

# District 22 Assembly Candidates Face-Off During Candidates Forum

By DEBORAH MADISON  
Specially Written for The Times

PLAINFIELD — State Assembly candidates in the newly-redistricted 22nd Legislative District clashed during a candidates forum held on October 17 at the Maxon School in Plainfield.

The Republican team of Gabriel Spera, a former Scotch Plains Mayor, and Green Brook Mayor Patricia Walsh squared off against Democratic hopefuls, Linda D. Stender, a three-term Union County Freeholder and former Fanwood Mayor, and Assemblyman Gerry Green, running for re-election, for the two Assembly seats.

Mr. Green previously represented the 17th District. The new 22nd District includes the municipalities of: Linden, Rahway, Clark, Winfield Park, Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Plainfield, North Plainfield, Green Brook, Dunellen and Middlesex. These municipalities, some of which were part of the 21st and 17th Districts, became a part of the 22nd District after the 2000 Census necessitated redistricting.

About 60 members of the public attended the League of Women Voters forum, mostly Plainfield residents, as well as 22nd District Republican State Senate candidate Milton Campbell.

Assembly candidate Green has held his Assembly seat for the past two years and was a Union County Freeholder for two terms in the 1980s. In his opening statement, Assemblyman Green told the audience that he supported gubernatorial candidate Jim McGreevey, as well as policies against racial profiling and a new cardiac unit at Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center in Plainfield. He related that his opponents were pro-life on the abortion issue and that his opponents have not voiced their position on the proposed cardiac unit.

A Scotch Plains resident and businessman, Mr. Spera talked to the audience about the September 11 tragedy in his opening remarks. He commended the people who came to the forum in support of the country's democratic process.

Mrs. Stender told the audience that she has been a Union County Freeholder for the past eight years and has a record of working toward improving the area's healthcare system, educational reform and the environment. She said that she has worked with Assemblyman Green on racial profiling issues.

Ms. Walsh, who has been Mayor of Green Brook for the past six years, told the audience that good administrative responsibility has enabled her to bring numerous improvements to Green Brook, while at the same time, lowering taxes. As a registered nurse, Ms. Walsh said that she was acutely aware of the need for improvements in the health care system and that her administration passed two resolutions in favor of Muhlenberg's proposed cardiac unit.

In answer to the first audience question asking how September 11 has changed politics, all of the candidates agreed that these times call for strong, non-partisan leadership.

Mrs. Stender said that the events of the past few weeks have affirmed the nation's belief in God and the need to conduct campaigning in a more civilized manner. Ms. Walsh pointed out that these events have made it more politically acceptable to voice a belief in patriotism, faith and God.

In answer to whether they support labor unions, all of the candidates said that they were in favor. Mr. Green pointed out that he was endorsed by the Policemen's Benevolent Association, the firefighters and "just about every other labor union in New Jersey."

"The teachers unions have been badgered by the Republicans," Mr. Green remarked.

Mrs. Stender said that she was endorsed by the CFL-CIO, the Communication Workers Association, and a host of other unions.

The candidates were asked whether they supported the Linden marine garbage train transfer station proposal, which would put 10,000 tons of New York City garbage a day on barges en

route to the Linden transfer station, then onto trains to be hauled through Middlesex and Union Counties to southern states.

Mrs. Stender said the she was in favor of the "trash train" proposal, as it has been called, because it would take thousands of trucks, which currently haul the garbage, off of New Jersey roads and highways.

"This makes good environmental sense," Mrs. Stender remarked.

Mr. Spera said that the proposal would destroy the recent gains made in cleaning up New Jersey beaches. According to Mr. Spera, the Environmental Protection Agency estimates that there would be 1 percent spillage of the garbage off of the barges, which would end up on New Jersey beaches.

Regarding where the candidates stand on the abortion issue, Ms. Walsh said that she was in favor of allowing abortion under the circumstances of rape, incest and protection of the mother's life, but not as a form of birth control. The other three candidates said that they were pro-choice.

Ms. Stender, Mr. Green and Mr. Spera were not in favor of school vouchers, while Ms. Walsh supports a parent's right to choose as long as it does not deprive the public school

system of adequate funding.

"Vouchers would add accountability to the system," Ms. Walsh commented. "If you provide a good system, you won't lose kids," she added.

When asked about cleaning up crime and drug sales on the streets, Mr. Spera commented, "Plainfield doesn't look any better today than it did 10 years ago and it is time for a change." This comment elicited loud, angry jeers of protest from most of the audience.

However, several of the Plainfield residents in the audience agreed said after the forum that they agreed with Mr. Spera's comment, that Plainfield needed a change, and that was why they were on the fence about which candidates slate to vote for.

Mr. Campbell, who was in the audience during the forum, said that he felt it was a good, lively debate, despite hearing things he said that were untrue, such as the Democrats claiming that the Republicans have raised taxes. He said that he believed that Plainfield has progressed, but not at the rate that it should.

"There is usually a correlation between the degree of poverty in a community and the amount of corruption in government," Mr. Campbell noted.

## Scotch Plains Halloween Parade To Be Held This Wednesday

SCOTCH PLAINS — The annual Scotch Plains Halloween Parade, sponsored by Scotch Plains Recreation Commission, will be held on Halloween, this Wednesday, October 31.

Parade participants will meet in the front of Park Middle School at 6 p.m. The parade route continues down Park Avenue to the Village Green, located adjacent to the Municipal Building.

Candy and entertainment will be provided. All children will display their costumes by walking across the platform on the Village Green.

Pumpkins, donated by the Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association, will be given to the youngest children.

For more information, please call the Recreation Department at (908) 322-6700, extension 221.



