

## County Closes on Purchases Of Church Property, Farm

By PAUL J. PEYTON  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

ELIZABETH - Union County has completed the acquisitions of a 13-acre of land from St. Agnes Roman Catholic Church and the former 4.25-acre Schwartz Farm property. Both properties are located in Clark.

"We are very happy that we have closed on both of these properties," said Freeholder Dan Sullivan, chairman of the Union County Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund. He said the latest open-space purchases bring to more than 300 acres the county has acquired since voters approved the open-space fund in November 2000.

A 1.5-cent per \$100 tax on assessed properties in the county finances the fund.

Union County purchased the St. Agnes property, located on Madison Hill Road, for \$8 million and the Schwarz Farm, located on Old Raritan Road, for \$3.6 million.

Mr. Sullivan said both pieces of land connect to the 42-acre Clark Reservoir, which the county has agreed to purchase from Clark Township for a dollar. The county purchased a 14-acre parcel from the Hazelwood Cemetery for \$6.25 million and the former Esposito Farm for \$2.9 million over the last few years. Both properties are also in Clark.

Union County Manager George Devaney told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* that the county is nearing the completion of the reservoir transaction.

"Hopefully it will be done by the end of the year," Mr. Devaney said.

In other business, the board approved a \$625,986 contract with T&M Associates of Middletown for design and construction administration services for the development of the Ponderosa Farm.

The county purchased the property from the Sevell family in 2003 with \$10 million from the open-space fund.

The county plans to develop the site for soccer fields and a jogging path with a 90-space parking lot, a water-spray playground, gardens, a patio and a multipurpose building.

The board also introduced a modified bond ordinance last Thursday regarding expansion of a pre-school in Plainfield by the African-American Fund of New Jersey. The freeholders approved a \$7-million consent ordinance in October as requested by the Union County Improvement Authority (UCIA), which is financing the project.

Under questioning from Freeholder Adrian Mapp, a Plainfield resident, UCIA counsel John Hudak said after seeking bids on the project, the organization determined the bond ordinance needed to be increased to \$7.5 million.

Mr. Hudak told Mr. Mapp that the African American Fund, not the county, would be responsible if the bonds went into default.

The ordinance's introduction passed by a 8-0-1 vote, with Mr. Mapp abstaining.

The board also approved a resolution "urging the New Jersey State Legislature to adopt legislation enabling county governments to establish and administer homeless trust funds."

Frank Guzzo, director of human services, said the New Jersey Association of Counties (NJAC) sought the resolution.

"It's not a perfect piece of legislation," he told the board, saying that under the proposal, counties would have to fund the trust funds. He said if approved, the county would seek other funding sources to finance the trust fund.

Mr. Sullivan announced that the state Department of Transportation (DOT) has pulled the plug on the Route 78 Interchange 43 improvement project off Diamond Hill Road following opposition from the county and Berkeley Heights to the project.

Mr. Sullivan said DOT officials determined the project "would do absolutely no good and would really be a waste of \$35 million." Berkeley Heights Mayor David Cohen had said the widening of roadways off the exit would "dump up to 300 cars going southbound down Diamond Hill Road a day."

Scotch Plains had supported the project, with Mayor Martin Marks saying the project would take stress off Bonnie Burn Road and transfer it to Diamond Hill Road while offering residents another exit off Route 78.

The board also approved a resolution opposing a cell tower New York SMSA Limited Partnership has proposed for the Cranford Swim Club. The case will resume this Monday at 8:15 p.m. before the Cranford board of adjustment.

During the public portion of the meeting, Bruce Paterson of Garwood said he was "flabbergasted" by the board's response at a previous meeting regarding a decline in property values in the county.

"I don't think any one of you know how county taxes are [calculated]," Mr. Paterson said. "If the values go down, taxes should decline."

Board members disagreed with Mr. Paterson, with Mr. Mapp, the chief financial officer for Roselle, saying tax bills are based on assessed value, not on the market price.

The board reappointed Nicole DiRado for another three-year term as freeholder clerk. A former director in intergovernmental affairs for the county, she was appointed to the freeholder clerk post in December 2004.



Greg Ryan for The Westfield Leader and The Times  
GIVING TREE...The Girl Scouts of Westfield launch their 15th-annual mitten tree drive at the town's Christmas tree-lighting ceremony on Sunday evening. The scouts are accepting collections of new mittens, gloves, hats, scarves and socks for the needy. They will distribute the donations to organizations caring for the homeless.

