

# Lower Township unveils new look

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- Officer safety issues must be met with the vehicle, such as the large shield in the back seat that separates prisoners from officers. These safety shields are only made for specific patrol package vehicles.
- The engine must be large enough to accelerate the vehicle in emergency situations, while resisting wear and tear with continued use.



- The breaking system must be exceptional while also resisting wear and tear.
- In researching the Dodge Charger Police Package Vehicle, the department determined the following:
  - The vehicle was rated slightly better or equal to the Crown Victoria in gas mileage.
  - The Hemi Engine, which is standard on all V8 Models, is rated excellent, standing up to continual use and requires less overall routine maintenance.
- The Charger has the largest battery capability of all police package vehicles to run the numerous electronic systems in a police vehicle.
- The Dodge Charger is the only rear wheel drive police vehicle with a short/long arm front suspension and an independent five (5) link rear

- suspension for prolonged life of the vehicle.
  - Police Dodge Charger vehicles have significant improved road handling capabilities (which is an officer safety issue).
  - The Dodge Chargers have larger standard tires for better road contact, (which is an officer safety issue).
  - The Dodge Charger has a shorter stopping/breaking distance of any police package vehicle, (which again is an officer safety issue).
- The chief indicated the department would also pay the same or slightly less for the Charger and the Crown Victoria, so cost was not a major factor in deciding to go with the Dodge vehicle. Donohue said the department purchased two new Chargers in the 2008 operating budget and would buy two more in 2009. He said the department would seek to purchase an additional vehicle with federal grant money.
- The LTPD also purchased two, four-wheel drive black and white Dodge Durangos

through its capitol budget. As part of the new look, the department's emblem has changed on police vehicles, as well. For many years the LTPD has used the gold triangle borrowed from the New Jersey State Police emblem back in 1921, as many towns did. Donohue said the department kept the basic triangle shape, but inserted a lighthouse with the wording "Lower Township Police, Serving Ocean to Bay Since 1955."

The lighthouse located at Lighthouse State Park adjacent to Cape May Point is actually located within Lower Township's borders, which run from the George Redding Bridge to Diamond Beach, west to the Delaware Bay, and south to the lighthouse. Lower Township shares borders with Cape May, Cape May Point, West Cape May, Middle Township, Wildwood, and Wildwood Crest.

The Township has over nine miles of coastline and is home to numerous marinas, campgrounds, the county airport,



Courtesy of the Lower Township Police Department  
Above, the new look of the Lower Township Police patrol car. Left, an updated police emblem includes the Cape May Lighthouse.

the Cape May-Lewes Ferry Terminal, and the second largest commercial fishing fleet on the east coast.

"I wanted to keep the triangle shape because of its honored history," Donohue said. "However I also wanted to portray our own sense of identity for our patrol area."

The Chief also credited Captain Brian Marker, Harold Carly and the staff at the Department of Public Works, for the excellent work they did marking the new police vehicles in-house, even creating the new emblem without having to purchase the emblems through an outside agency.

The first new vehicles were already patrolling the streets and making vehicle stops during the Memorial Day weekend.

# Lear wins

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was interested in fashion design and he said Project Runway got him very interested. He checked out Florida-Atlantic University in Davie but didn't like it.

Lear said his friend attended the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale, which opened 1968 with three fields of study - Commercial Art, Interior Design, and Fashion Illustration. The curriculum was gradually refined and broadened, its site says, "to include a wide spectrum of visual, applied arts, culinary arts or other business-related fields to service multimedia and technology fields."

"My friend Becky went

there and she said, 'Go to the Art Institute...you'll love it,'" Lear said.

Two years later he is graduated with a Student Designer of the Year Award.

About his design, Lear said, "I wanted to do something simple and classic, not crazy."

He went with something pretty and simple, choosing clean lines in classic black and white, he said.

Lear said he and his friend Shannon Couch, who graduated with him at the Art Institute, have now paired up to put together a swim line due out at the end of summer.

It sometimes seems like yesterday, but reality tells me it was well over a half century ago when I first met Bill Haley and the Comets. He was the entertainer most likely to have originated rock and roll music but he was still doing a country and western bit when I met him in the early 50's.

At our first meetings, Haley had not yet made the turnaround to full time rock. The All Around the Clock recording which launched him to stardom had not yet been made. He was experimenting with the changeover when I first met Haley.

Our encounters in those early years came about because I wrote a night club column for a local paper at the time. Part of my 'beat' was to review performers on the entertainment circuit and Haley's group made a number of appearances at the Supper Club at the Manor Hotel in North Wildwood. He was one of the many entertainers I covered on my night club beat.

Oddly enough it wasn't the music that made me a Bill Haley fan. I found out that Haley was a dedicated fisherman. That was the tie that bound us together in the years I knew him.

Haley kept a boat at Shawcrest Yacht Basin near Wildwood, not far from my family's tackle shop at Wildwood Yacht Basin. Not too many people knew he had a boat there and not too many knew he was such an ardent angler. When he had time to use the boat it was out at sea. He spent little time on the boat while it was at dockside, and he often arrived in town to fish after his last session ended if he was appearing somewhere in the Delaware Valley. By the time others arrived at the marina to fish, Haley and his crew were

# Outdoors with Lou Rodia

already out to sea, where they usually remained until dark.

