

Nantucket Inquirer & Mirror

October 1, 2009

Summer special trainer bothered by editorial

To the Editor:

I was disappointed by your Aug. 27, 2009 editorial criticizing the summer special officers' avid efforts to keep people out of hurricane waters and comparing their and the NPD's behavior to the conduct that led to the 2007 Water Street incident.

As the person who was hired to train the police officers and summer specials on how to work with youth, I am struck at your editorial's inability to follow some of the rules we recommend police follow, and which you no doubt would view as sensible, when working with youth: look for the good intent gone awry, restate the rules, and redirect. The utility of this approach is important in view of the fact that the majority of summer specials are between the ages of 19 and 21.

Instead, you compare these SSOs' behavior in 2009 to the 2007 Water Street incident, which involved racially-biased language and physical harm to a group of youth by a summer special cracking down hard on an alleged sidewalk violation. To equate that interaction with an incident in which summer specials are actively trying to persuade people to avoid danger, does a disservice to the police department. It suggests that there is such dislike of the police department that there is no point in trying harder or doing better.

This is not a useful stance for an island that has seen improvements in its summer special and police officers' conduct. It also nicely diverts blame from the island's decision to take the cheapest and least professional way of policing its annual population explosion.

Sometimes you get what you pay for, and for the summer of 2009, Nantucket appears to have once again gotten excellent help for cut-rate prices.

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