

Dem Voters to Decide Freeholder, Assembly, Co. Committee Races

By PAUL J. PEYTON

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

REGION — Registered Democratic voters will decide a competitive Primary Election field this Tuesday, June 4, in the races for Union County Freeholder, County Surrogate, State Assembly in the 21st and 22nd Legislative Districts and for members of the Union County Democratic Committee (UCDC) in Fanwood, Cranford, Scotch Plains and Westfield.

This year's primary challenge is focused locally in Fanwood where the county Democratic organization is running candidates for the UCDC under Column A against those aligned with Mayor Colleen Mahr

under Column B.

In the race for Union County Freeholder, nine candidates running on three different slates are seeking the party's nomination for three seats on the nine-member board. Incumbent Freeholders Bette Jane Kowalski, Sergio Granados and Rebecca Williams are running on the Regular Democratic Union County Organization line. Lorraine McNeal, former Fanwood Councilman Jack Molenaar and former Roselle school board member Anthony Esposito are running under the slogan "People First Democrats," while Plainfield Board of Education member Wilma Campbell, Alex Lospinoso, chief of staff for Linden Mayor Derek

Armstead, and former Roselle Councilwoman Sylvia Turnage are running under the slogan "Democrats United For Progress."

The winners will face Republicans Peter Kane of Summit and Glenn Genband of Mountainside in the November General Election. The deadline for Independent candidates to file for state, county and municipal offices in the November General Election is 4 p.m. on June 4.

In the race for Union County Surrogate, incumbent James LaCorte of Union faces a Primary challenge from Lisa McCormick of Rahway. The winner will face Republican Peter Lijoi of Summit in November. Ms. McCormick previously ran for Union County Clerk in 2010 against long-time incumbent Joanne Rajoppi and last year challenged U.S. Senator Robert Menendez in the Primary for U.S. Senate. In the U.S. Senate race, Ms. McCormick received 10,806 votes in Union County or 35 percent of the vote. In the 2010 race against Ms. Rajoppi, she garnered 10,499 tallies or 44 percent of the vote, according to election results.

At the state level, in the 21st Legislative District, Lisa Mandelblatt of Westfield is running with Stacey Gunderman of New Providence for State Assembly. They face a challenge from Jill LaZare of Summit, who ran for State Assembly in 2013 and 2015 against incumbent Republican Assembly members Jon Bramnick of Westfield and Nancy Muñoz of Summit. She ran for State Senate in 2017 against Senate Republican Minority Leader Tom Kean Jr. of Westfield. Ms. Mandelblatt was an early candidate for Congress in District 7 last year before dropping out. Ms. Gunderman is the Democratic chair in New Providence.

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Garwood to Draft Letter To Brindle About Ice Rink

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

GARWOOD — Borough Clerk Christina Ariemma will draft a letter to Westfield Mayor Shelley Brindle expressing residents' concerns about the possibility of the ice rink returning to Gumbert Park for a second season next winter.

Mayor Sara Todisco asked Ms. Ariemma to prepare the letter after several residents expressed concerns about the rink at the borough council's meeting last Thursday. The Westfield Town Council is scheduled to vote on the rink's location at a meeting in June.

Mayor Todisco said the borough council is not opposed to recreation programs, but said the park is "the wrong location" for the rink. Council President Marc Lazarow, who supported the letter, said he has spoken on behalf of concerned Garwood residents at several recent meetings of the Westfield Recreation Commission.

Councilman Michael Ince said in his short time on the council, few issues have "concerned me more than this one." He pointed out that several years ago, Union County had proposed installing an ice rink at Oak Ridge Park in Clark and he urged the county government to revisit the idea, saying the Clark location would be preferable to a rink in a residential neighborhood. "I am not against hockey," Mr. Ince said. "My son played hockey."

Councilman Sean Benoit said last week that any benefits the rink brings to the community are outweighed by negative impacts, including potential lower property values and increased noise disruptions.

"I ask each of you to stand up for



SUPPORT FOR OUR NATION...The Scotch Plains Italian American Club showed its support for our nation with its float in Monday's Scotch Plains-Fanwood Memorial Day Parade.

Freeholders Get Report on Need for Gateway Tunnels

By PAUL J. PEYTON

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

COUNTY — The Union County Freeholders received a condensed version at last Thursday's agenda meeting of a report on the importance of construction of the Gateway rail tunnel project connecting New Jersey to New York City as prepared by the Regional Plan Association (RPA).