Haley's front man and publicist had several business ventures going for him in the Wildwoods and he became a frequent visitor in the family tackle shop. He made me aware of Haley's passion for fishing. Since they could only fish on unscheduled trips and at odd hours, they had trouble getting bait and tackle. It was especially difficult when they left a playing gig at 2 or 3 a.m. and were on the boat and ready to go by 4 or 5 a.m.

We struck a deal. A phone call informed us of a planned fishing trip and an order was placed for the bait and tackle they needed was put in a spot behind the store if they were arriving after closing hours. If the bill remained unpaid by Labor Day, we'd get a visit from someone from the group or his agent and the bill would be paid in full.

Some years after I first encountered Haley and the Comets, they returned to Wildwood to play at the Manor Supper Club over the Labor Day weekend. Naturally, there was time to do a little fishing. Sharks were the target. Haley fished for just about any kind of fish, but his real passion was fishing for sharks. That passion wrote another chapter in our relationship.

The trip was a success. The group caught four sharks, the biggest of which weighed about 450 lbs. Because of the lateness of the hour when they arrived back at the dock, the group assumed that the other guests at the hotel would be amused to find a big shark on the lawn by the swimming pool when they awoke to take their morning dip.

Some were, and some were not. Nor was the hotel management that ordered the

sharks removed. They wound up hanging from a sign at the corner of Rio Grande and Susquehanna Ave. Needless to say, the sharks created quite a stir. Traffic was backed up in the area. If people didn't stop on the way in to Wildwood, they drove back out to look at and photograph those big sharks.

Remember that this was the era before sharks and shark fishing attained acclaim through the Jaws and Jaws II movies. Television was in its infancy and had not yet featured sharks on the adventure shows. People saw few, if any sharks up close. There was high interest especially when they could get up close and photograph and be photographed with these monsters of the sea.

Also this was well ahead of the advent of tag, catch and release and the use of sharks as table fare had not yet escalated.

The traffic problem was compounded when a local radio station announced the presence of the sharks along with the word that entertainer Bill Haley had caught them. To add to the photographic appeal, a sign denoting Haley's part in the shark capture was added.

More and more people came and the traffic jam got worse. Wildwood's police deduced that the way to get rid of the traffic jam, was to get rid of the sharks, and that was done.

The sharks were gone and the Labor Day weekend went on. That weekend was the last we saw of Haley in person. He went on to bigger and better things and his talent out-grew Wildwood's ability to accommodate him. I lost personal contact with Haley but I stayed in contact with his publicist for several more years. He left Haley and became associated with an

art gallery outside Philadelphia.

Ill health took its toll. The art gallery was closed. Just before he died, Jim showed up at my house over the Thanksgiving weekend. He stayed a short time and left. He said he had to make a few more holiday calls to see old friends.

He had an early Christmas gift for me. It was a watercolor of a hillside village in Spain. It was one of the few things he salvaged from the art gallery. Jim had no family and he said he wanted to see the few friends he had left before he died.

Jim had a remembrance for each of us. Mine was the watercolor. It was much later that I finally saw a real Spanish hillside village in Spain. The painting hangs in my hallway. It's the last thing I see before I head upstairs for the night.

It has been a constant reminder of just how lucky I have been to have met so many people in so many places over the years. Fishing is one of the denominators that have helped fabricate the many associations that have come and gone in my life.

These associations, some fleeting and others which have lasted a lifetime point out how much more there is to fishing than just catching a fish.

### Lou Rodia's Fishing Report

Flounder season opened Saturday with some keeper fluke mixed with throwbacks. Sea bass action remains good with mostly short fish and a few keepers in the catch. Drum action picked up. Big stripers were caught at Poverty Beach and the 2nd street jetty cove. Weakfish were caught on bloodworms on the Cape May Point jetties. Kingfish showed in the surf. Small blues were caught in the back bays. Bigger blues were caught offshore.

At Cape May, youngsters scored well on the Fiesta this week, with pools and sea bass catches going to Gregory Beatty, 9, Holland, Pa., (4.8 lbs.); Jessica, 12 and Carli Cannura, 8, (2 lb. sea bass); Morgan and Sydney Belitz, Brunswick, N.J., Carolyn Harris, 8, Philadelphia, (2 lbs.) and Bob Stone, (2.5 lbs.) Trips sail Saturday and Sunday at 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. Drum and private charters are available.

The Miss Chris reported catches of sea bass with some keepers mixed in. The boat is targeting fluke and sea bass. Sea bass catches were reported by John Matley, Philadelphia, (12 to 3 lbs.) and Walt Fargone, Cherry Hill, N.J., (9 to 2 lbs.) Night drum action picked up with limits to 80 lbs. more common.

The Lady Chris is catching fluke and small blues on daily 4 hr. trips at 8 a.m. and 1 p.m.

The Cape May Lady is sailing daily at 7 p.m. for drumfish. Mark McPherson caught an 89 lb. drum.

The Lone Star reported pool winning black drum for R. Thomas, of the Murphy group from Philadelphia, (58 lbs.) and S. Wiggins of the Henderson group from Berlin, N.J., (60 lbs.). Call for information. Private charters are available for the July 4th fireworks displays.

The Sea Star III is sailing daily 6 hr. trips for fluke at 9 a.m.

Fluke catches were reported by Bob Keppert, Greenbelt, Md., (2 to 3 lbs.); Polly Reeves, Pittsburgh, (3 to 4 lbs.) and Dave Schemm, Claymont, Del., (6.5 lbs.).

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