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SIXTY CENTS

Westfield Voters to Decide Four Separate Ward Races on Tuesday

By MICHAEL J. POLLACK
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD—Westfield voters will go to the polls Tuesday, November 6, and determine the make-up of the town council for the next two years.

Republicans hold a 6-2 majority on the council. This year, three races pit an incumbent Republican councilman against a Democratic challenger. One race features a match-up between two newcomers, after first-ward Republican Councilman Peter Echausse opted not to run for re-election. All council hopefuls seek four-year terms. There is no mayoral election this year.

In a town of 19,256 registered voters, a majority, 11,319, is unaffiliated. A total of 4,168 residents identify themselves as Republicans, while 3,758 people list themselves as Democrats. Although Democrats would have to garner victories in three of four races to take the majority, they cannot lose seats this year.

Second-ward Councilwoman Jo Ann Neylan, who has chaired the public works committee for two years, has stressed her work on behalf of the White Paper Study, which seeks to achieve further efficiencies at the department of public works.

A non-practicing attorney, she is the liaison to the Municipal Alliance, which promotes anti-drug programs. She will face off against challenger Bruce Regenstein, a trial attorney and delegate in the 2004 Democratic National Convention. Mr.

Regenstein, who once ran for a seat on the Westfield Board of Education, has campaigned on controlling municipal tax increases, limiting "McMansions" and vowing to not allow builders to head the local planning board.

Third-ward incumbent Mark Ciarrocca serves as acting mayor to the town and chairs the Public Safety,



Transportation and Parking Committee. Mr. Ciarrocca, in order to address traffic safety "hotspots," has formed the Citizens' Traffic Safety Advisory Committee, which recommends "incremental" changes to areas.

His opponent, Matt Sontz, a 30-year-old attorney, has made speeding and traffic-related issues a focal point

of his campaign. In a recent sit-down interview with *The Westfield Leader*, he proposed increasing police presence in the ward to avoid people cutting down Summit Avenue and Boulevard to avoid Central Avenue.

In the fourth ward, Jim Foerst, chairman of the Code Review Committee, has championed his role in promoting a "controlled-growth policy" in terms of limiting overdevelopment and controlling quality-of-life issues.

An attorney by trade, Mr. Foerst also serves as a member of the Westfield Planning Board and as a member of Mayor Andy Skibitsky's Land Use Task Force.

Lenore Scurry, a retired 60-year resident of Westfield, will oppose Mr. Foerst. Ms. Scurry has said her father was "instrumental" in the development of the Westfield Community Center.

During the recent candidates' forum, she stated her willingness to volunteer as a council liaison to the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

In the first ward, Frank Arena, a senior sales executive with an information technology company, ran unsuccessfully for freeholder in 2004 and said he would rally council members to attend freeholder meetings to increase dialogue between the entities.

Ross Katz, a Democrat, hopes to, if elected, start the first environmental commission in order to educate the public and earn matching grants. A lawyer, Mr. Katz has railed against the council's decision to raise the town attorney's hourly fee.

District 21, 22 Incumbents Seek To Retain Seats in Tuesday Elections

By FRED T. ROSSI
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

AREA—Voters go to the polls next Tuesday with all 120 legislative seats in Trenton up for grabs and Republicans hoping to narrow the Democrats' 22-18 majority in the State Senate and 50-30 advantage in the Assembly.

While historically, the party in control of the State Legislature loses seats in non-gubernatorial election years, Assemblyman Joseph Cryan of Union, the chairman of the New Jersey Democratic State Committee, told *The Westfield Leader*, "It's safe to say that we'll break tradition" next week.

All incumbents in Districts 21 and 22 seek new terms, with Senator Tom Kean, Jr. (R-Westfield) seeking a third full term to the District 21 seat to which he was first appointed in 2003. Opposing him is Democrat Gina Genovese, a former mayor of Long Hill Township. Both campaigns recently have been running television ads attacking each other's records.

Assemblymen Jon Bramnick (R-Westfield), first elected in 2003, and Eric Munoz (R-Summit), who has served since 2001, seek new terms. Democrats Norman Albert, a former Cranford Township committeeman and mayor, and Bruce Bergen of Springfield, who ran for Congress in 1990 and the State Assembly in 2005, challenge them. Two Green Party candidates, Ryan Reyes and George DeCarlo, also are on the Assembly ballot.

Mr. Cryan pronounced himself "somewhat optimistic" about the District 21 races on the basis of what he described as "tightening polls" and singled out Ms. Genovese, saying that "she has run a tremendous campaign."

District 21 includes Westfield, Berkeley Heights, Cranford, Garwood, Mountainside, New Providence, Roselle Park, Springfield, Summit, Westfield and sections of Essex,

Morris and Somerset Counties.

In District 22, Democratic Senator Nicholas Scutari of Linden, a former Union County freeholder, seeks reelection to the seat he won in 2003. Opposing him is Republican Rose McConnell, a former Somerset County freeholder and a former member of the North Plainfield Borough Council.

