

GOP Congressional Candidates Face Off in Mountainside Forum

By RAYNOR DENITZIO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

MOUNTAINSIDE — With the primary election now less than a week away, the seven Republican candidates for the congressional nomination in the 7th District gathered at the Mountainside Borough Hall for a debate hosted by *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* last Thursday night. Polls on Tuesday will be open from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m.

The 7th District stretches Union, Hunterdon, Middlesex and Somerset counties.

The hour-long debate was moderated by Fred Rossi of *The Leader* and

The Times and was split into three rounds. The first round of questions focused on domestic issues, the second round on foreign affairs, and in the final round, candidates spoke on a topic of their choice. Candidates were given two minutes to respond to each question and were offered a two-minute closing statement.

Issues such as the economy, property taxes, illegal immigration, gasoline prices and Social Security were the key topics during the debate's first round. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Middle East conflict and terrorism served as the salient issues of the second round of questions.

Martin Marks, the mayor of Scotch

Plains, emphasized his conservative credentials in an effort to separate himself from the other candidates. Mr. Marks said he is the "across-the-board conservative" candidate and that the Republican Party has lost its roots. He said voters should not be afraid to nominate a conservative.

"All too often, we like to go with the comfortable shoe," Mr. Marks said. "The candidate that might be better known, have a better name, a better political pedigree, one that might be considered moderate, so maybe they would do better in a General Election. And quite frankly, that doesn't work too often."

When asked about how to reform America's image on the world stage, Darren Young said that situations such as the treatment of detainees at Guantanamo Bay and Abu Gharib had made America "hated and feared across the world." He called for rights for prisoners at Guantanamo Bay as one way to improve the opinion of America abroad.

"One of the foundations [of America] is due process of law, and we're denying this to these people," Mr. Young said. "And you call them enemy combatants, but still, they're deserving of a fair trial like anyone else."

Mr. Young also said that the federal government has lost credibility domestically, citing a recent government report that showed energy prices falling 2 percent last month despite a 10 percent increase in oil prices.

"How can anybody believe anything that comes out of this government?" Mr. Young questioned. "We need a congressman that will insure accountability and transparency and truthfulness from the federal government."

Kelly Hatfield spoke of the danger posed by China, stating that aside from the threat posed economically by China's growing economy, the United States must be mindful of the military threat posed by China, particularly if it attains nuclear capabilities.

"I think that countries like North Korea and Syria and Iran getting hold of nuclear technologies and nuclear

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



PRIMARY DEBATE...The GOP Candidates for Congress, 7th District, debated their positions at Mountainside Borough Hall on Thursday, May 22, in an election event sponsored by *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*. Pictured, left to right, are: A.D. Amar, Kelly Hatfield, Darren Young, Sen. Leonard Lance, moderator Fred Rossi of *The Leader*, Tom Roughneen, Mayor Martin Marks and Kate Whitman. See the one hour video at goleader.com.

Voters to Decide Senate, 7th Dist. House Races

By LAURA MORTKOWITZ
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

AREA — This Tuesday, June 3, area voters head to the election polls to select candidates in the Democratic and Republican Primaries for New Jersey Senate, members of Congress for the 7th District, and three seats for Union County freeholder. There are no competitive Primary races at the local municipal level. Polls are open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The most hotly contested race locally is the Republican race for Congress in the 7th District, where seven candidates are vying to fill Republican Rep. Mike Ferguson's seat. They are: Seton Hall University business professor A.D. Amar of Watchung; former Summit councilwoman Kelly Hatfield; State Senator Leonard Lance (LD-23, Clinton); Scotch Plains Mayor Martin Marks; former assistant prosecutor in Essex and Union counties and Iraq War veteran Tom Roughneen of Watchung, the daughter of former Governor Christine Whitman, Kate Whitman of Peapeck, and Darren Young of Summit.

Three other candidates — former Watchung Mayor Victor Sordillo, Bridgewater Councilman Michael Hsing and former Hillsborough Deputy Mayor Chris Venis — had sought Republican support but declined to file nomination petitions by the April deadline to run in the Primary.

On the Democratic side, Assemblywoman Linda Stender of Fanwood is running uncontested. She came within a percentage point of unseating Mr. Ferguson two years ago.

The Democratic Senate race is between incumbent U.S. Senator Frank Lautenberg of Cliffside Park, who is seeking a fifth term, Rep. Rob Andrews (D-1st, Haddon Heights) and

Morristown Mayor Donald Cresitello.

The Republican Senate race is between former Rep. Richard Zimmer of Delaware Township, State Senator Joseph Pennacchio (LD-26, Pine Brook) and Ramapo College professor Murray Sabrin of Fort Lee. Businesswoman Anne Estabrook had to withdraw from the running after suffering a minor stroke in March. Her replacement, former Goya Foods executive Andy Ananue, dropped out of the race on April 11, and was replaced by Mr. Zimmer.

