

# Ceremonial shave raises \$20K for Camp Horseshoe

Tom Murphy parts with his 44-year-old beard in front of several hundred spectators

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**RISING SUN, MD.** » The old jingle goes, "Shave and a haircut: Two bits."

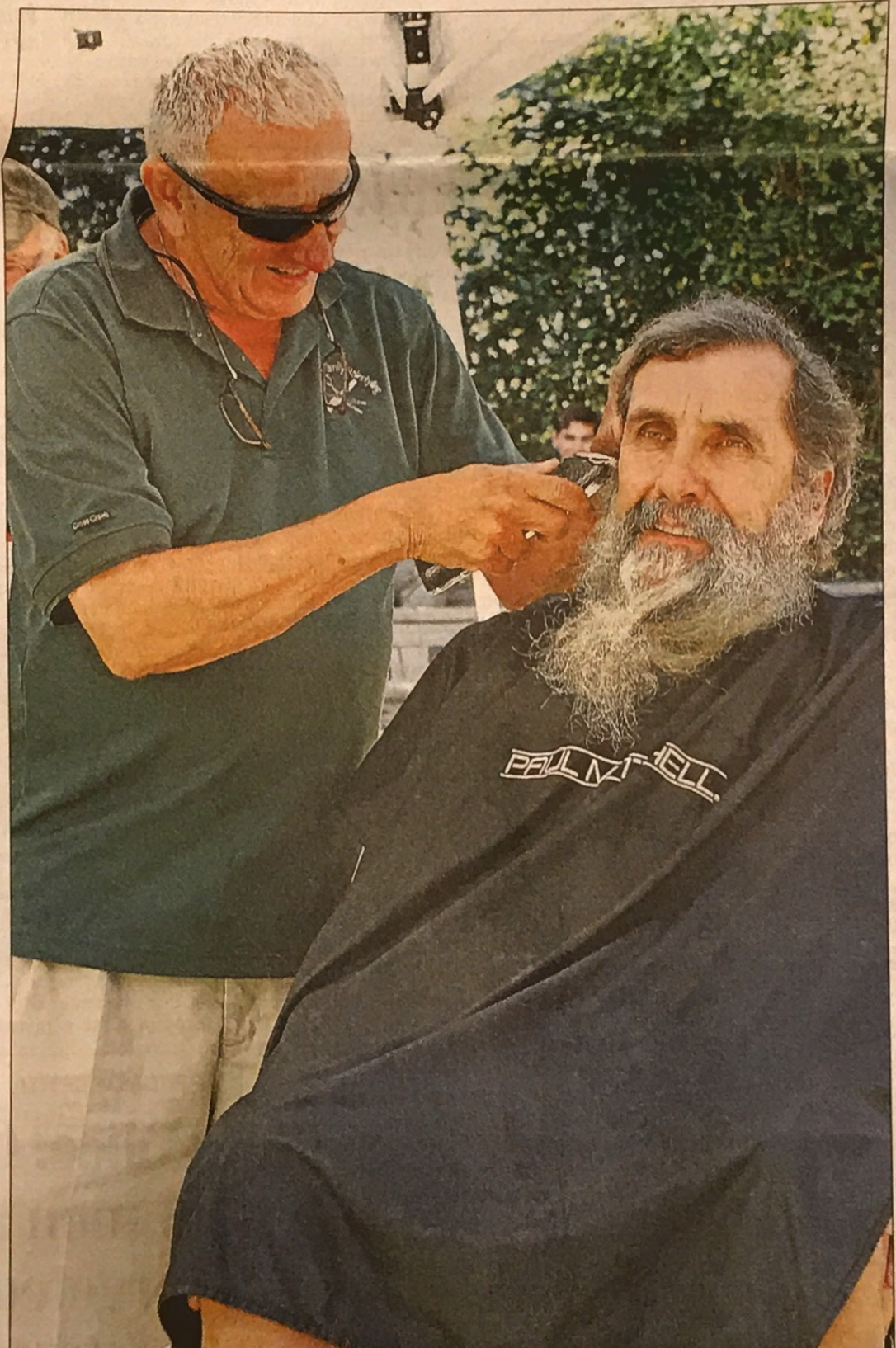
But at the Chester County Boy Scouts' Camp Horseshoe on Saturday, a shave went for more than \$20,000.

