

Scout For A Day

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will hear about law enforcement topics, the police academy, careers, and so on. The scouts will stay overnight at the academy.

On Saturday, April 4, the scouts and potential scouts will all attend a SWAT demonstration and participate in a PT (physical training) session. In the afternoon they will learn about the firearms training simulator and receive a safety lecture. That will be followed by a K-9 demonstration.

Learning about police training is just one thing scouts do, but something that hopefully appeals to the sons of men in law enforcement and other public safety fields.

"Dave's done a lot to promote the program, to introduce kids who are not scouts to the program and promote scouting," Troop 73 Scoutmaster Gene Sole said.

The district has challenged all the scout organizations to spread information about scouting and expand membership.

"The original idea was to focus on members of law enforcement, fire, EMTs - those who understand threats on children in the formative years," Von Savage said. "The program, if followed, involves just discipline and time. Do it and you will be successful."

Schaffer said he sent out fliers to chiefs of police, fire chiefs and EMS chiefs to get the word out to their people. All the information is also posted on the sheriff's website. He said West Cape May Fire Chief Chuck McPherson is also promoting Scout For A Day on the fire company's website. Troop 73 meets at the West Cape May Fire Hall. "This is a win-win," Schaffer said. "These (scout) programs are very little cost

to parents and great for young people."

Sole said Pack 73 Cubmaster Tony Genaro has been developing a scouting base with the Cub Scouts.

"Tony's done an awesome job getting people to his track. He makes it fun and exciting," Sole said. "We benefit from what he does."

Pack 73 now has roughly 55 Cub Scouts, about twice the district average, drawn from Cape May and West Cape May.

"To say scouting is not popular is not correct," Sole said. Part of continuing scouting programs includes getting parents on board.

"In the Cape May Police

Department we have six guys involved in the West Cape May Pack, and Rob Elwell from the fire department, as well," Genaro said. "We all have the common goals of wanting kids to do well, and we're a pretty good example of the appeal to law enforcement."

"Philosophically, self interest is the strongest motivator," Von Savage said. "If you connect with the child at the end of the day the prize is to become an Eagle Scout."

Von Savage said earning the rank of Eagle Scout gives a young man instant credibility on college and, later, job applications. Earning the rank shows future employers

about the level of a young person's commitment and character.

"In a competitive world the weight (the rank) carries really influences the minds of decision makers," Von Savage said.

Only about two percent of Boy Scouts ever earn Eagle Scout. Troop 73 recently promoted three scouts to the rank of Eagle.

Schaffer said he has worked with scouts for a number of years when he was an Ocean City police officer. He has been active with the Explorers program as the county sheriff, and he has been trying to involved chiefs countywide with the scout

recruitment effort.

"People are buying into the programs. It's just a win-win and such a great opportunity for kids," he said.

Von Savage said in these tough economic times people are reassessing their priorities and going back to basics, back to community.

"Scouting is an integral part of communities, and that's another reason why there is such growth. It's close to home - people know the people in the program," he said.

In 2009 Boy Scouts is celebrating 100 years. For additional information about Scout For A Day, call (609) 465-1233.

Lower sergeants

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budget next year. The State of New Jersey caps budget increases at 4 percent per year, and is also capping the increase in the tax levy each year.

"We have to reduce personnel or we're not going to make it next year," Beck said.

Beck said this year's budget was set last year and it included raises for employees in each of the three unions. He said the township must pay the wages they are obligated to pay under the contracts, so they have to start looking at positions. Beck said he would like to do away with a supervisory position in Public Works, and Deputy Mayor Kevin Lare recommended moving four full-time recreation department employees to public works.

"It hurts to make some changes," Beck said. "I think the world of our employees, but I think the world of our residents too."

The recreation department employees would move into civil service positions and would all receive pay raises. Douglass questioned the move saying, "We're cutting positions, but we're increasing salaries."

Beck said the increase would be a total of \$8,034 in 2009 and \$32,136 in 2010. He said he and Lare were proposing cutting some \$400,000 in salaries and reducing the number of cars township employees take home. Cars became an issue at the meeting two weeks ago when former mayor Jack Sparks criticized the pur-

chase of a new vehicle for the police chief. Police Chief Edward Donohue responded saying the chief had not received a new car for 16 years.

