



CITY OF MARGATE CITY

MUNICIPAL BUILDING
ONE SOUTH WASHINGTON AVENUE
MARGATE CITY, NEW JERSEY 08402
(609) 822-0424

“Margate City News”

Spring 2012 Newsletter

A Message from Mayor Mike Becker

I would like to take a moment to clarify some of the facts for the citizens of Margate in response to a recent letter to the editor published in the Current. This letter was critical of spending by Commissioner Taube and me, and this letter is factually incorrect.

The emergency no-bid contract to repair City Hall was unanimously passed 7/21/11 by the Board of Commissioners. All three Commissioners voted yes on the motion to make the necessary repairs for the safety of our employees.

The professional contracts of the new Auditor and Solicitor are thousands of dollars lower than those of their predecessors. Also, these contracts no longer include health benefits or pension contributions.

The Business Administrator is bringing new and innovative ideas to our city and is working to save many times his salary. His experience will help the city with better planning for the future, and to more efficiently structure and control our debt.

A new building for the Building Department, next to City Hall will save the taxpayers \$11,000 per year and the debt will be paid in full in 12 years. Instead of wasting money on renting space for our employees we will repurpose an existing property, add an asset to our holdings and realize a savings, not only now, but also in the future.

Commissioner Taube and I have agreed to cap capital spending at \$3.5 million dollars per year for the next three years. From 2008 to 2010 capital spending averaged \$5.5 million dollars per year. We must get control of our debt and this is step #1.

I send a big “thank you” out to our new Business Administrator Rich Deaney for the great job he is doing and thank all our city employees for their help and cooperation in working with Rich. Together we can make Margate's transition smooth and efficient.

As Director of Public Safety, I implore you to be careful. Cross streets carefully at approved locations and make sure traffic has stopped before crossing. When biking, please follow all traffic regulations.

We'll be starting a new feature in the next edition of “Margate City News” titled “Ask the Mayor”. So please send questions to me at mayorbecker@margate-nj.com or leave them with Agnes Schwartz, my assistant at City Hall, who may be reached at 822-0424. I look forward to your questions.

Mike

“NOTABLE MARGATIANS” - Spring, 2012

DAVID CARTER, VOLUNTEER BUS DRIVER, MARGATE SENIOR SHUTTLE BUS

One of the great strengths of Margate City is the unusual degree to which our citizens volunteer their time to enhance the quality of life of others. There are innumerable opportunities for meaningful volunteering, such as Lucy the Elephant, teaching courses for FELS (Friends of Encore Learning at Stockton), being a companion to elderly shut-ins through JFS (Jewish Family Services), training residents at Margate Terrace in computer skills, or being a Block Captain in the Margate Civic Pride organization, to mention just a few.

This newsletter will focus on one such individual, retired businessman David Carter of North Union Avenue, who cheerfully drives senior citizens around town several hours a week, on the Senior Shuttle Bus provided by the City free of charge for many years, under supervision of Marianne Christian, who operates the lively schedule of activities at the Martin Bloom Community Pavillion, Granville at the Beach.



On a recent Monday morning Dave arrived at the Pavillion for his 9-12A.M. shift, checked out his bus, and received his ride list from Dispatcher Volunteer Florence Heintzelman. At noon, Dave would be relieved by Tina Wheaton, another of the dozens of volunteers that make the bus so helpful to so many who cannot drive and who would otherwise be unable to do vital shopping, banking, doctor appointments, and family visits. **(If you want a ride, call 822-3304. The bus goes to anywhere downbeach, 9 A.M. to 3P.M. returns, and they need 24 hours' notice.)**

Dave's first stop of the day was at Margate Towers, where Thelma Goldberg, a spry lady in her 90's, who recently gave up driving because her kids insisted, hopped on and Dave drove her to the Bloom Pavillion to play cards. Later on, the bus would take Thelma to Krimpers in Ventnor, for a cut and color, and then on to friends in Ventnor for afternoon canasta.



By the way, as are many volunteers in Margate, Dave Carter is also a volunteer in other groups and endeavors. He is Block Captain in the Margate Civic Pride group, responsible for keeping his sewer outlet clean and for informing his neighbors as to correct recycling rules. And for 6 years he has been Chairman of the Crime Stoppers of Atlantic County, which promotes community welfare and safety in a number of areas.



Dave's next stop was Margate Terrace, senior citizens housing at 610 N. Fredericksburg Avenue, where he picked up Dan Schectman, a longtime resident of the Terrace, who rides the shuttle daily to the senior center where he enjoys a bagel and coffee, proceeds to Casels or CVS, and the rides home on the shuttle. Dan says, "It means the world to me, to all of us senior citizens, it means everything to us to be able to get around. I've been riding it 8-9 years, and we are far from transportation out there. It's wonderful!"

