

# LT Council discusses public comment

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS – “We are a civilized society,” Deputy Mayor Kevin Lare said Monday, “and every civilized society has order.”

Lare was expressing his desire to bring order to public comment at Lower Township Council meetings. Lare brought up the issue at the July 6 meeting, which ran about two hours. Most meetings do not run that long. Lare believes a lack of structure for public comment might be part of the problem. “Many times our meetings do not have order,” he said. “I would like to set some standards.”

Lare said a lack of order was a common thread through all their meetings. He recommended individuals making public comment be limited to speaking for five minutes.

Councilman Thomas Conrad said he thought council already had a time limit. “I believe we have a five-

minute rule, it just has to be enforced,” he said.

Mayor Mike Beck said there was no clock and was reluctant to start timing speakers. Councilman Erik Simonsen said he thought everyone should take responsibility for regulating public comment, including members of the public.

“I think we all should take some responsibility...and be more courteous to each other; then things will run more smoothly,” he said.

Councilman Glenn Douglass said he agreed with Lare, saying, “It’s just keeping order.”

Douglass said he thought people should be given a warning that they are about to exceed or have exceeded their five minutes. He said then more business could be conducted.

Beck said he didn’t think the time limit was the problem, saying no one had a problem with public comment three or four months ago. He said then the Lower Township Rescue Squad

issue came up and neighbors have been back every meeting making comments, which are followed by counter-comments from representatives of the rescue squad.

Simonsen said he believes the problem has been going on for a long time, as far as he knows.

“This is not just about the rescue squad. It’s been going on for two and a half years,” he said.

Simonsen said he believes everyone should have the right to speak, but there should be order, and he said it was the mayor’s job to run the meetings.

Lare agreed that it has been an ongoing problem and, since the meetings are recorded and broadcast, compared it to an TV old comedy program.

“People turn on Channel 9 and it’s like Benny Hill,” he said.

Lare said he had no intention to chill public comment, but he objected to the point-counter point discussion that sometimes arises in meet-

ings, and what he called the “gotcha moment” – when he believes some residents ask a question with the intention of stumping the township manager, for example. Lare said this practice by some members of the public ought to be discouraged, saying, “The way these meetings are conducted reflects poorly on this community.”

“I would love to see more civility,” Beck said, “but I would like to make sure everyone had the right to speak.”

“I think we are all in agreement,” Douglass said, “and I pledge to stay within the rules.”

Council members did not take a formal vote, but generally agreed to stick to the five minute rule and exert more control in council meetings.

Voll said he called a number of other municipalities and towns like Ocean City and Cape May have a five minute rule on public comment.



Special to the Cape May Star and Wave

## Miss Cape May County 2011

OCEAN CITY – Miss Cape May County 2011-12, Jennifer Taylor of Millville, was crowned on the Ocean City Music Pier last week by the outgoing titleholder, Anna Negron. Jennifer is a junior student at Arcadia University studying Corporate Communications. For the talent portion of the pageant, Jennifer performed a lyrical dance. Besides winning the title, Jennifer was the evening gown and interview winner. First runner-up, Dana Piccoli of Beesley’s Point, also a dancer, won the Community Service award. Second runner-up, Kiersten Stephens of Seaville won Swimsuit and Talent. Over \$4,000 in cash, scholarships and awards were given out at the pageant.

## Camp

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did not become a chef after the war. Instead, he worked in the Princeton Cemetery, digging graves, setting monuments, etc. It was Miriam who worked in food service, working in a school cafeteria in Pennington, where they live year around.

Since 1966, the Griffises have owned a cabin at the Erma Camp, where they brought their own five children as they were growing up. It has always been something of a family affair. Miriam said her older brother and his wife helped them prepare the meals for many years.

Asked if he had a specialty, Earl responded immediately.

“My roast beef,” he said.

He also prepares turkey, roast pork, ham and cabbage, and another popular item – fried fish – almost every Friday.

“They love my fish. We would run out almost every time I cooked fish,” he said.

Miriam said part of the draw for the campers is the price.

“The rates are not high,” she said.

A cabin is charged \$100 for three meals a day for the 10 days of the camp no matter how many are staying there. The same deal is offered to those who bring RVs or campers. Miriam said people also come from churches in the community.

