



News Highlights

UNION — Freshman Congressman from New Jersey's Seventh District, Michael A. Ferguson, will hold an open house for constituents at his Union legislative district office on Monday, April 30.

The office is located at 2333 Morris Avenue, Suite B8, Union. The open house will be held from noon to 4 p.m.

TRENTON — Acting Governor Donald T. DiFrancesco of Scotch Plains has requested that the Assembly's Ethical Standards Committee immediately convene to decide if the information brought against him by two Democratic legislators has merit.

Mr. DiFrancesco said he was "deeply concerned" that a complaint filed against him by Senator Byron Baer and Assemblyman Charles "Ken" Zisa, both Democrats from the 37th District in Bergen County, was done "for political reasons in a partisan effort to harm my gubernatorial candidacy."

The complaint was filed in February after news accounts of a 1994 real estate transaction, in which four friends reportedly lent Mr. DiFrancesco \$575,000 to help him avoid a \$1.2 million bank foreclosure, surfaced. The funds from friends is said to have excused a \$350,000 loan as part of a settlement with the bank.

The two legislators have questioned whether Mr. DiFrancesco was given "gifts" by the friends, who gave him the loan, as well as from the bank that was pursuing the foreclosure, which excused \$350,000 of the delinquent loan as part of a settlement.

WESTFIELD — The Westfield Regional Health Department has issued a health bulletin advising residents of risks associated with the West Nile Virus.

Health Officer Robert M. Sherr said, "the most important measure to take in combating the West Nile Virus is to eliminate stagnant water where mosquitoes breed." These include clogged rain gutters, old tires and neglected backyard swimming pools.

Residents should take precautions to avoid the risk of mosquito bites. Insect repellents should be used on clothing and exposed skin. Long-sleeved shirts and pants are recommended when outdoors. Outdoor activities should be curbed at dawn, dusk and during the evening.

Sightings of sick or dead crows, hawks or falcons should be reported by calling (908) 789-4070. The As-

sociated Humane Society in Newark, Westfield's animal control service, will only pick up dead birds that are viable for testing at state laboratories, which are those that have been dead less than 24 hours.

Birds not used for testing may be picked up by using gloves and placed in double-bags. Those persons who do not know which birds to touch may call Associated Humane at (973) 824-7080.

The Health Department also recommends that residents compost their leaves and also take precautions to prevent the attraction of rodents on their properties.

MOUNTAINSIDE — Hikers, nature lovers and anyone else who uses the trails in the Watchung Reservation

Approval of Spring Brings With It West Nile Warnings

By ALEXANDER MIRABELLA

Springtime brings Union County beautiful flowers, spring rains, songbirds in our parks and baseball season. Unfortunately, it also begins the mosquito breeding season.

Mosquitoes are both a nuisance and a potential health risk, since some species can carry West Nile Virus.

West Nile Virus is spread through the saliva of mosquitoes, one of the 60 species of mosquito found in the State of New Jersey. About 20 mosquito species call Union County their home.

Union County works year-round to control the mosquito population through the Bureau of Mosquito Control in the Department of Operational Services. This department eliminates potential breeding places and monitors their populations with special traps set in every municipality.

Since mosquitoes have a life span of a week to 10 days, eliminating the places where they breed is the best way to reduce mosquito populations. Mosquitoes breed in pools of standing water or in water collecting in drums, old tires, flower pots and planters.

This is where we need help from the residents of Union County's 21 municipalities.

There are several ways residents can help reduce the number of mosquitoes in their yards and communities this year:

- Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, empty flower pots and any other containers that hold water, as these are all places mosquitoes can use to breed;
- Remove discarded tires, a favorite breeding place for mosquitoes;
- Drill holes in the bottom of trash or recycling containers so they do not hold

water;

• Clean clogged roof gutters every year;

• Turn over plastic wading pools when not in use;

• Turn over wheelbarrows;

• Change water in birdbaths every three days;

• Clean and chlorinate swimming pools and remove water that collects on pool covers;

• Use landscaping that eliminates standing water. Mosquitoes can breed in puddles that last just four days.

Draining standing water and eliminating the places where it collects means being a good neighbor and making your community a healthier place for all residents.

It is the most effective way that we know of to fight West Nile Virus and reduce mosquito populations.

One of the ways we track West Nile Virus is by testing birds that may have died from the disease. While the disease does not affect most birds, it is fatal to crows. Anyone who finds a recently dead crow should contact their town health official to see if it can be tested for the disease. A crow must be in fairly good condition (for a dead crow, that is) to be tested.