In the race for Union County freeholder, incumbent Democrats Angel Estrada of Elizabeth, Rick Proctor of Rahway and Nancy Ward of Linden face opposition in the June Primary from Carmen Southward of Linden, Carlos Cedeno and Marlene Abitanto, both of Elizabeth and running under the banner "Democratic Change for Elizabeth," Armando Burgos of Elizabeth, under "The Time is Now" ballot slogan, and Diane Murray of Hillside, running under the "Insure Your Future" name.

On the Republican side, Roselle Park Councilman Michael Yakubov, John Russitano of Westfield and Joseph Franchino of Berkeley Heights, endorsed by the Union County GOP organization, face opposition from Krzysztof Nowak of Cranford, Dolores Makrogiannis of Scotch Plains and Jeffrey Payer of Summit, who are running under the "Constitutional Republicans Protecting the Liberty Platform," a ballot line aligned with Mr. Sabrin.

Tuesday's Primary is predicted to have a low turnout with some candidates saying the move of New Jersey's Presidential Primary to February will reduce turnout.

Paul J. Peyton contributed to this story.



HONOR AND SERVICE...During the Memorial Day ceremony in Garwood on Monday at the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Gary Wetzel gave the invocation and benediction, and Kenny Matz spoke of his experiences in Iraq with the U.S. Army.



MARCHING AND REMEMBERING...Dozens of civic, community and band organizations from the region marched up East Broad Street in Westfield, with hundreds of pedestrians lining the streets to remember American fallen soldiers in the annual Memorial Day Parade on Monday, May 26. The view is from the Ward Building balcony, courtesy of residents Al and Lisa DiDonato.

Portion of Garwood Municipal Aid Could Be Restored in State Budget

By RAYNOR DENITZIO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD — The Garwood Borough Council said on Tuesday that a portion of its Consolidated Municipal Property Tax Relief Aid (CMPTRA) could be reinstated pending approval of the state's budget.

Kathleen Villaggio, council president and finance chairman, said a percentage of the CMPTRA funding which was to be cut in the original state budget could be restored, but that the state cautioned municipalities not to factor this funding into their budgets yet since it needs legislative approval.

"We were notified that our aid has been restored in the amount of \$154,993," Ms. Villaggio said. "That's an unofficial, official type of notification."

According to a press release on the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs website, Governor Jon Corzine suggested the move, which would restore 25 percent of the cut in CMPTRA aid to towns with less than

10,000 residents, to lessen property tax increases. The plan calls for these communities to face no more than a \$100 average property tax increase due to the CMPTRA cuts.

Ms. Villaggio said the borough's average property tax increase per homeowner over last year due to the CMPTRA cuts would be \$97.50.

The council also held a public hearing on the 2008 municipal budget during the meeting. Resident Bruce Paterman asked the council if pension costs would stabilize in the coming year.

Ms. Villaggio said the borough could face another increase.

"At this point in time we thought that the pension on the police and fire would level off in the budget, but there's some indication that next year may also be an increase," Ms. Villaggio said.

Ms. Villaggio said the borough hopes to adopt its budget at the end of July or early August and that the borough will send out estimated tax bills at the end of June.

In other business, the council passed a resolution proposed by Councilman Anthony Sytko, the borough's representative to the Union County Air Traffic Noise Advisory Board, to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



WE REMEMBER...Lieutenant Colonel Michael Hrycak, Grand Marshal of the Westfield Memorial Day parade, addresses the crowd on Monday at the Monument to Veterans of World War I. Standing behind him, from left to right, are: Peter Hogaboom, master of ceremonies; Rick Harrison, president of Chapter 688 of Vietnam Veterans of America; Patrick Tighe, commander of American Legion Post No. 3 in Westfield; Bob Farley, commander of the Mountainside Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Westfield Councilman Mark Ciarrocca. Seated at far right is Al Riker, chaplain of American Legion Post No. 3.

BOE Hires New Beechwood Principal; OK's Teacher Pact

By KATHERINE EMIRE-NIEVES
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

MOUNTAINSIDE — The borough's board of education (BOE) on Tuesday night appointed Robert Phillips as the new principal for Deerfield Elementary School, filling the vacancy left when Jeanette Baubles was appointed Chief School Administrator (CSA).

After receiving about 80 resumés for the position, Ms. Baubles recommended and the board approved the appointment of Mr. Phillips, effective July 1 through June 30, 2009. No details of Mr. Phillips were released

at Tuesday's meeting.

Board President Mary Beth Schaumberg commended Ms. Baubles on adhering to the established timeline on finding her replacement. Mr. Phillips, who will receive a salary of \$117,000 a year, is expected to be in attendance at the next board of education meeting on Tuesday, June 10, to introduce himself to the public.

The BOE also ratified a new contract with the union staff. No details by press time.

The board also approved the hiring

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



REMEMBRANCE...Members of Mountainside VFW Post 10136 salute the flag at the borough's annual Memorial Day remembrance at Constitution Plaza. Also attending were Mayor Robert Vigilanti and members of the borough council.

PAGE INDEX

Regional	2-3	Obituary	8	Real Estate	11-17
Editorial	4-5, 16	Education	8-9, 18	Classifieds	16
Community ...	6-8	Sports	11-15	A&E	18-20