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The Shuttle Bus was first brought to Margate by former Commissioner Sigmund Rimm, and now at 33,801 miles for the present bus (the fifth one) it is administered under Commissioner Brenda Taube. Dave loves driving the bus. He is skilled (you should see him back it up in our tight streets when there is an obstruction!), and helpful to the riders, helping them on and off when needed, bringing their shopping bags to their houses, and always being pleasant, upbeat, respectful and friendly. Dave says, “I really enjoy the camaraderie of the people and their spirit and determination. This bus is the best kept secret in Margate, and I wish more people used it and benefitted from the free service.”

Commissioner Taube commented, “I cannot overstate my appreciation for Marianne and all of her volunteers for their amazing contribution to our community. People like Dave, Florence, Tina and all the others are just amazing, and on behalf of my fellow commissioners, much thanks! They are truly ‘Notable Margatians’.”



BEACH BADGE INFORMATION

The sale of beach badges will begin on Monday March 26th. For the month of March they will be available for sale at City Hall from 10am to 4pm. Beginning April 1st they will be available for sale at the following locations:



City Hall
1 S. Washington Avenue
Monday – Friday – 10:00am to 4:00pm
Saturday & Sunday – 10:00am to 3:00pm

Bloom Pavilion
Huntington Avenue and the beach
Monday thru Sunday – 10:00am to 3:00pm



The pre-season cost for a regular seasonal badge is \$7 and for a senior citizen, 65 years or older, the cost is \$3.50. **Senior badges are only available through May 31st and only seniors may wear a senior badge. Beginning on June 1st all seasonal badges will cost \$15.**



Update from Commissioner Maury Blumberg...

I thought I would take this opportunity to introduce you to Andy Bednarek, our Tax Assessor. Andy has served in this capacity, providing outstanding service to the city of Margate for many years. Below is his understanding of the office and a brief state of affairs in Margate. Please join me in thanking Andy for years of great work and this piece of good information.

The mission of the Tax Assessor's office is to maintain a fair and equitable property tax base for the community based on uniform rules, sound assessment practices and law. The office is responsible for identifying and placing value on every parcel of property within our borders. The Assessor is a statutory position based on the NJ Constitution. Although an employee of the municipality, the Assessor works under the direction of the Atlantic County Board of Taxation.

New Jersey real property is "ad valorem" or a "tax according to value" meaning each person pays property taxes based on the value of the property they own. The tax rate is expressed as dollars per hundred, and is set by the adopted budgets of taxing entities (i.e. county, municipality, and school board) in which the property is located. The Atlantic County Board of Taxation then strikes the tax rate from the total amount of taxes needed to be collected. In 2011, Margate City had a total tax rate of \$1.334, the third lowest of the twenty-three municipalities in Atlantic County. Margate City represents approximately 8 percent of the assessed valuation of Atlantic County.

Beginning in 2012 Margate City has an aggregate assessed valuation of \$3.484 billion dollars on the 6,998 taxable residential and commercial parcels. This robust real estate valuation is evident by the 183 useable deed transactions last year of new construction and existing properties that represented sales of \$103.8 million dollars. Taxpayer's who disagree with their property assessment have the right to appeal to the Atlantic County Board of Taxation on or before April 1st.

Finally, the Assessor's office also administers some property tax deduction and exemption programs such as the \$250 Senior Citizens, Disabled and Surviving Spouse and Veterans and Surviving Spouse of Veterans. Contact the Assessor's office at 822-1950 to learn more about program eligibility or visit the office at City Hall or the Margate City website at www.margate-nj.com. To review more information about property tax relief information administered by the State Division of Taxation, visit www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation.



Update from Commissioner Brenda Taube...

After two previous terrible winters, Mother Nature has blessed us with an unseasonable warm winter with virtually no snow at all. Prior to sporting my Commissioner of Public Works hat, I would have never linked snow, sleet and freezing rain to our municipal budget. I do now. Why? Because, thanks to Mother Nature, we saved on employee overtime, equipment wear and tear and salt.

And, more good news...spring is upon us, though my family officially views the start of spring as the day we first notice the Ospreys return, which we anticipate occurring any day now. Spring is my favorite time of the year when everything comes back to life, the trees and flowers are in bloom and there's a hub of outside activity as we exercise outdoors and we all work to get our homes and yards ready for the season. So get outside, take a breath of fresh, spring air and be grateful that we live in the wonderful community of Margate. Have an enjoyable spring and as always, please don't hesitate to contact me (609) 822-0424 if I may be of any help or assistance.

Come on out, we can use your help!

**Beach Clean Up sponsored by Clean Ocean Action at the Granville Avenue Beach on
Saturday, April 21st from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm.**

FLOOD SAFETY CHECKLIST

Preparing makes sense – Get ready now!

What should I do?