## Kate Whitman Announces Bid for Congressional Seat

PEAPACK - Kate Whitman, the daughter of former Governor and ex-EPA commissioner Christine Todd Whitman, has announced her candidacy for the Seventh Congressional District seat Rep. Mike Ferguson will vacate at the end of 2008.

"I'm running for Congress because I believe I can provide the type of first-class representation and constituent service that the people of the Seventh Congressional District want and deserve," Ms. Whitman said. "People are tired of politics as usual in Washington, and as a small businesswoman and mother of two, I will bring a unique perspective that will achieve results."

"The members of [Ms. Whitman's campaign finance committee] recognize that Kate Whitman has the ideal combination of experience, grassroots support, energy, intelligence and fundraising ability that is necessary to run for and win in the seventh district. We wholeheartedly offer her our support," former Rep. Jim Courter said.

"In what looks to be a difficult election year, we need a Republican candidate who can run and win - and Kate Whitman is that person. She will energize voters and bring us to victory in November, and that is why so many people have already coalesced behind her candidacy even in these early days," said Lew Eisenberg, honorary chairman of Ms. Whitman's finance committee.

The candidate and her husband, Craig Annis, live in Somerset County with their twin sons, Clayton and John. She has worked for the former chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee and the U.S. Secretary of Labor and as a staff member of the correspondent's office at the White House.

She has run her own consulting business and is currently a licensed real-estate agent in New Jersey.

Ms. Whitman is currently executive director of the Republican Leadership Council, formerly known as It's My Party Too, which was founded by her mother.



## Peyton's Peek at the Week In Politics

By Paul Peyton of The Leader/Times

### Corzine Nominates Bagger To Serve as Kean University Trustee

Governor Jon Corzine has nominated former State Senator Richard Bagger of Westfield to the Board of Trustees of Kean University in Union. The nomination, which was considered by the Senate Judiciary Committee on November 29, must go before the Senate for confirmation. Mr. Bagger, a former mayor and councilman in Westfield, served in the Senate in 2002 after 10 years in the General Assembly.

He would join Kean trustees Robert Cockren, Westfield's town attorney and former chairman of the Kean board, and retired state Senator and former Union County Republican Chairman Frank McDermott, both Westfield residents.

### Corzine Nominates Doria To DCA Post, Renames Sartor to PA

Governor Jon Corzine has nominated former Senator and ex-Bayonne Mayor Joseph Doria as Commissioner of Community Affairs. Mr. Doria is serving as acting commissioner until the Senate confirms his appointment.

Mr. Corzine has put the name of Anthony Sartor of Scotch Plains in for reappointment to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey board.

### Carmen Centuolo Nominated For UC Exec. Superintendent

Current County Superintendent of Schools Carmen Centuolo of Mountainside has been nominated for appointment as Union County's executive superintendent of schools.

If the Senate approves her, Ms. Centuolo will monitor school districts' performance in instruction and program, personnel, fiscal management, operations and governance. She would have the authority to disapprove portions of a school district's budget deemed excessive in non-instructional areas and develop plans to consolidate, create or enlarge regional school districts to eliminate all but kindergarten-through-grade-12 districts, subject to voter approval. She was one of 10 executive super-

intendents nominated under a new law increasing the authority of county superintendents.

### ELEC Extends Non-Profits' Pay-to-Play Disclosure Deadline

The Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC), in an "emergency" meeting last Thursday, voted unanimously to extend the pay-to-play disclosure deadline for non-profits to January 15, 2008. The deadline had been November 30, according to an ELEC press release.

ELEC said it took action in response to a request from Leon Sokol, counsel to the New Jersey State Senate, to extend the deadline while the Legislature considers a bill to exclude non-profits from the scope of the statute.

### Diane Allen Won't Run For Jim Saxton's Seat in Congress

GOP State Sen. Diane Allen (L-D-7, Burlington) announced last Thursday she will not run for the third-district seat Rep. James Saxton (R-Burlington) will vacate at the end 2008.

Ms. Allen, a former Philadelphia news anchor and candidate for U.S. Senate in 2002, has served in the Senate since 1998. She was an assemblywoman from 1996 to 1998.

*The Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that David Norcross, a national GOP committeeman, and Virginia Haines, a former state lottery director, are considering running for the open seat. The district covers parts of Burlington and Ocean Counties and Cherry Hill in Camden County.

