

CAMPAIGN RELEASE

Freeholder Board Should Cut Catering Budget for Meetings

By Pat Quattrocchi, GOP Candidate for Freeholder

There is one thing that the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders does really well: they eat.

Entering the Freeholder meeting room just prior to meetings, I have detected the aromas of tomato sauce, pickles and even Chinese food. There is talk and jokes made among the waiting spectators assembled that the freeholders are just finishing dinner and didn't invite us.

Checking into these expenses proved to be quite interesting. The county check register provided the answer not only to "what are they eating in there?" but what it cost all of us as well.

On average, there are two regular Freeholder meetings each month and two agenda planning meetings as well, or roughly 32 meetings each year plus committee meetings and budget hearings. Refreshments are served prior to all of the meetings with the tabs running \$260 to \$350 a pop.

The 2005 check register clearly contained 19 entries indicating "refreshments for F/H mtg" with establishments such as Costa's Ristorante, the Red Parrot Café, Napoli Deli and Michelin's Pizzeria providing the fare of the day. These 19 meetings cost taxpayers close to \$6,000, and let's not forget the check entries that just say meeting but not F/H.

But that's not all. The Red Parrot catered refreshments for a budget hearing at \$325, the Napoli Deli for \$835 for who knows what. During the '05 Topoff drills, one group dined at Costa's for a total of \$500 while the much more deserving

volunteers and real workers that day were treated to food from the Big Belly Deli.

There is no doubt that our freeholder board likes to put out a healthy spread, evidenced by a \$1,239 check for food at the Musicfest in '05. So far this year they have spent \$7,655 on meeting "refreshments." This figure does not include special events or the county coffee services, bagel runs for breakfast meetings or luncheons including "assorted wraps" from Leon's Catering Service which run in the neighborhood of \$400 to \$500.

Having been around awhile, I do realize that there are usually some perks that come with power, but this is just a bit much. Haven't these people ever heard of brown bagging it, or better yet, eating at home?

It is doubtful that Union County residents intended for their hard-earned tax dollars to be used to feed the masses on the sixth floor. Could this activity then be considered a violation of the Open Public Meetings Act, known as the Sunshine Law?

We cannot answer those questions. However, we do know that too much money is being spent on these dinners. The Republican team in Union County also thinks that the freeholders should be climbing on the "cut the unnecessary expenses band wagon" by starting with themselves and reining in these catering costs. To learn more about the Republican candidates for Freeholder call (908) 789-0200 or visit www.unioncounty.gop.org.

Applications Available for History Grant Program

AREA - The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders is seeking applicants for the 2007 Union County History Grant Program.

The grant program supports historical societies, historic sites, archives, libraries, schools, municipal governments and other non-profit organizations with programming relating to Union County and New Jersey history. Funding is available for specific history-related projects: research, publications, media, public programs, conservation, preservation and educational initiatives.

Funded programs and projects must take place between September 1, 2006 and August 31, 2007. General Operating Support (GOS) Grants up to \$7,500 are available to history organizations only. Special Project (SP) Grants up to \$5,000 are available to both history and non-history organizations.

The history grant program, which is administered by the Union County Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs, is made possible in part by a general operating support grant from

WF P.O. Window To Open at 9 a.m.

WESTFIELD - Westfield Postmaster Kenneth Brown has announced that the Westfield Post Office, located at 153 Central Avenue, will be changing their starting time from 8:30 to 9 a.m., effective this Monday, June 12. The post office will continue to close at 5 p.m.

"I know that many people come to the post office as early as possible and we are hoping that this change in opening times does not affect that many people," Westfield Postmaster Kenneth Brown said. "For those customers that like to do their postal business early, I remind them that our lobby opens each morning at 5 a.m. to allow full access to our automated postal center."



FILM AND FIRE... William McMeekan, Jr. of Westfield shoots his documentary profiling firefighter training.

Teacher's Videos Garner Top Awards at Festival

By CASSIE LO

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD - The Hometown Video Festival selected two videos from Westfield film producer William McMeekan, Jr. to be honored in three categories.

The 29th annual festival, held by the Alliance for Community, will take place on Thursday, July 6 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. in Boston at Faneuil Hall. Previous festivals have been held nationwide.