- Listen to area radio & television stations and A NOAA Weather Radio for possible flood warnings and reports of flooding in progress or other critical information from the National Weather Service.
- Be prepared to evacuate in a moment's notice.
- When a flood of flash flood warning is issued, head for higher ground and stay there.
- Stay away from and out of flood waters.
- Do not walk through flood waters. Six inches of swiftly flowing water can sweep you off your feet.
- Do not drive through flood waters; find another way. If caught, get out of your car quickly and move to higher ground.
- Keep children out of the water. They are curious and often lack judgment about running water or contaminated water.
- Because standard homeowners insurance doesn't cover flooding, it's important to have protection from the floods associated with tropical storms, northeasters, hurricanes and other conditions that may impact us. For more information on flood insurance, please visit the National Flood Insurance Program website at www.fema.gov/business/nfip.

ZONING TIDBITS

**ROGER RUBIN, ZONING OFFICER
MARGATE ZONING IS "GREEN"**

The Margate Land Use Ordinance contains many provisions that distinguish it from other communities in matters of environmental preservation, respecting the fragile ecology of a barrier island, and making Margate a more desirable place to live and invest and conduct business.

Just a few examples:

1. All new houses must have 35% of the total lot developed with grass or other landscape materials, and two street trees and 24 shrubs must be planted.
2. All decks and patios must allow penetration of water, and concrete and bituminous patios are prohibited. Inlaid pavers or bricks set in sand, or boards with drainage spacing are required.
3. The grass strip at the curb must be preserved as grass or permeably installed paver stones – no concrete. If you build a new house or make a major renovation and the curb strip was previously concreted, it must be restored.
4. The ordinance contains a 5-page detailed listing of tree and shrub species that would do well in the island environment. Anyone wanting a copy, please call me at 609-822-5438 or email a request to rubin_roger@margate-nj.com and I will get it to you immediately.
5. Our site plan requirements for larger developments include: landscaping to be used for climate control; ground cover to be used to prevent erosion; local soil conditions and water availability to be considered in the choice of landscaping; impervious materials are not to be used in any landscape areas.
6. Plantings of bamboo are not permitted, as they become harmful to foundations, other plants, and potentially water and sewer pipes.
7. There are provisions regarding trash storage, including location, screening, and a requirement for indoor storage prior to collection of any materials which might cause fumes, dust or odor or which might attract rodents or insects.

We are proud to have such a forward-looking ordinance in place, to protect our water table, to minimize flooding, to protect our water supply and to enhance the natural environment for all our residents.

Employee Happenings

Congratulations go out to the following employees:

- Police officer Frank Marciante and his wife Cheryl welcomed a baby girl Marebella on December 20, 2011
- Firefighter Brad Eissler and his wife Jessica welcomed a baby boy Brady on May 5, 2011
- James Scullion and his wife Stephanie welcomed a baby girl Charlie Rose on October 19, 2011
- Public Works Supervisor Franz Adler was appointed to the County SWAC Board (Solid Waste Advisory Council).
- Former Public Works employee, BJ Bailey is playing D-1 basketball for Lehigh University.
- Building Inspector Jim Galentino was recently appointed President of the Building Officials of South Jersey. After Jim's term, he will take a seat on the state-wide, NJ Building Officials Board.

Former Team Member Publishes first novel.....

Joe Keough, retired Margate City Police Records Clerk, published his first novel this month, "Shattered Peace", a murder mystery. Keough was born in Philadelphia and has lived most of his life at the southern New Jersey seashore. A magna cum laude graduate of LaSalle University and former member of Mensa, he is currently retired from a first career in corporate human resources and a second as Police Records Clerk in Margate City, NJ, his former hometown. Including *Shattered Peace* he has authored five novels. His short stories and articles have appeared in Men's Digest, Best of Men, Rascal and South Jersey Living. He also writes music and poetry, having penned the national prize-winning poem *Crocus*. He and his wife Margaret (artist and cover creator) currently reside in Ventnor City, NJ. Their six children and eight grandchildren live nearby.

Shattered Peace is available at www.amazon.com in print and will be available for Kindle readers from Amazon in 2 to 3 weeks. Copies are also available from Joe Keough through Lonnie Thomas at the Police Department.

Celebrate Earth Day (April 22) with one simple step to reduce your environmental foot print.

Stop unwanted junk mail at their source by going to <https://margate-nj.catalogchoice.org>. Save the city money in disposal fees and be earth friendly at the same time! The city of Margate has 23 registered users so far resulting in 590 opt-outs saving 21 trees, 8,600 pounds of carbon dioxide, 20,712 gallons of water and 3,049 pounds of solid waste. Let's keep it going! If you need help, call Commissioner Brenda Taube at 822-0424 and she'll be happy to walk you through it.

Just FYI...Work sessions are held the first and third Thursday of each month at 4:00 pm, followed by Commission Meetings at 5:00 pm. On the second Thursday of each month there is an evening work session at 7:00 pm. These meetings are open to the public and attendance is strongly encouraged.

THANK YOU to Fire Chief Anthony Tabasso, Deputy Fire Chief Dan Adams and their team of firefighters for spearheading the smoke alarm inspections/installations throughout the City. The governing body of Margate and its residents are grateful for your efforts to keep us safe.

**Don't forget to email questions to the Mayor to be answered
in the next edition of "Margate City News"!**

mayorbecker@margate-nj.com