Democrats Linda Stender (Fanwood), elected to the Assembly in 2001, and Jerry Green (Plainfield), serving his eighth term, seek re-election. Republicans Bryan DesRochers,

who ran unsuccessfully for Rahway City Council last year, and Robert Gatto, who twice ran unsuccessfully for North Plainfield Borough Council, oppose them.

Mr. Cryan said Democrats are "very, very optimistic" about retaining all three District 22 seats next Tuesday.

District 22 includes Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Clark, Linden, Rahway, and Plainfield in Union County as well as a few towns in Middlesex County.

Calls to state Republican Party officials were not returned.

Four Candidates Battle For Two GW Council Seats

By KATHY MARQUES
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD—In a town where there is only one Republican on the six-person council (Victor DeFilippo is not running for re-election) and registered Democrats outnumber the GOP 594-384, with 1,474 voters unaffiliated, Republicans are fighting to not only maintain a seat but gain a member on the governing body in Tuesday's borough council election.

The youngest of all candidates, 25-year-old Republican Anthony Sytko, is making his third run for council, while Dennis Clark is trying for the second consecutive year. On the Democratic end, council president Charles Lombardo seeks re-election to an eighth term on council while Stephen Napolitano is running for the first time.

One of the biggest issues facing Garwood residents this year is the \$2.1-million James V. Guerriero field project on Myrtle Avenue. Borough officials have said the project will cost residents \$50 a year for 20 years on a house assessed at \$100,000, the average assessment in the borough.

Mr. Clark and Mr. Sytko both said the field project would meet the needs of Garwood's youth but that the borough overlooked space for seniors and took too long to vote on the project.

"This should've been done years ago. I didn't want us to lose the grant money, but the Democrats moved at the speed of molasses for years," Mr. Sytko said. The Democratic contenders cheered the field project; Mr. Napolitano said, "It will be a multi-use facility, an exciting endeavor and something Garwood residents should be proud of."

Candidates from both parties said they would seek grants to offset taxes. Mr. Clark said he would recommend the borough retain a professional grant writer, which "could increase our chances of being successful in receiving the aid."

Residents have questioned Mr. Lombardo's decision to vote in favor of hiring professionals to look into the privatization of the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority (RVSA) operations.

Mr. Lombardo, a commissioner on the RVSA for 12 years, said, "The price of privatization is a minimal cost and the ordinance that we passed is very bare bones. We have to think outside the box in ways to save money." The RVSA passed the measure 6-5.

The RVSA is an autonomous agency serving Clark, Cranford, Garwood, Kenilworth, Mountainside, Rahway, Roselle Park, Scotch Plains, Springfield, Westfield, Winfield Park and Woodbridge. It owns and operates a trunk sewer system and a wastewater treatment facility in Rahway.

In 2006, Garwood's assessment rose from \$671,000 to \$1.3 million as part of a nearly \$200-million court-ordered upgrade of the RVSA sewerage-treatment plant.



CREATIVE COSTUMES...At the Westfield Halloween parade on Sunday, winners show off their costumes. Clockwise, from top left, "Bender" Marlo Avador wins first place for ages 7 and up, the Jennings Family - left to right, Constance, Catherine, Stephen and Steve - wins for a group, lion Gasoar DeVoly comes home with first place for 4-year-olds and penguin Nichole Muenzen captures first place for 6-year-olds.

Mapp Vows to Not Be a 'Sheep,' Says He Will Challenge County 'Bosses'

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD—After being bounced earlier this year from the Democratic line, Freeholder Adrian Mapp heads the Independent "Clean Up Government" slate that appears on Tuesday's General Election ballot.

In an interview at *The Westfield Leader* office Wednesday, Mr. Mapp said his willingness "to stand against the county party, the bosses [and] the machine" has attracted supporters to his campaign.

He chose to run as an Independent because he "didn't think just walk[ing] away from the process" would "be the right thing to do."

Speaking on the county budget, Mr. Mapp said the freeholders "can do a lot more to reduce the burden of property taxes," such as reducing overtime costs at the county jail and making department heads more accountable.

Mr. Mapp said he "took no comfort in having to vote against" a \$7-million consent-bond ordinance for the Black United Fund (African-American Fund) pre-school project in Plainfield.

He noted that "no one knows who the financing agency is" or is familiar with the project itself. The Union County Improvement Authority (UCIA) put forth the ordinance.

He said one board member "indicated that the freeholders are obligated to vote for anything the UCIA puts before the board."

He told *The Leader*, "I think that is just so wrong... That certainly shows to me that, in this kind of a process, the people lose. That's not right."

When asked whether county Democratic Party Chairman Charlotte DeFilippo should be the UCIA executive director, Mr. Mapp said, "That is one of the things that is wrong with politics...not just in Union County but across the state. We have so many counties and municipalities where there is double dipping, where people are wearing two hats and three hats, and I think there ought to be some limits to the kinds of jobs that they (county and municipal political party officials) can hold," Mr. Mapp said.

