

Ticket

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have a choice. What was so disturbing to me about the way this primary was shaking up was that the candidates were handpicked and there was no voice of the people. Let's discuss the issues and debate what's best for the county and after that debate who the two people out of the four should be the Republican choice to run in the general election for freeholder," Sheppard said.

She said Ocean City taxpayers contribute 25 to 30 percent to the county's budget, and deserve representation on the freeholder board.

"I don't necessarily know if Ocean City has been able to get all of the services that we could or have an open dialog by having a representative there. I want to represent Ocean City but I also want to represent all of the taxpayers of Cape May County and all of the Republicans who feel that they don't have a voice in Cape May County," Sheppard said.

McCann, an Ocean City real estate agent who ran unsuccessfully for state Assembly

in 2009, said he entered the freeholder race after strong public encouragement, and was selected to run with Bakley.

On March 15, the county Republican Committee members gave 94 votes for Thornton, 151 for Bakley and 131 votes for McCann.

Sheppard questioned the reasons why the county party did not back Thornton this year.

"Because he (Thornton) dared to question what the right course of action was for the Republican Party and the freeholder board, he got thrown under the bus," Sheppard said.

Thornton, 68, of Middle Township, has served as county freeholder from 1976 to 1987 and from 1996 until the present. As freeholder, Thornton is the director of Health and Human Services, overseeing the Department of Aging, the Health Department and the Crest Haven Nursing & Rehabilitation Center.

Thornton said his opposition to the county purchasing the Beesley's Point Bridge last December was a very

public disagreement that privately drew the wrath of party officials.

"When I expressed my independence and disagreed with them, they didn't like it. Suddenly, I'm pushed out. They abandoned me," Thornton said. "That's not called representative government, that's not called democracy. Everybody has the right to disagree. I've served with a lot of boards for many years and everyone was allowed to disagree and express themselves and it was never a problem until this board and the Republicans here."

Thornton said though he's a loyal Republican, he's an independent thinker.

"I'm not elected just to nod my head. Frankly, I'm elected when I think it's necessary to say no and have a contrary position," Thornton said. "People wanted to stifle me and I don't want to be stifled."

He said after speaking with Sheppard and his supporters, he reached out to her and asked her to join him as a ticket.

"She's (Sheppard) an independent thinker who feels as I do that we've got to bring

integrity and openness back to the Republican Party in Cape May County. Everybody has the right to express how they feel, and open the party up to discourse so we can look at different issues," Thornton said. "We just can't have a party that's controlled by two or three individual people."

Thornton said support for his campaign has been "overwhelming," including backing from the Cape May County Union League, which represents Republican business and professionals.

"I'm getting a lot of calls from people who are not declared, not only Republicans," Thornton said. "I've gotten calls from a Democrat who wants to tell everybody who's Republican to vote for me and Sue."

According to Thornton, a few people control the county GOP and select candidates for office.

"Those that have been historically loyal to the organization suddenly get pushed aside because you don't agree with some of these people," Thornton said.

Cape May County Regular Republican Organization

Chairman David Von Savage said although Thornton should be proud of his past accomplishments as freeholder, it was time for a change.

Von Savage said that Thornton sought other positions such as township manager, county clerk and county surrogate, which created doubts if Thornton was dedicated to his freeholder position.

"After close to 35 years as a freeholder, no one can blame Jerry for lacking the enthusiasm and leadership needed for this position, but at the same time the Republican Organization can not afford to 'rubber stamp' a candidate's nomination simply because he has always held that position," Von Savage said.

According to Von Savage, the primary campaign will give the county Republican organization the opportunity to demonstrate to county Republicans that Bakley and McCann are the better candidates.

"Our local business people know that they have to make financial adjustments as they face a downsized market. With today's economic chal-

lenges, it is all them ore important that we can count on our government leaders to do the same," said Von Savage. "Just as Governor Chris Christie is reshaping state government by cutting spending and reducing the size of state government, Ralph Bakley and John McCann are prepared to make the necessary policy changes in government to keep Cape May County's property tax rate the lowest in the state while protecting the valued community services that are essential to our citizens."

As of yet, the Cape May County Democratic Party have not picked their two candidates.

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Jazz

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Copeland, because she has her following."

Riggi said the response to the discounts and the lineup is heartening in light of cuts in state aid.

"The money from the state we were counting on we're not going to get," he said. "But it's going to be pretty cool to have a great turnout."

Friday night's headliner Spyro Gyra and Saturday's headliner Shemekia Copeland will play at Lower Cape May Regional High School.

"The high school is a great venue. It has the capacity to deal with the audiences we expect," Riggi said. "And the high school has been more

than helpful with us."

Still, Riggi is anxious for the new Cape May Convention Center to be constructed, so they can resume holding the headline acts in a Cape May venue.

