

# Arts group hopes to expand in county

By CAROL R. EMMENS  
Special to the Star and Wave

Pegasus, the winged stallion of Greek mythology, unleashed a Fountain of Muses when he struck the ground with his hoof. Taking its name and philosophy from the myth, the nonprofit organization Pegasus the Arts is essentially a muse: it provides creative arts classes for adults with special needs.

Now serving Burlington, Camden and Gloucester counties, Pegasus the Arts is planning to open in Cape May County. What better place exists to offer creative art classes than in a community that embodies the Pegasus motto — “Where Creativity Soars” — and that demonstrates an extraordinary commitment

to the arts through its theater productions, music festivals, art exhibits and galleries.

“Special needs” is a catch-all phrase describing a wide variety of mental and physical disabilities. By law, those who attend special-education classes or schools are not eligible to continue after the age of 21.

For most, that leaves a large void in their lives. The art, dance, music, drama and writing classes offered by Pegasus not only help them fill that void, but energizes them and gives them confidence, pride and hope.

Director Bonnie Crosby resigned her position with Commerce Bank to raise seed money and start Pegasus more than 10 years ago. “Pegasus is my full-time job

and my passion,” she said.

Driven by her desire to help the community, she said Pegasus continues to grow and will offer more classes in the fall at its current locations in Westmont and Clarksboro. It plans to offer classes one day a week at Atlantic Cape Community College.

Pegasus is funded by tuition and donations, which can be made online. The state Division of Developmental Disabilities provides funds for students to attend self-directed day services by qualified providers such as Pegasus.

The classes are open to those with mild to moderate disabilities and are a testament to the desire and determination to fulfill dreams that appear to be beyond reach.

One student, a woman who

is legally blind and has only pinhole vision, paints with the enthusiasm of the best and most famous painters, Crosby said.

Pegasus strives to teach life skills as well as the arts. The artwork is used to make note cards, jewelry, totes, printers and coasters that are sold in community galleries, shops and online. The creation of the art and the artworks themselves are videotaped and are shown on special movie nights. Pegasus further extends its reach by collaborating with local artists and high schools in the areas its serves.

Those interested in teaching — instructors will be paid — or volunteering are encouraged to contact Pegasus at www.pegasushearts.org or (856) 240-7145.

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## Boyd blasts Cape May leadership

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“Mr. MacLeod seems to have forgotten what he went through, but yet he has no trouble sitting here doing the same thing for Chief Sheehan,” he said.

Boyd said he did not know if MacLeod had a problem of not knowing “what to do or how to do it or he was told not to do something about it.” He said the issue of Lt. Chuck Lear’s use of comp time was known to MacLeod well in advance.

Boyd said government has a triple “D” philosophy: “deny, defend and then defer.”

“That’s what this whole process has done to the chief, and it’s unfair and unwarranted,” he said.

Cape May Police Department has lost its trust in City Council, Boyd said, adding that the message sent from

council is to work hard, try to do the best you can wanting to achieve advancement for this city and your fellow officers and “you too will be rewarded with what happened to Sheehan.”

“I’m not making this up, it happened to me,” Boyd said.

He said after being appointed police chief, it took him five years to put the department back together and gain back the confidence of his officers.

“Quite frankly, I have no respect for any of you and the manner in which you conducted this,” Boyd said to council. “This was absolutely unconscionable.”

He said he realized the action was a tactic and hoped with all his “heart and soul” the agenda wasn’t to create a director of public safety.

“It’s so obvious you’re tearing down the fire department,

you’re losing or trying to get rid of the entire command structure of your police department,” Boyd said.

He said he did not believe Sheehan’s demotion was handled properly and was unlawful. Boyd said if Sheehan left the police department, there was nothing in place to replace the command structure of the department.

“It’s like a perfect storm with your director of public safety, I sincerely believe that,” Boyd said.

At an earlier meeting, Mayor Edward Mahaney denied he was interested in eliminating the chief of police and fire chief positions to create a public safety manager position.

Boyd said he felt the situation with Sheehan was contrived. He said County Prosecutor Robert Taylor stated in

a letter to the city there was no criminal investigation.

“You have one of the finest, best qualified people that’s ever filled the position of chief of police in the entire history of the city,” Boyd said. “He completed his bachelor’s degree in business administration, he completed the West Point command leadership course and he went to the FBI National Academy before he was appointed chief of police, the first time in history (of the city.)”

He accused the city administration of setting up the situation with Sheehan that has produced a serious problem in the police department.

