

Cape man bringing entertainment to town

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

OCEAN VIEW - Joe Scrocca grew up in Wildwood and settled into a career as an accountant and running his own mortgage company. He started Benchmark Mortgage and was doing fine until the music bug bit him.

In January 2008 he merged his business with Oak Mortgage so he could form Scrocca Entertainment Group and devote more of his

time to the music business. He heard a group called the Dollyrots, who he later saw live in Trenton.

"I felt the band was good and I wanted to do what I could to help them. I sent their stuff to a manager and she invited me to L.A.," Scrocca said.

"Sitting in her office surrounded by gold and platinum records I said to myself, 'You know what? This is what I want to do,'" Scrocca said.

According to Scrocca, he

"She didn't have to say that, and she wouldn't have said it if she didn't mean it. A year and half later, here I am," he said.

Scrocca said he has three bands showcasing in Austin, Texas and another in Cape May, this weekend.

That band was the first runner-up in the band/duo category in the International Acoustic Music Awards, in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

The band, Ready in 10, sent him a press kit after they found his name in an artists' management directory. He said they sent him a CD and it just blew him away. Scrocca said it doesn't matter that his business is based in Ocean View.

"With technology it doesn't matter. I talk to people in California, Europe ... you don't have to be in the center of it all anymore," he said.

Still, Scrocca cautions hiring him doesn't mean artists are getting a ticket to fame and fortune.

"Hiring me doesn't open the doors. It means I promote you full time to labels, promoters, music supervisors who get music for movies and TV shows," he said.

Additionally, Scrocca isn't looking to take on the "week-end warriors" who are working 9-5 and playing music on

the weekends. He said labels need to see they are serious about a career and will make money for the label.

"I'm not looking for more clients, but if someone comes to me and has talent and is serious about their career ... I just talked to some guys in Kentucky. I could tell one fellow was very passionate. So I met with them in Louisville and we signed contracts. If you are willing to work hard I'm willing to work with them. But nothing is going to fall in your lap," he said.

Scrocca said his job is mainly to create a "buzz" about artists.

"It's the A&R (Artists and Repertoire) people who discover and sign people to labels and they like hearing from people who don't have a vested interest in the band. They should be on people's radar, so my job is to create the buzz that gets them there," Scrocca said.

Scrocca said that is what he is trying to do with Ready in 10, who got their name from calling Chinese Restaurants.

"No matter what you order they always say it'll be ready in 10 minutes," he said.

The band just played in Austin and Fort Lauderdale and will be playing Friday at 8 p.m. at the Ugly Mug.



Special to the Cape May Star and Wave

Annual Flower Show April 28

Busy planning for the Garden Club of Cape May's annual flower show are, back row, left to right, Barbara Pitman, Pat Milligan, Nancy Benson, Jackie Pouloupoulos; and seated, left to right, Marge Conley, chairman, Joan Prentice, and Elizabeth Favre, president. Not pictured are Anna Marie Zablielski, co-chairman, and Elinor Brasher, publicity. The show will be held on Tuesday, April 28, in the Grand Hotel's Ballroom from 12:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Kirby speaks at Cape May Point Union Chapel Saturday, March 28

CAPE MAY POINT - John David Kirby, Th.D., will speak at the Cape May Point Union Chapel, 317 Cape Ave., at 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 28.

Kirby is the founder and president of John David Kirby Ministries, Inc. He was the senior pastor of Free Spirit Revival Center which he and his wife, Sarah, founded in 1987. In the following year they founded Free Spirit Education Center, a private Christian school.

Kirby speaks nationally and internationally boldly proclaiming the uncompromised Word of God. He has ministered in conferences, crusades, tent revivals, street outreaches, home meetings, and churches here and

abroad. Kirby has also ministered on radio and television.

Cape May Point Union Chapel is the home of historic Seagrove Conference, originally founded in the late 1800s by John Wanamaker. The original conference closed in the 1920s and was re-started by the Rev. Donald Theobald in the early 1960's. Today, Rev. Theobald's vision of a charismatic, non-denominational fellowship is being carried on by his son and daughter-in-law, Pastors Don and Kate Theobald.

All are welcome. For directions or information, call Don and Kate Theobald at (856) 785-2652 or email unionchapel1@juno.com.

I did it because there were too many bands with great music who needed help getting noticed. -Joe Scrocca

time to the music business. "I did it because there were too many bands with great music who needed help getting noticed," he said.

Scrocca said he decided to follow his passion - a move he blames on his satellite radio.

"It happened by accident," he said. "I bought a Volkswagen Passat with satellite radio, and at the time I thought I'd never pay for radio. I changed my mind after three days."

Scrocca started listening to a channel called

was told the best music act managers have a background in accounting or law.

So he just started building his business from there, taking some classes on line from Berkley to see if he had the interest and aptitude.

"My first professor was Lauren Davis, Clive Davis' daughter, and she encouraged me to get in the business," Scrocca said.