"The down side to playing at the high school, for many people, is that it's out of Cape May. A lot of ticket buyers don't want to travel out of Cape May. Their major concern is if they go to a later show, when they get back to Cape May the jams are winding down," he said.

The Convention Hall construction project is tentatively scheduled to be completed before Memorial Day 2011. Until then, Riggi is thankful for the beautiful venue at the high school.

"I got a feeling Friday night there going to be a mob over there. Fortunately they have the capacity to handle the crowd. I expect both shows to be sold out," he said.

Some of the previous Jazz Festival headliners have been the Count Basie Orchestra, Duke Ellington Orchestra, Chuck Mangione, Ravi Coltrane, Pat Martino, and tributes to Herbie Mann, Little Jimmie Scott, Ray Charles, Wes Montgomery and Maynard Ferguson.

Now in its 33rd year, the Jazz Festival has been working to establish a sounder financial base.

"Last year I put together a financial stabilization plan to change how we spend money and deal with finances. The timeline would have had us reach stability in three years. Now, that was written before the economy tanked. But if we continue with these kinds of gains we could become stable by the end of this year or first quarter 2011 - about two years ahead of schedule," Riggi said.

Riggi said while the State of New Jersey is giving the Jazz

Festival less, and some sponsors are giving less, the Bank of America increased funding last November.

"Bank of America, oh my god! Talk about sticking by us," Riggi said.

Riggi said the approach the Jazz Festival is taking is that they are more than just Cape May Jazz.

"We're here to promote the music, it's an important part of the local economy, and we have an obligation to see it survive," he said.

"Another thing that ensures it will survive is we have a very proactive board. This is the most involved board we have had in a long time," Riggi said.

The Cape May Jazz Festival board includes Phil Pizzi, president, first vice-president Wood Woodland, second vice-president Curtis Bashaw, third vice-president Carol Stone, fourth vice-president Oscar Johnson, treasurer

Gene Boyd, secretary and chair of marketing and promotions Rick Dee, and members at large, Lois Smith, Myra Vassian, Linda Steenrod, Rina Terry and Kathleen Varallo.

"Rick is like an iron horse," Riggi said of Dee, "but the whole board very, very active. I think that is what makes my job a lot easier."

Riggi gave most of the credit to the day-to-day operations of the Jazz Festival to program administrator Jody Perry and administrative assistant Diane Mitchell.

"If you ask me what makes the Cape May Jazz Festival go, it's those two," he said. "They are the main wheels that make this go smoothly."

And, of course, Riggi pointed out how much help is given by volunteers.

"If there were no volunteers there would be no jazz festival," he said.

Asked what he thought peo-

ple would miss if they skipped the April 16-18 Jazz Festival, Riggi said, "They are going to miss probably the best festival we ever had. A friend can't make this one. She is a teacher and they have to make up snow days during spring break. I said, man, you picked the wrong festival to miss. It's going to be a grand slam."

Riggi said last year was the first turning point for the Jazz Festival and he sees this month's festival as a major turn for Cape May Jazz.

Additionally, he said what is being planned for November could be a very pleasant surprise for people.

"That's all I'm going to say," he said.

For information go to www.capemayjazz.com for the program schedule. Look for a Jazz Festival program booklet in next week's Star and Wave.

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Diary Of A Wimpy Kid PG: 11:30, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30
The Last Song PG: 11:15, 1:25, 3:30, 5:30, 7:50, 10:00
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Pool

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request a presidential declaration," McCall said.

McCall said the county started putting together a Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2007 and has a plan ready to submit to FEMA for future events. For the time, he said the county has been cooperating with Lower Township, but said the amount of ground water is unprecedented.

"There are people who have

lived in the county four or five generations who never had basement flooding who are having water for the first time," he said.

Kobik said he has lived on Tabernacle Road 36 years and has never seen it like this. He said in April 2009 he build a pole-barn type garage and he dug the depth of a posthole digger and did not hit water. He said a DEP official used an auger to get even deeper without finding water. However, since that time the area has become saturated and there is nowhere for water to go. Kobik said his

home is part of a 40-acre tract surrounded by four county roads, which seems to act as dikes keeping the water in their neck of the woods.

Kerlin said at least one neighbor has water up to their floor joists and is worried it will be in the home. Even if not, the Tabernacle Road residents are going to have mold, mildew and will have to replace insulation under their homes. They all have wells and septic systems, so they are all drinking bottled water.

"This is now a health hazard," Kobik said.

declarations of emergency. McCall said FEMA has conducted surveys between March 12 and March 24 and has identified 7,000,000 affected properties.

"If people are looking for help from FEMA, the numbers have been filed with the state and they are reviewing them so the governor can have sufficient data to

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