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Candidates File for Senate, Congress and Local Races

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

REGION — Candidates filed by Monday afternoon's deadline to be included on the Tuesday, June 5 Primary Election ballot. This year there are races for mayor in Scotch Plains and Elizabeth, as well as council races in Cranford, Fanwood, Garwood and Scotch Plains along with races for the U.S. States Senate, Congress and the Board of Chosen Freeholders.

The top of the ticket this year is headed by the Presidential race. While President Barack Obama is not challenged in the Primary, GOP front-runner, former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, is trying to win the Republican nomination over challengers, former U.S. Senator Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Texas Congressman Ron Paul.

In Scotch Plains, Councilwoman Mary DePaola was picked by the local GOP committee over incumbent Mayor Nancy Malool. Mayor Malool has filed for reelection off the GOP organization line. Seeking Mrs. De Paola's council seat are Republican Ed Saridaki, a former Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education member, and Democrat Colleen Gialanella.

The Fanwood Borough Council currently consists of three Democrats and three Republicans along with Democratic Mayor Colleen Mahr. First term GOP incumbents Robert Manduca and Mike Szuch are being challenged by former councilman Jack Molenaar, currently planning board chairman, and newcomer Daniel Levine.

Cranford Mayor David Robinson did not file for reelection to the township committee. Running for the open seat on the committee are Republican W. Scott Mease, a former committee member, and Democrat Thomas H. Hannen, Jr. Mr. Hannen came 200 votes shy of winning a seat in 2011. Republicans hold a 3-2 edge on the committee.

There are two seats up this year on the Garwood Borough Council - one Republican seat and one Democratic seat. Republicans hold a 4-2 edge on the council and control the mayor's office. Republican incumbent Timothy Hak is joined on the GOP ticket by Carol Kearney, who ran unsuccessfully for council last year. Filing for the Democrats are William Nierstedt, who sits on the borough's planning board, and Matt Allouf, who ran unsuccessfully for council in 2010. Council President Keith Sluka, a Democrat, is not seeking reelection.

Mountainside incumbents Councilmen William Lane and Robert Messler filed for reelection. No Democrats filed candidacies for the all-Republican borough council.

Three-term Clark Mayor Sal Bonaccorso, a Republican, faces a challenge from Democrat Richard Kazanowski. Seeking reelection to their council seats are GOP incumbents Alvin Barr and Angel Albanese. They are joined by newcomer William Smith, replacing, Sheila Whiting, who is not seeking reelection.

The Democratic ticket includes Michael Altmann, Michelle Novak and Phil Laskowski. Republicans hold a 6-1 edge on the council with Rich Kazanowski as the lone Democrat. His Third Ward seat is up for reelection in 2014.

At the county level, incumbent Freeholders Alexander Mirabella of Fanwood, seeking his sixth term, and Mohamed Jalloh of Roselle, seeking his second term, are joined on the Democratic organization line by former long-time Springfield township attorney Bruce Bergen. They will face a June Primary Election challenge from Anamaria Bercik, Babe Darlene Frazier and Carlos Cedeno, all Elizabeth residents, running under the Democrats For Change (DFC) banner. Mr. Cedeno is currently serving on the Elizabeth City Council.

Filing nominating petitions for the Republicans are Diane Barabas of Westfield, who ran for freeholder in 2006; Stephen Kozlovich of Union and Krzysztof Nowak of Cranford. Mr. Nowak ran unsuccessfully for freeholder in the Primary in 2008. Democrats For Change also is seeking to unseat long-time Elizabeth Mayor Chris Bollwage with Oscar Ocasio, a former director of planning for the City of Elizabeth, running on the DFC ticket. Last year, the DFC came within 800 votes of Senator Ray Lesniak and within 1,300 tallies of Assemblywoman Annette Quijano.

Candidates have also filed for United States Senate and House of Representatives from the seventh and 12th Congressional districts. In the Senate race, U.S. Senator Robert Menendez faces a token challenge Gwendolyn Charidy Diakos. Republican state Senator Joseph Kyrillos of Middletown, who has served in the state Legislature for 24 years, faces a challenge in the June Primary from David Douglas Brown, David Douglas Brown and Joseph Rullo. New Jersey Republicans have not won a U.S. Senate seat since Clifford Case's win in 1972. Mr. Case left the Senate after 24 years in 1979.

In the House, two-term Republican incumbent Rep. Leonard Lance (R-7th) faces a Primary challenge from David Larsen, who Mr. Lance defeated in a four-candidate field in the 2010 Primary. As a result of redistricting having been completed at the end of 2011, all but 1,000 Scotch Plains residents and all of Fanwood have been moved to the 12th Congressional District of incumbent Rep. Rush Holt (D) of Hopewell Township in Mercer County. Challenging Mr. Holt is Republican South Brunswick businessman Eric Beck.

A seven-term Congressman first elected in 1998, Mr. Holt was previously employed as assistant director of the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory, Princeton University's largest research laboratory. Mr. Beck runs RMI, Risk Masters, Inc., a risk management consultancy specializing in business continuity management.

The deadline for Independent candidates to file is Tuesday, June 5.



