a new design before presenting it to the public via a Zoom meeting last week.

"After our last August presentation, the criteria for selecting a site evolved significantly," Boecker said. "It's located in a commercial zone, with no impact on any residential neighborhoods or residential properties."

Boecker added that he hoped the public would see

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Cape May Point budget to raise tax rate 3 cents

By RACHEL SHUBIN
Special to the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT — Borough Commission unanimously passed its 2026 budget April 14, calling for a 3-cent increase in the local tax rate.

The \$2.8 million spending plan is up \$337,458 from the previous year and the tax levy is up \$178,000 from \$1.8 million to \$1.98 million.

The budget raises the tax rate to 39 cents per \$100

of assessed value. The increase amounts to \$30 per year on a \$100,000 assessment. The average assessment of a home in Cape May Point is \$750,000, amounting to a \$225 increase per year.

Auditor Mike Garcia said the budget increased by \$163,000: \$41,000 in capital and debt service, \$36,000 for increased salaries and wages, \$24,000 for interlocal service agreements,

See Budget, Page A3

Habitat for Humanity raises new homes in West Cape May

WEST CAPE MAY — A significant step forward in addressing local housing needs took place last week as two new single-family homes were erected in West Cape May.

The homes were delivered and set on site via crane, marking a visible milestone for the community.

According to a news release from the organization, the moment reflects a broader initiative to create attainable housing opportunities through a combination of municipal leadership and strategic private partnerships.

By aligning local expertise, public support and mission-driven development, the project demonstrates what is possible when communities proactively respond to housing challenges.

"This is an exciting and tangible milestone," said David DeTorre, Habitat for Humanity of Cape May County Construction Committee chair. "Seeing these homes arrive and be set in place is a powerful re-



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Habitat for Humanity of Cape May County and its partners erected two new homes last week on Willow Avenue in West Cape May.



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How city became Queen of Victorian Seaside Resorts, Part 1

By the beginning of the Victorian Era (1837-1914), an interface of influences had formed a virtual positive perfect storm of tourism that caused Cape May to become the Queen of the Victorian Seaside Resorts.

This confluence of motivation, location and transportation made the town at the tip of the Jersey Cape the most desirable vacation destination for an ever-expanding segment of the American population, mainly the newly emerging middle class.

As the era evolved, more and more members of the lower class added to this influx, and Cape May became Victorian American's most popular seaside resort.

The Victorians' motivations for vacations (they called it resorting, thus the

places they went to were called resorts), were new and many. The primary ones were that they had increased leisure time and disposable income thanks to the prosperity brought about by the Industrial Revolution.

Indeed, the middle socio-economic class was formed mainly by the new white-collar workers of the age, such as the middle managers of industry, finance and commerce, plus scientific, medical and legal professionals.

The Victorians had a philosophical dilemma about how to use this leisure time. According to their belief in the Protestant Work Ethic, idle hands were the potential tools of the devil. God had rewarded their hard work with wealth and lei-

sure time. How they could they please him in using them?

The solution was to engage in activities to make themselves even better people, piously, intellectually and physically (improving their health). They would recreate themselves. The ways they used to do so became known as recreational activities to improve one's spirit, mind and body.

A growing number of Victorians lived in the urban areas that had formed around industries. Victorians' science was revealing how unhealthy due to various types of pollution these cities were becoming. Thus, to recreate one's health, one had to resort to traveling to a healthier locale.

At these resorts, Victorians simultaneously im-



king of the most powerful kingdom in the world advocated ocean bathing, the practice was adopted by trendsetters on both sides of the Atlantic.

But, where should the Victorians go to enjoy the benefits of ocean bathing? Cape May turned out to be the ideal location, as I will detail in my next column.

A retired history teacher, school administrator, university professor and Museum Education Director Emeritus for the Cape May MAC, R.E. Heinly is the author of the book *Victorian Cape May*. Heinly is also a lifelong governmental geopolitical intelligence consultant. He writes this column weekly on the Victorian Era highlighting its foibles and fascinations.

health and enjoyable besides.

King George III of England had first popularized ocean bathing in the late 1700s. Prior to that, the only sane persons found swimming in the ocean were those whose ships had sunk and were thus frantically trying to save their lives.

However, as soon as the

proved their health while attending educational and religious seminars and meetings. Surely God would be pleased.

Why resort to Cape May? There were two main reasons: its location and ocean bathing. Ocean bathing combined with the breathing in of the invigorating and healthy sea breezes was known to be good for

Nature Talks

Continued from Page A4

first known evidence of breeding behavior, reads:

"On June 15, 1924, Richard Miller, in the heart of the Timber and Beaver Swamp at South Dennis ... came upon a pair of Prothonotaries the female carrying a bill full of insects. They approached to within a few feet of him and gave every indication of having young in the immediate neighborhood. This swamp, with which I am well acquainted, is an ideal habitat for these warblers, with deep sluggish streams and many over-flowed areas."