"We generally try to alternate between the East Coast and West of the Mississippi," Hometown Video Festival Coordinator Deborah Vinsel said. Last year's competition was in Monterey, CA, and next year's event will be held in either Minneapolis or St. Paul, MN.

In addition to the video festival, a trade show and conference will take place from July 5 to 10 in Faneuil Hall. These events will host between 500 and 600 people involved with community media. In between workshops, conference attendees can attend the trade show, which will have more than 40 vendors.

The competition is held approximately every four years in Washington D.C., because Ms. Vinsel likes to "encourage members [of the conference] to do legislative hobnobbing" for community media.

There are more than 1,350 entries for the entire competition, which is broken into 41 content categories and

four organization categories.

Mr. McMeekan's video, *Everything's On Fire: The Union County Fire Academy* was selected as a winner in both the Educational Profile and Government Profile categories. Mr. McMeekan, an English Teacher at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School and producer for TV-35 in Scotch Plains, spent time with the Union County Fire Academy and created a riveting documentary that depicts the lives of firefighters. SPTV and the Mountinside Fire Department were also awarded for the video.

His other video, *President Bush Visits Westfield*, was selected a winner in the Government Activities category in conjunction with *The Westfield Leader*, which helped fund the project.

Several Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School (SPFHS) students helped Mr. Meekan with this video.

"I was really assisted by SPFH kids," Mr. McMeekan said. "I thought it was important to encompass every aspect."

All videos chosen as winners of the festival will have 20 to 30 second clips shown to conference members when the directors receive their awards.

"We have been very successful recognizing non-commercial based programming in communities," Ms. Vinsel said. "This has been going on for 29 years, and we see different communities every year, which is very interesting."

"It is really great that SPTV can be recognized on this level," Mr. McMeekan said.



Union County News

The Spirit of '76

By Alexander Mirabella, Chairman Board of Chosen Freeholders

Now that the dust has settled from the Memorial Day weekend sales events, perhaps we can all take a moment to revisit a familiar question: what has become of this day set aside to honor our war dead?

It seems that every year, Memorial Day becomes more marked by the free exercise of our rights and liberties at the mall and the backyard barbeque, and less by solemn acts of remembrance. And every year, we ask why this has come about.

But perhaps we are asking the wrong question. Memorial Day has always combined celebration with solemnity. From its earliest years, parades and picnics have been part of the tradition. Even such entertainments as the Indy 500 have long been attached to the holiday.

The commercial ties go back even farther. We were once a colony under the rule of a king who dictated the terms of our livelihood. Our forebears fought and died for both political and economic freedom together. The two are entwined.

If some of our fellow citizens simply enjoy a day off, many others do take the time to reflect and remember. There are ceremonies big and small in schools, parks, public buildings and houses of worship all across Union County.

Among the many acts of honor, scores of Union County veterans' groups and community organizations mark each grave with the flag of our country. I have walked these cemeteries with young and old alike, and I can tell you that the spirit of remembrance is alive and well in Union County.

I am also proud to see that children participate in many other events as speakers, musicians, and marchers. By respecting the contributions of our youngsters, we keep the true meaning of Memorial Day alive in a very powerful way.

So to me, the real question is not whether people should go shopping on one particular day of the year.

The real question is, how can we honor our war dead on the other 364 days?

There are many, many different answers to this question. One can be found in the oath that each one of our military men and women takes. It starts with these words: "I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Students of military history have said that this oath is no mere exercise in pageantry. It is the foundation for leadership, a guide for deciding between right and wrong.

Most of us will never have occasion to take such an oath. But as civilians, each of us can honor it. And in doing so we can honor the memory of those who died serving our Constitution.

We can honor our war dead with every vote we cast, every town meeting we attend, every civic group or organization we join - in short, everything we do to uphold our freedoms and liberties under our Constitution.

On Memorial Day and throughout the year, we all can pay tribute to our men and women in uniform by taking their oath to heart.

Computer Club to Host LAN Party at Squad

SCOTCH PLAINS - The Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey [ACGNJ] will be hosting a local area network (LAN) party at Scotch Plains Rescue Squad Friday, June 9 at 6 p.m.