Nate Bottigheimer, New Jersey director of the RPA, gave a synopsis of

the association's report, called "A Preventable Crisis, The Economic and Human Costs of a Hudson River Rail Tunnel Shutdown."

He said since 2002 the percentage of New Jersey residents working in the city has grown from 11 to 13 percent as a share of the New York City workforce.

"So it's very important that we have strong connections across the (Hudson) River," Mr. Bottigheimer said. He said seven-eighths of the 200,000 commuters into New York are NJ Transit commuters. He said the condition of the existing tunnel from age (it dates to 1920) and damage from Superstorm Sandy makes transportation by rail, including the Portal Bridge in Hackensack, increasingly unreliable.

"We need to have new infrastructure in place to head off an interruption of access to the city," Mr. Bottigheimer said.

At peak times, 67,000 commuters currently cross the Hudson River into the city from New Jersey. He said if one of the existing tunnels is shut for repairs, it would displace 38,000 daily Garden State commuters. Mr. Bottigheimer said around 11,000 of those commuters will opt to commute to New York by car, putting "tremendous impacts" on roads throughout Northern New Jersey.

He said 250,000 commuters will see a trip that increases by 10 minutes, while 100,000 will see commutes increase by an hour.

The report also found that Union County could see a \$1.8-billion loss in revenues over a four-year period if rail service to New York was disrupted without construction of new rail tunnels.

During the board's regular meeting, board members approved a \$917,287 change order for a new \$20,511,742 contract for the Union County fire code upgrade project. Joseph Graziano, director of engineering, public works and facilities management, said the project involves access to the courthouse tower.

He said the county received a bid of \$19 million for upgrading the courthouse rotunda and creating a new interior staircase to the tower. He said the rotunda project, which will be completed this November, now includes stabilizing lead paint that has been peeling and then repainting 80,000 square feet of wall space.

Mr. Graziano said \$419,000 of the change order is for stabilizing of the lead paint with the balance for repainting the walls of the rotunda, including courtrooms.

He said the new stairwell tower

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TWO JOES...The grand marshals of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Memorial Day Parade, Joe Schott and Joe Murano, both World War II veterans in their 90s, were given proclamations and presented with flags in honor of their service.

Party in the Park Set For June 25 at LaGrande Park

By LAUREN A. SILVA

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

FANWOOD — There was much discussion about the Summer Party in the Park at Tuesday night's Fanwood Recreation Commission meeting. The Summer Party in the Park will be held on Tuesday, June 25, at LaGrande Park from 6 to 8:30 p.m. The movie, *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*, will be shown. There additionally will be food, hamster balls and an obstacle course.

Recreation Director Bob Budiansky also discussed the training wheel toss, where children learn to ride a two-wheeled bike, to be held on Sunday, June 9, from 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Union County Vocational-Technical Schools parking lot. Mr. Budiansky said all spots are filled for this event.

As first mentioned at last month's meeting, Mr. Budiansky spoke about the organization Achieving Better Life Experiences (ABLE) and its previous interest in renting LaGrande Park and the Forest Road Park kitchen. ABLE is a day rehabilitation organization for special-

needs adults with a focus on life skills, social skills, prevocational skills and community integration. Joseph Spreitzer from ABLE was interested in renting LaGrande Park and the Forest Road Park kitchen Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., year-round, Mr. Budiansky said.

"(Mr.) Spreitzer found another facility. He may use the Forest Road Park kitchen next year, though. I told him (Mr. Spreitzer) the commission didn't come to a conclusion regarding pricing at the April (commission) meeting," Mr. Budiansky said.

Mr. Budiansky also spoke about a recent update regarding the Forest Road Park master plan. Gary Oliva, from CME Associates, told Mr. Budiansky recently that the soil test drilling was done on May 13. It was sent to a lab for preliminary testing and then it will be sent to the state for review. The test results will not be completed until August, he said.

The recreation commission's next meeting will be held Tuesday, June 18, at 7:45 p.m., at the LaGrande Park recreation building.



A CELEBRATION OF HEROES...Families line the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Memorial Day Parade route to commemorate Americans of all wars who made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of freedom.



YOUNG PATRIOTS...Cadets from the Civil Air Patrol march in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Memorial Day Parade.

Primary Election is Tuesday, June 4

STATE -- Election polls are open Tuesday, June 4, between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. for the Primary election.

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Congratulations to the Top Teams for the Month of April!



Deborah Citarella Team

Top Sales and Overall Top Team
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Sherrie Natko Team

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