### Hyde Dies; Retired Rep. Led House Impeachment of Clinton

Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Illinois) died last week at the age of 83. He served in Congress from 1975 until retiring last year. As chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Mr. Hyde led the impeachment proceedings against former President Bill Clinton.

### Gov. Nominates Glatt, Robins To Serve on Financial Bd.

Governor Jon Corzine has nominated Summit Mayor Jordan Glatt and Martin Robins of Westfield to serve on the state's financial policy review board.



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**BIBICH MANTRA GRENACHE \$24.99**  
This is a full, complex and rich wine from the Dalmatian section of Croatia. Twelve months in French oak add to the complex mix of sour cherry, coffee tobacco, pepper, sage and mint. Try this with game, roast or ripe cheeses. It benefits from 45 minutes of decanting and it will help change the way you think about eastern European wines. This is the kind of wine that makes you brag the next day.

**NINFA RIPANA PASSERINA \$9.99**  
A white wine from Italy's eastern coast, this is dry and clean. Lots of fresh pear and almond flavors. There are notes of straw and flower with small hints of herbs. This is great before dinner, with light pasta, or with all but the heaviest of fish dishes. The Romans drank Passerina, and they knew more than a little about wine.

**DOMAINE BERROD BEAUJOLAIS NOUVEAU 2007 \$8.99**  
This is exactly what Nouveau is supposed to be. It is light, bright and easy to drink. It is not, however, devoid of taste or character. This is not Kool-Aid with a little alcohol in it. Lots of strawberry, raspberry and cherry notes, but with nice balancing acid and earth tones. Great for just sipping and with lighter meat & fish dishes. This deserves to be a holiday favorite and it doesn't cost much more than the famous ones.

### Your Favorite Wines

Blackstone Merlot	\$8.99	750ml
J Lohr Chardonnay	\$10.99	750ml
Simi Chardonnay	\$13.99	750ml
BV Coastal Cabernet/Merlot	\$7.99	750ml
Hess Select Chardonnay	\$9.99	750ml
Toasted Head Chardonnay	\$10.99	750ml

### 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	\$12.99	1.5L
Walnut Crest Cabernet	\$8.99	1.5L
Cesari 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	\$9.99	4L
Opici Homemade Barbarone	\$11.99	4L

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## Wine Of The Week

### Echeverria Limited Edition Cabernet Sauvignon \$24.99

Like many Chilean wines, the top end of a brand name is so much better than the mass marketed lower end product that you almost don't think they come from the same company. This is an elegant cabernet that has 5% each of syrah and carmenere. All kinds of raspberry, black cherry, pepper and spice make this perfect with a full flavored beef dish. Unlike a lot of new world wine, this is not just about power and fruit, it is about balance and working with your meal. A hidden gem.

### Your Favorite Cordials

Baileys	\$18.99	750ml
Romana Sambuca	\$18.99	750ml
Kahlua	\$17.99	750ml
Southern Comfort	\$14.99	750ml
Amaretto Di Saronno	\$18.99	750ml

### Your Favorite Vodka

Absolut 80	\$29.99	1.75L
Ketel One	\$36.99	1.75L
Grey Goose	\$27.99	750ml
Smirnoff	\$19.99	1.75L
Stolichnaya	\$32.99	1.75L
Skyv	\$21.99	1.75L
Wolfschmidt	\$13.99	1.75L
Gordons	\$15.99	1.75L

### Your Favorite Scotch

Dewars White Label	\$29.99	1.75L
Chivas Regal	\$57.99	1.75L
Johnnie Walker Black	\$57.99	1.75L
Johnnie Walker Red	\$29.99	1.75L
Clan MacGregor	\$16.99	1.75L

### Your Favorite Whiskey

Jack Daniels	\$37.99	1.75L
Jim Beam	\$25.99	1.75L
Seagrams 7	\$16.99	1.75L

### Your Favorite Gin

Bombay Sapphire	\$36.99	1.75L
Tanqueray	\$32.99	1.75L
Hendricks	\$28.99	750ml
Beefeater	\$29.99	1.75L
Gordons	\$15.99	1.75L
Seagrams	\$16.99	1.75L

### Your Favorite Rum

Captain Morgan	\$25.99	1.75L
Bacardi Silver	\$19.99	1.75L
Bacardi Gold	\$19.99	1.75L
Malibu	\$25.99	1.75L