Monday's meeting also included an overview of the township's budget situation - including its debt service - by Municipal Auditor Leon Costello. Costello told the council and public, "The thing that drives the budget in every municipality is how many people you employ."

Essentially, the only way to significantly reduce the budget is to cut the number of personnel by any permanent means. Costello said the layoffs and furloughs the state has authorized are not a good idea. He said when those people come back the salaries come back, and in the next year's budget they come back at a higher level. He said a furlough doesn't eliminate spending for salaries and wages - it only defers it until a later time.

Costello said between 1996 and 2009, expenses related to personnel, including wages, pension, and health insurance have risen by \$7 million. He said the "other expenses" have gone up about \$1 million over the same time frame.

"A lot of salaries and wages are driven by pension costs. You have to pay them," Costello said.

Between 2001 and 2004 municipalities were told to contribute nothing to the state pension fund. Furthermore, Costello said the municipalities were told they could not reserve the amount they would have paid in pensions. In 2004 the state said towns had to start

paying again starting at 20 percent of their commitment and increasing that amount by 20 percent each year until they were at 100 percent. Costello said towns were given the option of deferring pensions this year, but he said no one is.

"Towns who defer are ones who can't make the levy cap. Anyone who is deferring is smacking the people with a big tax increase next year," he said.

Costello addressed debt service for capital projects, saying the amount the township pays is fairly stable.

"The budget is controlled by the number of employees, not capital projects. If you want to change spending, change the number of employees, change the way you operate," he said.

Costello added that people want services, and to keep services at the same level with fewer employees some decisions have to be made.

Lare said moving the four recreation department employees to public works would allow the township to do weekly recycling pickups year around, which is an increase in services. Councilman Thomas Conrad expressed concern over the personnel changes being proposed. He questioned the effect reducing the number of police officers would have on public safety, and whether there would not be a problem with the change in duties for the recreation department employees.

"There is a difference between pushing a lawnmower and riding on a trash truck," he said.

Harris lays down his trowel

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cially baseball and football, he didn't have time for hobbies. Harris said he didn't fish.

"I didn't want to go on a boat because I was afraid of the water," he said.

According to his daughter

Pam, however, Harris did like to play Pinochle. She said he also enjoyed cooking and would hold a big fish fry every summer for the family, for whom he also made "Red Chicken."

"It was really Chicken Cacciatore, but the kids couldn't say it so it became 'Red Chicken,'" she said. His daughter said he was also a doting grandfather, and he tried to instill in everyone the notion they could be successful if they would dedicate themselves to being the best they could be.

Harris also served as an inspiration for the men who worked for him.

Clara said she asked her husband to name some of the guys who worked for him



Courtesy of Harris Family/ Cape May Star and Wave

Above is the lamppost outside the Harris home in West Cape May.

over the years, but he said there were just too many. "He worked with more than 50 over the years," she said.

According to his daughter, some of these men went on to start their own businesses.

"He hired and taught many," his daughter said.

Harris, 89, started his business at 28 and never stopped working until a couple of years ago. His health started to deteriorate about five years ago, and for the past couple of years he would still go out to the job site with the men who worked for him. He finally decided it was time to hang up the trowel for good and close the business after serving as a role model to his children, grandchildren and many young men in Cape May County.

And so ends the history of one of the remaining African-American owned and operated businesses in Cape May and West Cape May. His family wanted to let the community, his many friends and customers know about his long-delayed retirement, and express their pride in their father, who lived and worked his entire life in this part of Cape May County and left his mark in stone.

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as a periodical
(USPS 619020)

SUBSCRIPTION PRICES:
By mail in Cape May
County: \$22; East of
Mississippi, \$25; West of
Mississippi: \$29. Mail sub-
scriptions paid in advance.
Newsstand price: \$.50 per
copy.

PUBLICATIONS SCHEDULE:
Weekly, every Thursday.

POSTMASTER:
Send address change to
Cape May Star & Wave,
600 Park Blvd. #28, West
Cape May, NJ 08204.

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