This area, protected within the Beaver Swamp Wildlife Management Area, still holds prothonotary warblers today. A little farther north, Belleplain State Forest also plays host to the golden swamp warbler, with nesting pairs found along streams and ponds throughout this marvelous swath of public lands.

On Cape Island, the birds tend to occur in more places during wet years than dry years, as standing water is often a requirement for this species. Most times, the best place to find them is Rea's Farm, where several areas

of lowlands and wooded ponds often hold multiple pairs.

The farm, and its vital habitat for Cape May's wildlife, only remain thanks to the Rea family's unwavering commitment to the land. For example, since 1999, the Reas have leased access rights to New Jersey Audubon's Cape May Bird Observatory, a unique partnership in the birding world.

Check the observatory's schedule for the next guided program at this property, or become a member and receive an annual pass that permits access to enjoy the prothonotaries

and countless other birds that call this special place home.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I've got to head back out. It's prothonotary season, which means spring is truly here; and there's not a moment to miss outdoors. I look forward to seeing you out there, too.

Tom Reed is a lifelong Cape May County resident. He directs the migration monitoring projects of New Jersey Audubon's Cape May Bird Observatory and serves as the avian naturalist with the Cape May Whale Watch & Research Center.



Jesse Amesbury

The prothonotary warbler is a local but conspicuous warm-season resident, occupying select swampy, wooded areas through the interior of the peninsula and on Cape Island from mid-April through most of the summer.

All eyes on Teitelman Middle

Continued from Page A1

is then visited by a panel of other Schools to Watch members. Additionally, committees comprised of faculty and administrative staff, parents and students are interviewed.

Daly said the information is analyzed before the recognition is awarded.

"It's a pretty intense process," he said, adding that once Teitelman was re-designated, he attended the NJAMLE conference to accept the recognition.

In addition to the application process, the follow-up to implementing improvements is critical.

"You have to do a hard self-evaluation and look at

the good areas and the areas you need to improve on," Daly said. "It's a really good learning experience for myself and the staff."

One area of improvement cited for Teitelman is decorating the halls with artwork. Prior to the school's renovation, there were many murals and old lockers. Since then, Daly said they are in the process of bringing some of that back and allowing students to express themselves through art.

Daly has visited other potential Schools to Watch as part of a panel. He said it is helpful to pick up other ideas that can be brought back to his school and incorporated, and he has experienced other visitors to Teitelman consider doing the same.

Teitelman is re-designated through 2029, and as that date nears, Daly and the staff will start working on the next application.

Teitelman stands out

Connecting both the

middle and high school districts with an overriding theme is paramount for Daly. "Everything counts," is the mantra he took on when he became principal.

At the beginning of the school year, students and staff contribute to a list of norms and values that serve as a guide for the school district. Posters are hung up throughout the buildings to remind students of the behavior expected.

"It's challenging, but the goal is to try your best and make sure that you value every issue, every person, every class, others' concerns," Daly said. "Some count for lots and some count for a little, but everything counts."

Administration and teachers use positive behavior supports and issue "Tiger Tickets" to students when they see them doing good things. Students can use their tickets for raffles and end-of-year events.

The staff can also issue "Everything Counts"

chips and plastic tokens if they see students doing something they value. The tokens are slightly more valuable than tickets.

"We have events all throughout the year that they can use them, like dance and pizza parties," Daly said. "Kids like to keep them, but we want them to become a currency and cash them in, so we're working on that."

Daly added that the school culture for staff includes departmental planning, which allows different teachers to work in lockstep.

Teitelman has an "intervention period" that allows students to focus on what they need, such as making up tests, working on homework before a sports game or even getting extra help in a specific class.

Daly said the school has Title I funds, which they use to help place students in targeted classes if they are struggling in a specific area.

"We always look for more activities that we can give

to the kids," Daly said. "We do our best to give them as many opportunities as we can to be involved in the school and in a positive place."

The school may have a smaller population, but Daly said it's largely due to the local area's changing demographics.

"Because it's so small, you get more of a family atmosphere to the school," he said. "When you have so many kids, you tend not to know everybody. But [knowing the kids is] one of the things I like, and the staff is close here, too."

Daly credits Lasher for so much of the good work going on in the school district. Utilizing community partnerships is also key for additional activities. Cape Assist is one of the partners and Daly said they are a huge part of what goes on at Teitelman.

"All the work going on at RMT is something to be proud of," Daly said. "I hope to represent our school and our district well."

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