The fundraiser to replace dying pine trees on the land was organized by the camp's support group, Octoraro Lodge 22 Order of the Arrow. It's an honor society whose members are elected based on service to the Scouts, and this local group meets three times a year to support the camp hands-on. They also raise money with an annual event.

That's where the shave and haircut, which they named "Buzz the Beard," came in.

Ed Dougherty, the trading post adviser for the lodge, said they sometimes have popular, albeit unusual events to raise the money, like a Scout volunteering to have his head shaved for contributions. While this regularly netted them some nice funds, they

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The after-picture: The spectators get a look at the new Tom Murphy.

Barber Jack Assetto begins the shave of Tom Murphy's 44-year-old beard.



# Shave

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were always aware of the presence in the group of a potential "big gun": their beloved camp ranger, Tom Murphy.

Murphy, 66, had an unforgettable beard that hadn't been shaved for 44 years, and he had an appearance that was strikingly like Confederate General Stonewall Jackson. When the idea came months ago to feature the shaving of his beard for this year's annual fundraiser, he took to it favorably. But he told them this: "It's time to put up or shut up. I'll do it if you raise \$5,000."

(That's how he recalled it on Saturday before the shaving.)

As the campaign proceeded, it was met with unimaginable success, and by the time the shaving day came on Saturday, more than \$20,000 had been raised.

"I can't believe we've raised that much money," he said.

The event was a rollicking good time in the 1,200-acre facility tucked away in the rural woods just south of Nottingham.

Several hundred members of the lodge had arrived, Murphy's children and grandson were there, and officials from the council were on hand to celebrate as well.

Earlier in the day, the Mummers' Quaker City String Band stopped by to play a few numbers, and later on a barbershop trio of lodge members came on the scene. There were refreshments all around, and everyone was well fed as bagpiper Jim Harris of West Chester led them down the gravel hill to the fire circle — the scene of the shave.

The barbershop trio set the mood by singing a song about parting from a girlfriend ("Good Bye My Cooney Island Girl"), only at the end they changed to words to convey parting with Murphy's beard. Then they ceremoniously brought in the chair.

Just before the cut, Murphy got serious and addressed the crowd that en-

circled him.

"I'm really glad I'm a member of Order of the Arrow. We're going to be losing a lot of (pine) trees, but we'll be planting a lot more (oaks)," he said. He also smiled as he received citations from the state Senates of Pennsylvania and Maryland naming Sept. 23 Tom Murphy Day.

Murphy brought along his personal barber, Jack Assetto of Parkesburg, but he was also attended by volunteer Art Taylor (who later contributed a symbolic new oak tree), and a young Scout who was chosen to be an honorary "assistant."

Then the cut began and proceeded rather fast.

As the grizzly, gray hair came off, Dougherty held a mirror to Murphy to see the face that the owner himself had not witnessed for 44 years. Someone shouted from the audience, "You look 20 years younger."

Then the momentum of the occasion increased and people started chanting for Assetto to take the mustache as well.

They passed a hat around and collected dollars and dollars, which they rained on the ground at Murphy's feet.

Again, Assetto went to work and shaved the mustache.

Then it was over.

In retrospect, there were some facts published by the lodge as they solicited funds and attendance.

They said his grown children had never seen him without a beard.

He did not have a beard when he married his wife, Carol.

He hadn't shaved since 1973.

The word afterward was that strands of his beard would be sold to add to the fundraising, and a few strands would be preserved in the camp's museum.

Carol Murphy summed up her adventure with her bearded husband: "On our first anniversary he just said, 'I'm tired of shaving.' Who knows what's gonna fall out of it."



A barbershop trio brings in the barber chair, followed by Tom Murphy, rear.

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Tom Murphy gets a look at himself in a mirror after losing a beard he had worn for 44 years.

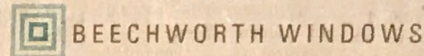
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