

Wenonah landmark spared from fire

By LAUREL REID
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WENONAH — Thanks to the good sense of 2-year-old Jason Neely, one of this tiny borough's landmark commercial establishments was saved this weekend from possible destruction.

Because Jason was smart enough to summon his mother from the shower Saturday when he noticed a fire in the kitchen of his Mantua Avenue home, firefighters were alerted in time to save the Carriage Stop luncheonette — a more than 100-year-old building.

The luncheonette and one apart-

ment are on the first floor. Two apartments are on the second floor.

Wenonah fire chief Jack Hart said the cause of the fire was traced to an electric coffee maker left in operation on the kitchen counter.

While the first floor apartment and another apartment upstairs were damaged, no one was injured and the Carriage Stop sustained only smoke damage, Hart said.

The Carriage Stop and apartments are owned by George and Jane Bowker, who have run the luncheonette for the past eight years.

And Bowker claims the Carriage Stop may be the oldest commercial establishment in the 1.08-square-mile borough.

Bowker said he hopes to reopen the Carriage Stop "for loyal patrons" by Thursday. Because smoke from the fire drifted into an area where food is prepared, the luncheonette first must pass an inspection by the Gloucester County Board of Health before it may be reopened, Hart said.

Hart said the 11:44 a.m. fire was contained in the apartments within 20 minutes by firefighters from Wenonah, Woodbury and Woodbury Heights, with Deptford's Oak Valley fire company standing by.

I-676 project leads to detour

Motorists driving into Camden from the North-South Freeway will be detoured off westbound Morgan Boulevard, starting today, as construction begins on the final phase of I-676, linking the Benjamin Franklin and Walt Whitman bridges.

After today's morning rush-hour traffic, motorists leaving the Freeway to get to Broadway will use Eighth Street from Morgan Boulevard to Fairview Street, and then will use Fairview Street to Broadway.

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