“You’re talking about public safety, you’re talking about the future of law enforcement in this community,” Boyd said. “We enjoy a great reputation countywide.”

## Legal counsel

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is considering by reason of this resolution,” Monzo said.

He said the city could provide legal defense as long as the conduct the official or employee is being questioned about is incidental or rising out of the performance of official duties and there is no evidence of fraud or misconduct.

“As of this point in time, there is no evidence of that, and the city officials and employees have requested to be allowed to have an attorney accompany them with any investigation or questioning being conducted by the Cape May County Prosecutor’s Office,” Monzo said.

He said the resolution would not provide indemnification to city officials or employees but merely provide a legal defense. Monzo said it is subject to an employee or official who wants legal defense to come forward with a professional service contract with a fee schedule to be approved by City Council.

Former Mayor Jerry Gaffney said taxpayers are seeing the dollars and cents for legal

fees rising, noting the city hired a special attorney to defend against former Police Chief Robert Sheehan’s lawsuit against the city.

“I’m really concerned that we’re looking at a budget of \$750,000 this year for legal expenses, the same last year,” Gaffney said.

He said if the city is not careful, legal costs for 2015 could reach \$1 million.

Resident Charles Hendricks questioned why funds for providing legal defense for city officials and employees was not included in the recently adopted city budget.

Monzo said it was not known at the time the budget was adopted the Prosecutor’s Office would be interviewing employees in regard to Police Department matters.

Hendricks questioned whether any employees had been interviewed by the Prosecutor’s Office. Monzo said one employee was interviewed for a few minutes. He said it has not been determined whether city employees would be represented by more than one attorney.

“It seems to me we’re spend-

ing more on lawyers in the city than we are on firefighters or police,” Hendricks said.

Councilman Shaine Meier asked whether Monzo could provide legal defense to city employees instead of hiring outside attorneys. Monzo said it was possible but if it was determined a city employee was acting outside the scope of employment, it could place

the city attorney in a conflict of interest.

Resident Laura DeCamillo said if she were asked to speak to the Prosecutor’s Office, she would not take an attorney with her.

“I would just speak the truth,” DeCamillo said. “I don’t know why an attorney is necessary unless it’s something very, very bad.”

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15	5:36	6:09	11:40	
16	6:33	7:03	12:07	12:33
17	7:27	7:54	1:04	1:23
18	8:19	8:43	1:59	2:12
19	9:09	9:31	2:51	3:00
20	9:59	10:19	3:42	3:48
21	10:49	11:07	4:34	4:37
22	11:40	11:57	5:26	5:27

**MOON PHASES**  
New Moon, April 18

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## North Cape May man, youth charged with drug possession

**SCHALLENGERS LANDING** — Patrolman Michael Nuscis of the Lower Township Police Department located two vehicles at about 10:30 p.m. April 13 under the Route 109 bridge after receiving a phone call reporting a suspicious vehicle in the area.

Upon approaching the vehicles, Nuscis and another officer allegedly detected a distinct odor of burning marijuana.

During the course of an investigation, Thomas Pepper, 18, of North Cape May, and a 17 year-old boy were found to be under the influence of a controlled

dangerous substance and in possession of both drug paraphernalia and marijuana, police said.

Both subjects were arrested on scene and transported to the Lower Township Police Department, where they were processed and charged with being under the influence of a controlled dangerous substance (CDS), possession of CDS and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Pepper was released on his own recognizance and the juvenile was released into the custody of a family member.

## Stockton

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ously, as you pointed out, CCA doesn’t have.”

He said the Franklin Street School would serve local residents, bring students to the city for research and expand the availability of college-level courses in Cape May.

Gaffney said the Franklin Street School was segregated when it was operating and the original mission of CCA was to create a black history museum in the building. He said he would hate to see that lost.

He said grant money was not available in the numbers it was in the past.

Mahaney said an illustration of a partnership with Stockton University was the Sam Azeez Museum of Woodbine Heritage, a former synagogue.

According to its website, CCA was founded in 1995 as a multicultural education organization whose arts and humanities programs foster creativity, community building and appreciation for the rich diversity. The organization offers a year-round Youth Arts Program. CCA’s community history program began as an effort to preserve the Franklin Street School, and documents and exhibits the history of Cape May County’s long-established African-American community.

CCA is preserving related artifacts, documents and photographs in its John and Janet Nash African American History Archives. Its efforts have led to New Jersey designating Franklin Street School an African American Historic Site.

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