GRAND OPENING...Attending the recent grand opening ribbon cutting of Hapi Yogi, located at 235 East Broad Street in Westfield (above Victoria's Secret), from left to right, are: Westfield Councilman Sam Della Fera; Robert Dowdy, Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce (GWACC) board member; Amorette Farella, Hapi Yogi owner; Mayor Andrew Skibitsky; Chris Devine, GWACC board member, and Mitchell Beinhaker, GWACC chairman. Not pictured are Sherry Cronin, Downtown Westfield Corporation executive director.

FEMA Provides Funding for Bulkheads In Sea Bright

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senators Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) and Robert Menendez (D-N.J.) have announced that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will provide \$1,373,964 through its Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to Sea Bright to minimize flood damage in a frequent flood area.

The funding will be used to install a new bulkhead and repair five others in Sea Bright, where homes often flood because of overflow from the nearby Shrewsbury River. This federal funding is directed to repair damage caused by a February 2010 storm. The Sea Bright community is under frequent threat of flooding from storms, high tide events, and Nor'easters, which have caused severe damage over the years.

"This funding will help protect Sea Bright families from storms and flooding that consistently cause damage to their community," said Senator Lautenberg, vice-chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security, which funds this FEMA program. "This grant provides relief for families already in need while investing in prevention so that residents don't suffer from future flood damage. We will continue to fight for federal disaster relief programs that protect New Jersey's at-risk communities from storms and flooding."

"In the aftermath of severe natural disasters our families and communi-

ties need all the help we can provide. Sea Bright families are still recovering from the effects of the snowstorm that hit the area and destroyed local families' homes back in 2010. This funding will help fully repair the damage caused; it will also bolster the relevant public infrastructure to prevent future damage from the regular storms and floods that affect the area," Senator Menendez added.

DNC Deadline for Credentials Is April 15

REGION — The 2012 Democratic National Convention will be held in Charlotte, N.C. the week of September 3. The deadline for requesting media credentials for the convention is Sunday, April 15. Media inquiries should be made to medialogistics@demconvention.com or press@demconvention.com.



Peyton's Peek at the Week In Politics

By Paul Peyton of The Leader/Times

Four Candidates Seek Payne's Congressional Seat Including Son

Seven candidates have filed petitions for the Congressional seat of the late Rep. Donald Payne (D-10th).

They include Newark City Council President Donald Payne, Jr.; state Sen. Nia Gill (D-34, Montclair), Newark City Councilman Ronald C. Rice and Irvington Mayor Wayne Smith.

Union County Democratic Chairwoman Charlotte DeFilippo told the online blog that Union County would have an open primary by not giving the Democratic line to any of the candidates.

The redistricted district includes all of Newark, Orange, East Orange, Glen Ridge, Irvington, and Maplewood and parts of Bloomfield, Montclair and West Orange in Essex County, parts of Bayonne and Jersey City in Hudson County, and all of Linden, Roselle, Roselle Park and part of Union Township in Union County.

George Norcross Part of Group Buying Philly Newspapers

A group of local investors led by South Jersey Democratic leader George Norcross and businessman Lewis Katz have agreed to buy Philadelphia Media Network (PMN) Inc., the parent company of *The Inquirer*, *Philadelphia Daily News*, and *Philly.com*, for \$55 million with an additional \$10 million in working capital for operations.

Mr. Norcross and Mr. Katz will serve as managing partners of Interstate General Media L.L.C., the new parent company.

The six new owners said they would sign a pledge that they would not interfere with the operations of PMN's three newsrooms. The newsroom's leaders drafted that pledge, which three of the six owners signed Monday morning.

Christie Meets With Israeli, Jordan Leaders on Trip
Governor Chris Christie kicked off

his trip to the Middle East on Monday with a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday and President Shimon Peres on Tuesday. The trip also includes Jordan with a personal visit with Jordan's King Abdullah, according to the Associated Press.

The Governor's delegation includes his family and 13 business and religious leaders. The trip includes a tour of a pharmaceutical facility that wants to expand to the U.S. as well as participation in a business round-table and a visit to a school, according to the AP report.

Gusciora Announces Bid for Governor in '13

Eight-term state Assemblyman Reed Gusciora (D-15, Trenton) has announced his bid for Governor in 2013, according to politickernj.com. The Assemblyman says he will run on the Real Liberal Democratic line.

When asked about the South Jersey Democratic leaders rift with U.S. Senator Frank Lautenberg (D), he told politickernj.com. "On day one I plan on signing an executive order making it illegal to refer to 'North' or 'South' Jersey," Mr. Gusciora said. "In fact, I plan on introducing a measure just to simply call our state 'Jersey.'"

On a more serious note, Mr. Gusciora also wants to expand casinos expansion to Asbury Park and the Meadowlands and to legalize marijuana.

Obama Leads Romney By Four Points in Poll

President Barack Obama has a four-percentage-point lead over Mitt Romney in a General Election matchup, according to a new *USA Today Today/Gallop* Poll. Forty-nine percent of respondents said they would vote for President Obama, while 45 percent said they would pick Governor Romney.

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