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nothing but the truth...



Raising the Standard:

Warwick Twp. Police Chief Rich Garipoli

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by Ron Harper, Jr., *Lancaster Post*

Chief Rich Garipoli: Raising the standards of law enforcement

Rich Garipoli looks like he could be an accountant. The suit and tie, along with the MBA from Columbia Southern University, suggest strong nerdish tendencies. On this day, the 52 year-old Garipoli has a full plate from a popular Lititz smörgåsbord, and was looking very much like many of the desk jockeys sitting for the midday meal.

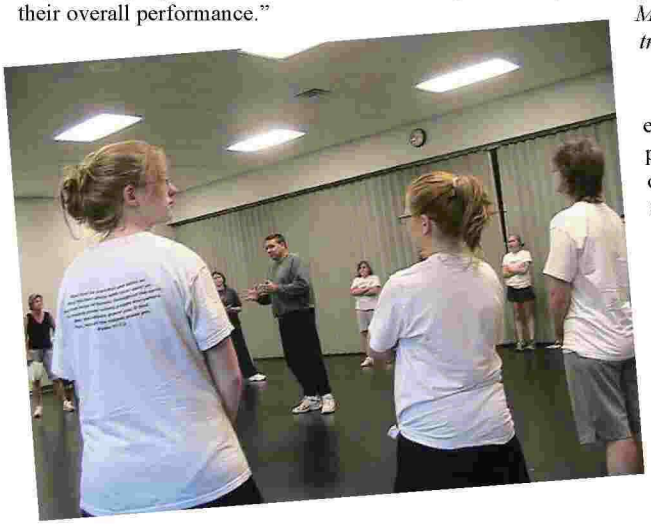
But Rich Garipoli is not your average suit. He is the Chief of Police for Warwick Township, the current President of the Lancaster County Chiefs of Police, and is the Chairman of the Lancaster County Human Relations Police Committee.

"I'm teaching a self-defense class at the Lititz Rec, why don't you come out?", Garipoli says over the delicious lunch.

Six hours later, after a full day at the office, Garipoli, a 4th Degree black belt and former professional martial arts fighter, is surrounded by about 20 young women, along with a few men, soaking up advice from someone regarded by many as a law enforcement 'professional of professionals.'

The Chief has been in law enforcement for more than 30 years, and shares the profession along with his five brothers. "Nope," says the Chief with a laugh, "My dad was not a cop."

His passion for professionalism and standards in law enforcement has led him to push for accreditation for his township's police force. In fact, Warwick Township was the first police force in Lancaster County to be accredited by the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission. Garipoli is a strong advocate of "accreditation," which according to the Police Chief's website, is "a progressive and time-proven way of helping institutions evaluate and improve their overall performance."



Teaching a self-defense class at the Lititz Community Center.

Garipoli is puzzled that only a handful of municipal and university/college police forces are pursuing the accreditation. "I don't understand why more police forces are not doing this." Garipoli stressed that the public will have greater confidence when law enforcement agencies are run by professionals who are trained and operate under accepted practices that accreditation helps direct.



Garipoli, smashing blocks with his bare hands.



Garipoli (L), receiving his 4th degree Black Belt.



The Brothers Garipoli, policemen all.

(Note: "private" police such as Franklin & Marshall public safety have zero statutory training requirements.)

Garipoli's admirers include both law enforcement (the Chiefs elected him president) but also elected officials and citizens' groups. Lancaster County Sheriff, Terry Bergman, says that "Chief Garipoli is a man of character who demonstrates to the world of law enforcement daily all of his many leadership qualities and character traits that have made him successful in his field of expertise."

Garipoli pursues law enforcement ideals of professionalism, not just during his day job. He also teaches at his alma mater, Reading Area Community College, in the Criminal Justice Program.

Additionally, he has designed courses for the leadership and executive management courses for the Municipal Police Officers Education & Training Commission, has been a course developer and instructor for Harrisburg Area Community College in the "7 Habits for Law Enforcement officers," as well as for the PA Chief's Command Institute & Advanced Command Institute for Police Executives.

Garipoli is also a member of International Association Chiefs of Police Training and Education Committee, (responsible for training throughout the US), in addition to being a member of the PA Chiefs of Police Training & Education Committee.

"When I teach officers on weapons training, I tell them that their tongue is the most important weapon they have and they must learn to control it. If they don't learn to control that, than they will surely be using their other weapons."

Founder and President of Justice & Mercy, Tom Zeager, a prison and justice system reform group, praised Garipoli, "He is a man of character and knows the right thing to do and I highly respect him as a law enforcement officer." Zeager was eager to share how the Chief's knowledge, experience, and professionalism helped their organization. "He's a great guy," Zeager said.

Gary Spangenburg, Mayor of East Petersburg, is a personal friend of Garipoli and relies on him for advice as well. "Rich is the epitome of a police chief of character. He's good man."