Not to be overlooked, however, is the attraction of the camp meeting. This year the Erma Camp Meeting runs from July 22 to 31, at the Retreat Center, 470 Seashore Road, Erma, N.J. 08204. The camp begins with a concert on Friday at 7 p.m. Saturday is the first fish fry, followed by drama and music with song evangelist Jim Hughes. This year’s evangelist is the Rev. Joe McNulty, who grew up in Cape May and as a teen attended the Tabernacle United Methodist Church in Erma. He is currently a pastor of the First Church of the Nazarene in Pensacola, Fla.

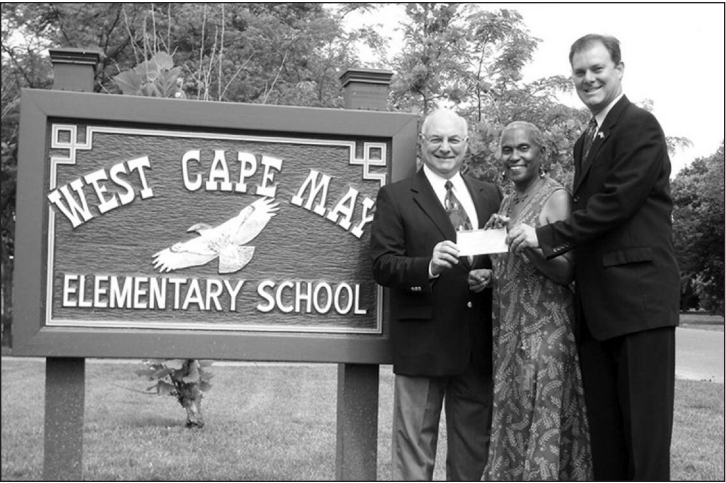
An evening meeting will be held Monday through Saturday at 7 p.m., on Sunday, July 24, at 6 p.m., and on Sunday, July 31, at 5 p.m. For more information on the daily schedule, call 609-884-5314.

“It’s like a revival,” Miriam said of the camp meeting.

“People have a good time,” Earl added.

Miriam said people seem to enjoy the singing, praying and preaching.

The Griffises said there have been a number of changes at the camp, including a new bookstore with gifts, cards and books. Also new, this year the Griffises will be replaced by two other volunteers, who will serve their time in the summer heat.



## Sturdy Supports WCM School

WEST CAPE MAY - Sturdy Savings Bank recently renewed its commitment to West Cape May Elementary School. Branch Manager Michael Clark (pictured above, right) presented Dr. Dominick Potena, Interim Superintendent, and Brenda Williams Elliott, Supervisor/Head Teacher, with a donation to assist with the school’s playground upgrade.

## Blame

Continued from page A1

got a phone call. They were not treated like every other code violation,” Beck said.

Beck said this treatment is why the residents are coming back every meeting and questioning the operation of the Lower Township Rescue Squad. Since the alleged code violations were brought up in April, complaints escalated to the point of challenging the LTRS Certificate of Incorporation, the deed, having the Health Department investigate a food pantry operated by the LTRS, and municipal license plates on three LTRS vehicles, which are privately owned. Some have challenged the fiscal soundness of the operation and have questioned the degree of medical service

being provided.

Copies of the COI and deed seemed to indicate the LTRS must operate at no cost to township residents. The LTRS maintains a food collection point and distributes food to local food pantries. Assistant Chief Tony Kapurelos said the license plates are leftover from a time when the rescue squad was a township operation, and the license plates have simply been transferred from one vehicle to another over the years. Kapurelos also said the LTRS operates according to state guidelines, which calls for two EMTs to man an ambulance.

“We cannot put paramedics or nurses on an ambulance,” he said.

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Horrible Bosses R 11:50, 2:20, 4:50, 7:20, 9:50  
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Cars II 3D G 11:05, 1:35, 4:10, 7:25  
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## CCA Beach Party July 24

CAPE MAY - Come join the fun and bring your beach chair and blanket - there's a beach party for CCA going on at the Beach Club. Enjoy food, drinks and plenty of fun on Sunday, July 24, 6 to 9 p.m. at the Beach Club, 1860 Maryland Ave., Cape May. Tickets are \$50 for adults, ages 12-18 are \$25, children under 12 - Free. Local Fare, catered and coordinated by Chris Shriver of Depot Market. Dance to the music of DJ MoJo of WCFA 101.5FM playing beach-reggae-dance music. Buy your ticket now or call Center for Community Arts at 609-884-7525 or www.centerforcommunityarts.org. There will also be a “Flip-flop Contest.” Decorate your flip-flops and win prizes for the most colorful, prettiest, craziest, bizarre, spectacular, and most outrageous.