MAYOR'S MESSAGE *October 3, 2024*

On September 20, I was honored to attend VFW Post 1963 Auxiliary's annual POW-MIA Recognition Day Ceremony, during which our nation's prisoners of war and service members who are still missing in action were remembered. My thanks go to the Auxiliary members for hosting that event – and for everything they do for our community throughout the year.

Also on September 20, Sea Isle City's Recreation Office hosted a Philadelphia Phillies Watch Party at Excursion Park, where approximately 200 people watched the Phils soundly defeat the New York Mets on the Band Shell's giant screen. From all reports, it was a very enjoyable evening, and fun was had by all. My thanks go to everyone who was on-hand to cheer the Phillies onto victory that night – and my thanks also go to our Recreation staff for hosting another successful community event.

Looking ahead, the Environmental Commission will host Sea Isle City's Autumn Beach Clean-up on Saturday morning, October 12 – and I hope as many people as possible will donate a little time to help beautify our beaches and dunes that day. Each year during this event, hundreds of pounds of trash and debris are collected, but it takes volunteers to make it all happen. Therefore, if you can attend, please see the special section in this week's E-Newsletter for more details.

Our friend Joe Griffies (a tireless Veterans Advocate and the host of the weekly "Welcome Home Veterans" radio show) recently told me a wonderful story that I am happy to share with everyone…

Last month, Joe had the pleasure of attending the Commissioning Ceremony of the USS New Jersey (SSN 796) in Middletown, NJ, where Governor Murphy, high-ranking naval officials and many other important people gathered to officially put into service the Navy's new Virginia-class nuclear submarine. However, Joe's story doesn't stop there, because in addition to being present during the commissioning of that state-of-the-art warship, Joe was also invited to be onboard during the New Jersey's 4-day voyage from Middletown to Norfolk, Virginia – and a large portion of that journey took place under water!

During those four days, Joe and the other members of the media who were onboard learned a great deal about the New Jersey's amazing abilities, including its impressive technology and how every square inch of the boat's interior was intelligently utilized. Joe also closely interacted with the ship's crew, and he explained that the nearly 130 male and female sailors who now call the USS New Jersey "home" performed their duties in an extremely cohesive manner, all the while treating each other with respect and courtesy, regardless of their gender, race, religion, or political viewpoints.

Perhaps Joe put it most succinctly when he said: "How lucky we are to have these brave women and men to protect our freedoms at the bottom of the ocean and all around the world" – and I could not agree with him more!

I want to thank Joe Griffies for sharing his story with me, and I hope everyone will keep the crew of the New Jersey in their thoughts and prayers, because they – and the other members of the United States military – provide a precious blanket of freedom that we all enjoy (and sometimes take for granted).

As our nation approaches a presidential election in November, let's all learn a valuable lesson from the crew of the USS New Jersey by remembering that we are all in the same boat, and that we should always show each other respect and courtesy – no matter what our political, religious or social beliefs may be. Also, we must remember that we are extremely fortunate to live in a country that has a very strong Constitution, which affords us the ability to speak our minds freely – however, we also must "agree to disagree" and still remain friendly with one another.

This week's "Shout Out" goes to the members of the Sea Isle City Women's Civic Club, which is the longest-standing civic organization in Sea Isle City. I appreciate all the good work that the Civic Club performs in our community, and I look forward to them making a positive impact in Sea Isle City for many years to come!

Smile…You're in Sea Isle!

Mayor Leonard C. Desiderio

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