The event will include computer gamers networking personal computers to play video games. Games played will be Battlefield 2, Call of Duty 2, and Unreal Tournament. Players must bring their own computer, cables and software. All are invited but players are asked to donate \$5.

ACGNJ will also be having its "Windows Pains" group on Friday, June 16 where it's topic will be "Editing Video" with computers.

Budget Hearing

The Union County freeholders will hold a hearing on the county budget tonight at 7 p.m. at the county administration building in Elizabeth.

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ALLORE PINOT NOIR \$39.99
A great example of what Oregon Pinot can be like. A wonderful soft undertone of earth that supports bright rich flavors of currant, cherry, and cranberry. This wants a leg of lamb.

ARBENT SPARKLING CABERNET / SHIRAZ \$13.99
Do you need some bubbles to go with that chocolate graduation cake? This is perfect. Filled with summery red fruit - it has a long clean finish. And it's great with Kangaroo.

Your Favorite Wines

Blackstone Merlot	\$8.99	750ml
J Lohr Chardonnay	\$10.99	750ml
Simi Chardonnay	\$12.99	750ml
BV Coastal Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay/Pinot Noir	\$7.99	750ml
Hess Select Chardonnay	\$9.99	750ml
Toasted Head Chardonnay	\$10.99	750ml

Your Favorite Vodka

Absolut 80	\$31.99	1.75L
Ketel One	\$34.99	1.75L
Grey Goose	\$25.99	750ml
Smirnoff	\$18.99	1.75L
Stolichnaya	\$30.99	1.75L
Skyv	\$24.99	1.75L
Wolfschmidt	\$13.99	1.75L
Gordons	\$14.99	1.75L

Your Favorite Gin

Bombay Sapphire	\$34.99	1.75L
Tanqueray	\$30.99	1.75L
Hendricks	\$27.99	750ml
Beefeater	\$28.99	1.75L
Gordons	\$14.99	1.75L
Seagrams	\$15.99	1.75L

Your Favorite Scotch

Dewars White Label	\$29.99	1.75L
Chivas Regal	\$53.99	1.75L
Johnnie Walker Black	\$56.99	1.75L
Johnnie Walker Red	\$29.99	1.75L
Clan MacGregor	\$16.99	1.75L

Your Favorite Whiskey

Jack Daniels	\$35.99	1.75L
Jim Beam	\$24.99	1.75L
Seagrams 7	\$15.99	1.75L

Your Favorite Rum

Captain Morgan	\$24.99	1.75L
Bacardi Silver	\$19.99	1.75L
Bacardi Gold	\$19.99	1.75L
Malibu	\$23.99	1.75L

Your Favorite Value Wines

Mondavi Coastal Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay	\$16.99	1.5L
Beringer Founders Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay	\$15.99	1.5L
Woodbridge Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay	\$10.99	1.5L
Vendange Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay	\$6.99	1.5L
Fetzer Cabernet/Chardonnay	\$12.99	1.5L
Cavit Pinot Grigio	\$11.99	1.5L
Walnut Crest Cabernet	\$8.99	1.5L
Cesar Pinot Grigio	\$10.99	1.5L
Bolla Soave	\$10.99	1.5L
Beringer White Zinfandel	\$8.99	1.5L
Franzia Burgundy/Chablis/Chianti	\$10.99	5L
Carlos Rossi Burgundy/Chablis/Paisano/Sangria	\$8.99	4L
Opici Homemade Barbarone	\$11.99	4L

Your Favorite Cordials

Baileys	\$17.99	750ml
Romana Sambuca	\$17.99	750ml
Kahlua	\$15.99	750ml
Southern Comfort	\$13.99	750ml
Amaretto Di Saronno	\$18.99	750ml

Wine Of The Week
Anton Bauer Ried Wagram Cuvee 9 \$21.99
A blend of Blaufrankisch, Zweigelt, Cabernet and Merlot that could have only been made in Austria. A nose of violets and slightly smoky gentle oak is followed by a rich and complex palate of plums, blueberries, black cherries, currant and a small hint of earth. Roast a pig. Enjoy - this is a treat.

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