Scrocca said Davis told him he was "very apt at picking up the nuances of the music industry."

Singer Songwriter Cape May

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event for Cape May and they're still figuring it out."

Singer Songwriter Cape May is scheduled for March 27 and 28. The weekend event features live music but hosts afternoon panels, clinics, workshops and mentoring sessions for musicians, students and registered guests at Congress Hall and the Harrison Conference Center.

Scheduled to speak and mentor are: Grammy Winning Songwriter Julie Gold, best known for Bette Midler's version of her song "From A Distance"; Dr. E. Michael Harrington, Professor of Entertainment & Music Business at William Patterson University; Grammy Award Winning Producers Joseph Donofrio and Phil Nicolo; Bill Pere from the CT Songwriters Association and Academy, who was named one of the "Top 50 Innovators and Guiding Lights

of the Music Industry" by Music Connection Magazine and wife Kay Pere who is one of the premier vocal instructors in the Northeast.

Local TV anchor/singer-songwriter Michelle Dawn Mooney will speak and perform. Home town boy Chris Jay of Army of Freshman also returns to perform and rub elbows with managers, agents, publishers and publicists. It's a power packed array of music industry professionals.

Geyer

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operations management for Hewlett-Packard.

"I think I can utilize that to continue the business of the borough," he said.

Geyer retired from HP but continued to work as a consultant for Norfolk Grummond. He said he still does some consulting for an organization in Tuckahoe.

Locally he has served as the chairman of a committee on new sources of revenue the mayor created. He said he did some research for the borough regarding some ordinances, particularly the one on wind and solar power. He has solar panels on his own house.

Geyer said, as he was getting signatures for petitions for office, he asked people about the issues - good or bad. "I didn't get any major earth shattering issues," Geyer said.

He believes the challenges

the borough faces have to do with the continuing requirements of COAH. He said the borough is now in a good position with COAH, having won a lawsuit with the Sixth Street Partners, and should be able to avoid costly and time-consuming lawsuits.

Geyer also said it's important that any board of commissioners seek to maintain the character and history of West Cape May. "With good planning you can do it on your terms rather than on developers' terms," he said.

Geyer said he knows there is a lot of work required of borough commissioners.

"People who don't get involved don't know the amount of work the mayor and commissioners put into this small little town," he said.

Geyer said there are many things that need attention, such as grants, which Commissioner Dick Rigby

was often doing behind the scenes. Geyer said people who have not worked in a major business environment may not recognize the amount of work it takes.

Overall he believes the current government has done an excellent job. He said he went over the 2008 budget and believes the commissioners have done an excellent job streamlining personnel in a way that the borough operates with all its services in place, but also so they can manage costs.

"They have been very frugal in the way they managed the borough," Geyer said.

He said the governing body has saved the taxpayers a lot of money, which would be harder to do in the future. He said they created the committee to find new revenue sources and find out what can be done today to prepare for the future.

He also pointed to activities related to the Smart Growth

Plan Endorsement for achieving a town center rating.

"All those things have to be well thought out and timed in a manner that allows the borough to do things," he said.

Geyer said he is committed to working with Kaithern and Burke to maintain West Cape May's pride, history and culture and to make the future even better.

Labrusciano

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own a bed and breakfast in West Cape May."

He and his wife bought the Albert Stevens Inn and have invested a lot of time and money into the business.

"Lenanne was from Bridgeton and they have like three times the historic homes as Cape May," Labrusciano said. "That's one of the reasons Lenanne liked the small town appeal of Cape May and West Cape May."

He said the state of economy more or less guarantees they will be here for a long time. They actually put the Albert Stevens Inn on the market last year but now the only interested parties are those looking for a steal.

Asked why he was running for commission, Labrusciano said he has been involved in the community since he got here.

"I saw being in West Cape May carries a certain responsibility to the town because it's a small town," he said.

So he served on the board of Historic Accommodations of Cape May as treasurer, and has always been involved with the West Cape May Business Association and the Shade Tree Commission.

Labrusciano said the residents of West Cape May need a voice in government that represents them.

"Especially when it comes to prop rights...especially when it comes to taxes," he said.

Labrusciano said every administration has changed the zoning laws and he feels it was done without public input.

"Lots of times the public doesn't get involved until it's too late," he said.

Labrusciano said when he arrived in West Cape May there was more public than there is now.

"Cape May County has a declining population growth," he said. "You can see the difference. In West Cape May people are moving out because of the taxes. And families can't afford to move to West Cape May."

Labrusciano said he followed closely the matter of the addition on the Wilbraham Mansion.

"That's about property rights," he said. "Things have to be addressed in a proper way when commercial buildings are going up, where people in residential districts are

not affected in a negative way."

Labrusciano said whoever is elected to the Borough Commission, the strongest characteristic needed is to be able to work with other people in a cooperative manner to get things done.

"I feel I have been able to do so, especially in the business association," he said.

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