CAMPAGN STRATEGY SESSION...Former Congressman and Vice Presidential contender, Jack Kemp, meets with Republican State Senate candidates Milt Campbell, center, and Richard H. Bagger at last Wednesday's fundraiser in Mountainside.

## Westfield Recreation Events

**Lunch & Learn - Fashion Shown** with Chico's, 12:15 p.m., Wednesday, November 14, Community Room, Westfield Municipal Building. The show is being sponsored by the Westfield Recreation Commission and the Westfield Y.

Although there is no cost for the show, people wishing to attend can register at the Recreation Department. Attendees should bring a bag lunch. The show is open to adults only.

**Teen Programs:**

**Teen Center:** Friday Nights, 8 p.m. to midnight. Teen Center nights feature music, movies, pool tables, video games, Ping-Pong, foosball, air hockey, big screen TV, refreshments, lounge area and special events.

**Night Place:** This program is offered monthly to all intermediate school youths from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Activities include disc jockey, food, games, movies and dancing. The cost is \$2 in advance and \$3 at the door. Upcoming dates include: November 16, January 25, Febru-

ary 15, March 22, and May 17.

**New Classes To Start Monday, November 5**

**Ballet Stretch & Tone.** This beginner class is based on various dance exercises at the barre and floor. No experience necessary. The class is being offered on Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. from November 5 through December 5. The fee is \$45 per person.

**Ballet For Kids.**

This beginning ballet class is for children 7 to 10 years old. The class is being offered Mondays from 3:30 to 4:15 p.m. from November 5 through December 3. The cost is \$35 per child.

**Kids Club.**

This program includes sing-alongs, arts & crafts, free play, and much more. The club is targeted for preschool through kindergarten age children and their parents. It will be offered Tuesdays from November 13 through December 18 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. The cost is \$25 per child.

**Events, Tickets, Trips.**

**Renault Winery Tour & Smithville Trip.** - Friday, October 26. The bus will leave at 9:15 a.m. The cost is \$52 per person and includes lunch.

**Ellis Island Trip.** Sunday, November 11. The cost is \$58 per person.

**School House Rock Trip.** The Forum Theatre Company, Metuchen, Saturday, November 3.

The bus for this trip will depart at 10 a.m. The fee is \$22 per person.

**Winnie The Pooh Christmas Trip.** The Forum Theatre, Metuchen, Friday, December 14.

The bus will depart at 9 a.m. and the fee is \$25 per person.

**NJ Devils Tickets.**

Discount tickets are available for the Wednesday, December 26 game versus the Pittsburgh Penguins.

The cost is \$36 for second level seats in the 200s. Game time is 7:35 p.m. Transportation will not be provided.

For more information, please call (908) 789-4080.

**Life Feeling Upside Down?**  
Maybe I Can Help...

David A. Manning, LCSW, CADPC  
(Union County Area)  
Please Call For Appointment  
Tel/Fax: (908) 232-4347  
E-Mail: Floyd123@aol.com

- ▼ Individual / Couples
- ▼ Alcohol / Drug Treatment
- ▼ Adolescents / Families
- ▼ Gay / Lesbian Concerns
- ▼ Group Therapy
- ▼ Consultation

**IN UNION COUNTY, IT'S:**

**Unlimited Communications**  
SALES • SERVICE • INSTALLATION

**FOR CELLULAR PHONES, BEEPERS & PAGERS**

**Stay Off Route 22**  
Find Everything You Want  
Locally & Conveniently

**Including:**

- Cellular Plans
- For Everyone's Needs
- Personalized Service



**verizon wireless**  
Authorized Retailer

**OWNER OPERATED • SERVING UNION CO.**

**15 East Broad St. Westfield, NJ**  
**908-654-6440 Fax : 908-654-6441**

**CERTIFIED TRIAL ATTORNEY**

**WEISEMAN HELY DIGIOIA & BOYLE**

A PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
**CERTIFIED TRIAL LAWYERS®**

INJURY CASES



Jim Hely

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

**TV36 Announces Special Program**

Westfield Community TV36 has announced airing times for "The First Nine Days", a presentation of the NJ Naval Militia and its role following the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

The announced schedule is: Friday October 26; 12:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m., 10:30 p.m. and Sunday October 28; 4:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m., 10:30 p.m.

The program is to be repeated over the next couple of weeks.

**Is Your Coffee Getting Cold?**  
the Only Thing



**Heat Up Your Relationship With a "Weekend to Remember"!**

Get away with your spouse to a FamilyLife Marriage Conference for fun, encouragement, and practical steps to help your marriage grow. You'll experience a fun, romantic weekend together and learn how to:

- Avoid the five threats to oneness
- Clarify your role as a husband or wife
- Resolve conflict in your marriage
- Maintain a vital sexual relationship
- And much more!



**A "Weekend to Remember" is coming soon!**  
**Parsippany Hilton Family Life Conference**  
**November 2 - 4**  
**OR**  
**November 16 - 18**

For information:  
Call Tom and Claire Byrne at  
**(908) 233-8675**

*Living on his own terms.*

He thinks of himself as the soldier he was sixty years ago: strong, independent and able to make his own way. With help from Patient Care, he can. Our business is understanding the world of the older person. Since 1975, our compassionate staff has provided the in-home support services the elderly need to live as fully and independently as possible.

For more information and a free nursing assessment, call 908-654-5656.

**patient care inc.**

Hourly and Live-in Certified Home Health Aides • Companions • Nurse Visits  
24 Hours a Day, 7 Days a Week • www.patientcare.com • 120 Elm Street, Westfield  
ACCREDITED BY JCAHO