

Lower Twp. police to crack down on drunken driving

The Lower Township Police Department will be cracking down on drunken drivers as part of the 2014 Labor Day "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" campaign. Beginning Aug. 15 and running through Sept. 1, local and state law enforcement officers will conduct sobriety checkpoints and roving patrols, looking for motorists who may be driving while intoxicated.

"Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" is a national campaign designed to raise awareness about the dangers of drunken driving through high-visibility enforcement and public education tools, including posters, banners and mobile video display signs. Launched across the U.S. in 1999, the program works to combat drunken driving during the busy summer travel season, including the

Labor Day holiday period. "More than 10,000 people are killed in the United States each year in alcohol-impaired driving crashes. Drunk driving is reckless and preventable," said Gary Poedubicky, acting director of the Division of Highway Traffic Safety. "During this campaign, police agencies in New Jersey will be sending a clear message: If drivers are caught driving im-

paired, they will be arrested" In 2013, alcohol-impaired fatalities accounted for 22 percent of New Jersey's motor vehicle fatalities. As part of the initiative, the Division of Highway Traffic Safety provides grants to local law enforcement agencies throughout the state to run the two-week campaign. Law enforcement agencies participating in the "Drive Sober or Get Pulled

Over" 2014 crackdown offer the following advice: — If you plan to drink, designate a driver, someone who will not drink alcohol, before going out. — Take mass transit, a taxi or ask a sober friend to drive you home. — Spend the night where the activity is held. — Report impaired drivers to law enforcement. Drivers may

dial #77 to report a drunken or aggressive driver. — Always buckle up, every ride, regardless of your seating position in the vehicle. It's your best defense against an impaired driver. — If you are intoxicated and traveling on foot, the safest way to get home is to take a cab or have a sober friend or family member drive you to your doorstep.

Police station

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lice building and its features has changed year by year.

"You can't get a price without involving the professionals," Beck said.

He said the estimated cost of a new police building would be between \$3.5 million and \$3.8 million. Beck said "pouring money" into the current public safety building was not on the agenda.

He noted there is no bus service to the public safety building at the airport, which also houses the township's municipal court.

The roof on the current public safety building needs replacement at an estimated

cost of \$2 million, Beck said. "That is not spending the taxpayers' money wisely," he said.

Conrad said it did not matter where the police station was located because officers would not be sitting inside the building, they would be out patrolling the township.

Resident Ed Peckicomic said he has a master's degree in criminal justice and administration.

"I've looked and couldn't find one place in South Jersey that had the police station not next to or in earshot of City Hall," he said.

Resident Johnny Walker said Conrad should be leading the charge to move the police

station to Villas. He asked if Conrad was aware of home and car burglaries and heroin problems in Ward One.

"This isn't about the money, this is about human beings' lives," Walker said.

Resident Rosalie Gallagher addressed Conrad and Simonson. She said they had more of an interest invested in the county freeholders than the people of Lower Township.

Conrad said he had not talked to any freeholders about the public safety building.

"I wouldn't mind paying more in taxes if I know I'm safe," Gallagher said.

Beck said building a new police station would not raise taxes.

Big snake on the loose in Villas

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side of the pool and her son went out and saved the cat," she said.

Clements said she saw the large snake July 29 under a table in her backyard waiting for a black snake to cross its path. The black snake slithered up into a chair.

Clements said she called her husband, Michael, who rescued the black snake. He served his country in Special Forces in Afghanistan and Iraq and knows how to deal with snakes, she said.

"The black snake was 5 feet long and this dwarfed it," Michael Clements said of the larger snake.

The large snake crawled between two fences separating their home from their neighbor's in the rear.

Michael Clements and the neighbor's son cleared away brush growing along the fence.

"From what I saw of it, it was at least 10 feet long," Becky Clements said.

She said she initially called animal control but that it did not view the situation with concern. After showing the photo of the snake eating a gull to neighbors, she called police.

Michael Clements said the entire head of the gull was in the snake's mouth.

The neighborhood was once full of rabbits, but none has been seen lately, he said.

Becky said police went door to door to warn residents and inquire if there were any owners of large snakes in the neighborhood.

"Everybody is chalking it up to an animal drop because of the time of year," she said, meaning the snake may have



Shore Animal Control is advising all residents who see any large snake to immediately contact animal control at (800) 351-1822 or the Lower Township Police Department. Residents are also advised not to allow children or small pets unattended in rural backyards.

been abandoned when a shore visitor left for home.

The couple has a 100-degree hot tub in their backyard. Michael Clements said he checked with a local hot tub dealer to make sure the snake could not get under it and survive the New Jersey winter.

He said he would pick up the python if it returns.

"In North Carolina, I had to grab copperheads from neighbors' yards," Michael Clements said. "If it comes back in the yard, I'll grab it. I have a bin for it."

A house under construction on Arbor Road could offer a number of places for the snake to hide, he said.

Residents in the neighborhood have been cleaning out their sheds to limit hiding places for the snake.

Shore Animal Control Services is advising all residents who see any large snake to immediately contact animal control at (800) 351-1822 or the Lower Township Police Department.

In addition, residents are advised to not allow children or small pets to be in rural backyards unattended until the snake is caught. Shore Animal Control is patrolling the area to find the snake, but they are often difficult to catch, according to a news release.

It stated the majority of reptile owners keep their pets for less than one year. Some animals die due to poor care, while others, including unwanted snakes, may be intentionally released outdoors or escape from poorly secured cages. Requiring specialized expertise and care, many captive constrictor snakes end up suffering from starvation, dehydration, parasites, respiratory infections, mouth rot and other symptoms of neglect, noted the news release. There have been many cases of extreme cruelty to snakes, it said.

"We need the public's help in finding this snake's former owner. Anyone with any information about a resident that might have kept exotic snakes is asked to come forward immediately to officials," said Dr. Nick Holland, of Shore Animal Control.

Lower police charge two with drug offenses

Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township police investigated two suspicious people seated in a vehicle July 27 at the North Cape May Wawa.

Upon approaching the vehicle to speak with the suspects, officers Jennifer Anzelone and Thomas Ritterhoff detected

the odor of burnt marijuana, police said.

Further investigation revealed the two occupants, Nicholas Mazzotta, 19, of Green Creek, and Jocelyn Shillingford, 19, of North Cape May, were in possession of marijuana, which was hidden in a modified soda can in their possession along with several

other items of drug paraphernalia, police said.

Mazzotta and Shillingford were arrested and transported to the Lower Township Police Department, where they were each processed and released on a summons charging them with possession of a controlled dangerous substance and possession of drug paraphernalia.

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*** No Passes • [] Friday • Wednesday