When asked if the 9-0 Democratic majority on the freeholder board has led to a lack of debate at meetings, the freeholder said, "All elected officials have got to muster the strength that lies within all of us to disagree with the party bosses and the structure when necessary, [even] if it means being smacked down by the party

leadership." Citing his own independence, he said, "What I will not do is just be a sheep...as opposed to attempting to lead and shape the direction of the

Mr. Mapp said the state legislature could help reduce property taxes by placing a cap on legal fees charged by attorneys representing county governments in lawsuits.

On county projects before town boards, such as the county's public-safety building in Westfield, the freeholder said, "We (the county) shouldn't be playing the role of headmaster, willing to smack down or discipline the students."

He said the county has an "obligation" to listen to its constituents, as it did during discussions regarding Ponderosa Farm in Scotch Plains. After input from residents, the county ditched plans for a children's farm and is now constructing ballfields on the site.

Mr. Mapp said he wants to see the State Legislature create freeholder districts in Union County. His plan creates six individual districts and three at-large seats. He said the system would give each town two elected freeholders and would help "rid our county of the [Democratic] dominance that prevails today."

In closing, Mr. Mapp said voters should "not be blind slaves or loyalists to the party system...It is very safe to cross the line."



MAPPING OUT A PLAN...Freeholder Adrian Mapp, right, discusses ideas for reforming county government with Leader assignment editor Paul Peyton. Watch the full interview at goleader.com/video.

party and of the government."

On professional-services contracts, Mr. Mapp said the current New Jersey pay-to-play law needs to be strengthened to close loopholes that allow towns and counties "to circumvent the process" by choosing anyone who submits a RFP (request for proposals) regardless of the amount they want to charge.

Nine Candidates Vie For Three Freeholder Seats

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

COUNTY—On Election Day, Union County voters will choose three freeholders out of a field of nine candidates, while three candidates vie for sheriff.

The candidates include Democratic incumbent Freeholders Bette Jane Kowalski of Cranford, chairwoman of the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders; Dan Sullivan of Elizabeth, an administrator with the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission, and their running mate, Plainfield City Council President Rayland Van Blake.

Republicans Patricia Quattrocchi of Garwood, a job recruiter making her fourth-consecutive run at freeholder; Westfield Department of Public Works employee John Russitano, Jr. of Westfield and Robert Reilly of Winfield Park, who ran for freeholder in 2003, will challenge them.

In addition to the Democratic and Republican lines, an Independent slate, dubbed "Clean Up Government," will run against the freeholders this year.

The Independents consist of current Freeholder Adrian Mapp of Plainfield, who serves as Roselle's chief financial officer; Becky McHugh of Linden, a learning-disabilities teacher, and George O'Grady, a community-attendance liaison. Both Ms. McHugh and Mr. O'Grady are employed by the Elizabeth Board of Education.

Voters elected Mr. Mapp on the Democratic ticket in 2004, but he fell out of favor with county party leaders this year and was bounced by the ticket in favor of Mr. Van Blake, a financial analyst and professional actor.

The sheriff's race pits 30-year veteran Sheriff Ralph Froehlich against GOP challenger Peter Lijoi of Summit and Independent candidate Charles Mitchell, Sr. of Roselle, an Essex County sheriff's officer and Baptist church minister in Asbury Park.

This year's election campaign has focused on issues ranging from taxes and county spending, the Open Space, Recreation and Historic Trust Fund, county no-bid and/or professional-services contracts, county lawsuits, shared services with municipalities and county matching grants given to towns.

Democrats have held a 9-0 command of the freeholder board since 1998 and have won every election since 1995. Democrats hold a 85,522 to 36,705 advantage in registration county-wide, with 259,892 unaffiliated and 62 Independent voters, according to the county's Board of Elections website.

Publisher's Note

Thank you for reading this edition of *The Westfield Leader*. Each year on the Thursday prior to Election Day, we mail this special edition to inform and encourage you to vote. Westfield has municipal elections on Tuesday for four council seats; all residents have received a copy of this newspaper. Mountainside has uncontested elections for mayor and two council seats. Garwood has elections for two council seats.

All 120 seats in the state legislature are up for election. Westfield, Mountainside and Garwood are in Legislative District 21; residents will elect a state senator and two state assemblypersons. County residents will also elect three freeholders and a sheriff.

This edition contains extensive information about the candidates and their statements. The candidates have worked hard, and we thank them for participating in this edition. More information is available on our Internet site at goleader.com. Video interviews with many of the candidates are also available on our website.

Voter turnout has been declining and that is worrisome. Please spend the time to read and study the candidates and questions on the ballot before heading to the polls. We urge you vote this Tuesday.

For those residents who are not subscribers, we ask that you become one. We will earn your trust each week.

Horace Corbin



Wayne Baker for The Westfield Leader
SIR, THIS IS NOT A DRIVE-IN...On Monday, a car driven by an employee of Auto Spa of Westfield lost control, struck two other cars and came to rest embedded in the facade of the KFC restaurant on South Avenue. Fire Chief Dan Kelly said the employee said the accelerator stuck. Mr. Kelly said nobody was seriously injured.

Fall Back!

Daylight Saving Time Ends
Sunday, November 4, 2 a.m.

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Tuesday, November 6, 2007**