Union County's Bureau of Mosquito Control can help residents remove standing water and mosquito breeding areas. Call them at (908) 654-9834 with any questions about mosquitoes or mosquito control. The bureau's mosquito control workers can usually come to any home in Union County within 24 hours.

Alexander Mirabella is Chairman of the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

are encouraged to attend a meeting on Saturday, April 28, to learn about Union County's Adopt-A-Trail program.

Sponsored by the Board of Chosen Freeholders, the meeting will be held from 9:45 a.m. until noon at the Visitor Center of the Trailside Nature and Science Center in Mountainside.

Participants will be required to adopt their trail for a period of two years. They will be expected to remove litter, do minor pruning, clear away debris from drainage pipes and re-mark trails as needed.

The county has 26 miles of bridge paths and 13 miles of marked hiking trails.

For more information, please call Trailside at (908) 789-3670, extension no. 221.

Ferguson Holds Town Meeting In Summit To Discuss Issues Relevant to District 7

By DEBORAH MADISON
Specially Written for The Leader and The Times

SUMMIT — Congressman Michael A. Ferguson (R-7th) held his second Town Hall meeting last week at the Summit Municipal Building.

Mr. Ferguson discussed a variety of issues relevant to the Seventh District, which consists of municipalities in Union, Somerset, Middlesex and Essex counties, including Westfield, Scotch Plains, Fanwood and Mountainside.

Congressman Ferguson has been and will be holding a number of these town meetings in several different towns over the next few months.

These meetings give residents an opportunity to hear Mr. Ferguson's policies as well as to ask the Congressman questions.

The packed audience included residents of the Seventh District, as well as mayors, councilmen and other government and agency officials.

Mr. Ferguson outlined his positions on education, tax reform and transportation before taking questions from the audience.

He said that because of the \$5.6 trillion surplus, the government could pay down the national debt, reduce the marriage penalty, increase the child-tax credit, eliminate the death tax, expand Medicare and Social Security services, increase funding to education and transportation and still have money left over to return to taxpayers.

"There are over 70,000 married couples in the Seventh District, who pay an average of \$1,500 more simply because they're married," Mr. Ferguson explained.

Mr. Ferguson also discussed his committee assignments, which include being on the Small Business Committee and the Transportation Committee, and how he was working toward passing bills that would increase funding for New Jersey's transportation needs.

"We have more rail-lines than any other state and I will work hard to make sure that New Jersey gets its fair share of transportation funding," Mr. Ferguson said.

He said that he testified before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation last month regarding improving New Jersey's commuter problems.

Mr. Ferguson also said that he is aware of the large number of resi-

dents in Union County concerned about aircraft noise and that he would work toward bringing about a solution that was both agreeable to the residents and those involved in the airline industries.

One of the first bills that Mr. Ferguson sponsored, he told the audience, was the "The Helping Children Succeed by Funding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act."

This bill would increase special education funding by \$2.5 billion each year until the full 40 percent federal funding of "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)" is reached by 2007. IDEA was adopted in 1975.

He said that he feels very strongly that the federal government should honor their commitment to fund 40 percent of mandated special education programs per IDEA.

Currently, the federal government is only funding about 15 percent, Mr. Ferguson pointed out.

"This puts a tremendous burden on the local schools and short-changes the students as well as tax payers," he said.

Mr. Ferguson also said that he supports giving more freedom and flexibility to parents and local schools in how they administer federal funding, such as expanding charter schools.

Summit Physician and President of the Summit Board of Health, Doctor David Shreck, asked Mr. Ferguson what his position was on health care reform and funding for local health programs.

Mr. Ferguson said that he ran on a platform supporting a patient's bill of rights, putting decisions back into the hands of patients and doctors, not in the control of HMO's.

"The current Medicaid reimbursement formula penalizes New Jersey and has put many hospitals on the brink of bankruptcy," Mr. Ferguson stated. "This situation needs to be

reformed to save our hospitals." Mr. Ferguson also explained that New Jersey is "a donor-state," sending more to Washington than what the state gets back.

The remedy for that is for New Jersey's United States Senators and Representatives to work together, in a non-partisan way in order to get back more for the state, he explained.

Other issues raised by the audience, questioned Mr. Ferguson's position on President George W. Bush's environmental platform as well as the Congressman's position on gun control.

"I co-signed a letter to the President expressing disappointment with his decision to relax emission standards for CO2," Mr. Ferguson said. "As a member of the Sierra Club, I recognize that protecting the environment isn't just about trees and wildlife, but about the quality of the air and water for people," he added.

Summit resident Larry Farrell asked Mr. Ferguson what his position was on protecting the civil rights of gun owners.

"Why do you want to take away my Second Amendment rights?" Mr. Farrell pointedly asked.

Mr. Ferguson answered, "Common sense steps must be taken to insure that we keep guns out of the wrong hands. A minimum level of responsibility to own a gun safely must be demonstrated to restrict children's access to guns."

Congressman Ferguson invited anyone with any other questions or concerns to visit or call his office in Union, at: 2333 Morris Avenue, Suite B8, (908) 686-5576.

The congressman will be holding an open house at his District Office, from noon to 4 p.m. on Monday, April 30.

The congressman has scheduled Town Hall meetings in Garwood, Manville, Berkeley Heights and Springfield.

WEISMAN HELY DIGIOIA & BOYLE
A PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CERTIFIED TRIAL LAWYERS®
INJURY CASES

Jim Hely

See us in the Bell Atlantic Yellow Pages
Only 1 of 40 lawyers is a
Supreme Court Certified Trial Lawyer.
(908) 789-9000

VALLEY'S PREMIER HOME EQUITY CREDIT LINE

Great rate. Don't wait!

6.79% Annual Percentage Rate
Introductory Rate
Then just Prime*
minus 1/2%
(with no conditions)

For a limited time, we're offering two very low interest rates on our Premier Home Equity Credit Line. Just 6.79% APR for the first 6 months, then enjoy the very low rate of Prime* minus 1/2% for the life of the loan. And the interest may be tax deductible. Consult your tax advisor. Let one of our loan representatives assist you in applying for a new Valley Credit Line or transferring an existing one from another bank. At Valley, we make it easier for you.

Apply in person, by phone, or online. Special rates are for a limited time only.

1-800-522-4100 - www.valleynationalbank.com

Banking / Just like it's supposed to be.®

Valley National Bank

*The APR may vary and is based on an index that is the highest Prime Rate published in The New York Times for the last banking day preceding the first day of each billing cycle. Your interest rate may never exceed 15.99%. Available on 1-4 term, owner-occupied primary residences in New Jersey. Subject to income requirements, credit approval, and maximum 75% loan-to-value ratio. Limited to first and second mortgages. Properly insured required. The annual flood insurance may be required. ©2001 Valley National Bank, Member FDIC, Member Federal Reserve System, Equal Housing Lender.

-BRET SCHUNDLER-

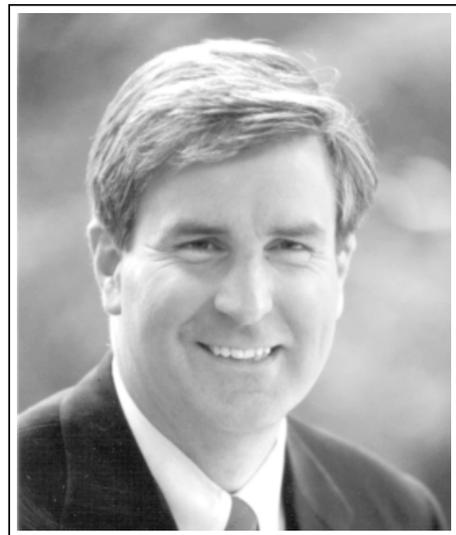
FROM WESTFIELD ALL-STATE FOOTBALL STAR

TO

A PROVEN CHIEF EXECUTIVE RUNNING FOR

GOVERNOR!

Whether in athletics, business or in politics - Westfield's hometown hero Bret Schundler has always proven one thing: He is a LEADER with integrity and a record of success and the courage to do what needs to be done. As Mayor of Jersey City, Bret Schundler pioneered one of the greatest urban renewal efforts in New Jersey history. His record speaks for itself—reducing crime and taxes, creating jobs, improving education, and protecting the environment.



Now Bret needs your help! With your support, Bret will take his message of lower taxes, educational opportunity, and the need to stop suburban sprawl to Trenton. As Governor, Bret will once again prove the critics wrong by putting people above politics and not allowing the special interests to dictate policy.

SUPPORT BRET SCHUNDLER FOR GOVERNOR

Sunday, April 22

Cocktail Reception: 5:00PM - 6:00PM

Dinner: 6:00PM- 8:00PM

L'Affair

Route 22 - Mountainside, New Jersey

Cocktail Reception and Dinner, \$300

Dinner only, \$200

Call Melanie 973-325-9700

or come to the door

Paid for by the Schundler Family.