

Straight Talk – A Candid Interview With Dem. Congressional Candidate Tim Carden

By STEVEN KRAKAUER
Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

At 53, Tim Carden has experienced a lot. When he was 31, he was appointed Commissioner of Human Services for the State of New Jersey. He started his own firm, Public Private Initiatives, with his wife, Amy Rosen. He's worked on Wall Street, graduated from Harvard and raised three teenage children.



Bill Sheppard for The Westfield Leader and The Times
Tim Carden

Now, he's seeking to represent the Seventh Congressional District against freshman incumbent Mike Ferguson.

Krakauer: Did you know in high school that you wanted to be involved in politics?

Carden: I always had an interest in politics. When I graduated from college, I had already been involved in a number of campaigns as a volunteer. It led me to the beginning of my career in state government, which in turn fueled my continued interest in public service.

Krakauer: Many high school students are apathetic when it comes to politics because they feel it doesn't affect them. Why should you care about what high school students think on different issues?

Carden: How we conduct our government and how we elect and challenge our public leaders to respond will have a direct effect on the quality of life that you get to lead, your children get to lead and my children get to lead. So what's important to high school students may be their grades or getting into college or achieving something in sports, but I hope they recognize that the world they're liv-

ing in didn't just happen; it's working because our government is working for us. And my goal is for it to continue to work for us and hopefully work a little better.

Krakauer: You recently opened a campaign office in Westfield. Tell me something you like and something you

don't like about being in Westfield.

Carden: I love being in a town that is as vibrant and alive and has as great commercial center as Westfield. I like being in Westfield because it's representative of the district I'm running in. It's full of people raising families, trying to build a better future for their kids, and that's the center of what my campaign is about.

If I had to say something bad about Westfield, I'd have to say that on certain days parking is somewhat of a challenge.

Krakauer: Let's talk a little about

your race against Mike Ferguson. If Vegas was putting odds on your chances of winning, what would they be?

Carden: I don't have a percentage today, but let's say...The incumbent always starts with the advantage of being in office. Incumbents don't leave office voluntarily; they have to be pushed out. That takes energy, commitment and resources. So in this race, I'm the David and he's the Goliath.

I enjoy the challenge of trying to make my case and let people know why I'm running and let them make the final decision. I'm the underdog, but it's a winnable race.

Krakauer: The New Jersey Democratic State Committee had an article about you about two months ago and they called you "one of two rising stars capable of winning seats long held by Republicans." That kind of confidence has got to make you feel good.

Carden: It does. My experience in the private and public sectors has been trained on having government work more effectively and efficiently. That's the agenda I've been talking about and the agenda that's interesting people in my campaign.

Krakauer: I've had a chance to be around your staff a few times. They seem like fun, eager people. Do you like going through the excitement of the race with these people on your staff?

Carden: I have a terrific staff. They're all enthusiastic. It's an interesting mix of full-time staff and part-time volunteers. They charge me up as much as I charge them up because their enthusiasm is infectious.

Krakauer: I know you have a lot of high school volunteers. How is it working with enthusiastic young people on your campaign?

Carden: It's absolutely terrific. It makes me proud and excited to be a part of this race, because as important as winning is, making certain that young people are engaged and involved in this political process is just as important. We have to invigorate the next generation with the excitement that politics brings.

Krakauer: What do your three teens think of having a father who might end up in Washington, D.C.?

Carden: They have been the most

understanding of having an absentee father for the last five months. All of them have worked in the campaign as well. They've been terrific campaign volunteers.

Krakauer: Okay, time for a speed round of questioning. Just say the first thing that comes to your mind. James Traficant.

Carden: Criminal, should leave office.

Krakauer: The stench of New Jersey.

Carden: New Jersey is a highly underrated state. It's filled with fabulous people and places.

Krakauer: Third party candidates.

Carden: Third party candidates play an important role because they often bring forward ideas that others haven't been able to bring within the parties.

Krakauer: Bush's month-long vacation.

Carden: (laughs) I wish I could take one.

Krakauer: Parking in Westfield.

Carden: Very challenging!

Krakauer: And, finally, tell me something about yourself that would surprise people.

Carden: As interested as I was in government, I did a lot more acting than politics when I was in college. I was in the theater every year.

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Westfield Recreation Events

Financial Planning Workshops: Includes Passport to Retirement (below), Dismantling Variable Annuities on October 10 and Long Term Care Planning on November 14.

Passport to Retirement Workshop: Learn how to manage money wisely. Instructor, Keith Toussaint, CFP, will teach the workshop on September 12 & 19 from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. The fee is \$20 or \$30 for two people. Participants will receive a 145-page retirement planning workbook. To reserve a seat call 789-4080 or email tkastner@westfieldnj.net.

Fall Tennis Program: September 9 to October 2. Classes for beginner level students, ages 7 to 10, will be from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. and intermediate ages 11 to 16 from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. Programs will be held Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday. Space is limited. The fee is \$40.

Mad Science: August 26 to 30, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., for ages 5 to 8 and August 19 to 23 or August 26 to 30, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., for ages 9 and above, held in the community room. The fee is \$110 per week. Spots are limited.

Movie Night at Memorial Park Pool: For pool members and Westfield residents only. For children under 10 years and their parent or guardian. The fee is \$1 per person. Shows begin at 7 p.m. and will end approximately at 8:30 p.m.

Teen Night At Memorial Park Pool: Wednesday Nights from 8:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. for grades 6 to 12. Includes D.J. dancing, swimming and special events. The fee is \$3.

Discount Summer Tickets: Dorney Park \$25, Great Adventure \$30, Hershey Park \$26 for ages 9 to 54 and \$20 for ages 3 to 8, Mountain Creek \$18, Sesame Place \$30.

New Early Bird Lap Swim Program: Held at the Memorial Pool for residents and non-residents between 6 a.m. and 8 a.m., Monday through Friday.

Future Programs: Mad Science, Arts & Crafts, Bowling, Dancercise, Yoga, Family Skate Nights and much more.

For more information, call the Recreation Department at (908) 789-4080 or visit the rec. online at www.westfieldnj.net

Scotch Plains Recreation Events

Basketball Programs: Third through eighth grade basketball program begins on Thursday, August 27 through September 20 in the recreation department. The fee is \$30 for early registration, \$40 after September 20. Registration will be opened until October 11.

Overnight Vacation Trips: Sponsored by Scotch Plains, Mountside and New Providence Recreation Departments. The trip is to Pigeon Forge, Tenn. on September 28 to October 4.

Junior Golf Tournaments: Scotch Hills Country Club on the following Sundays: August 18 and September 8. Please register at the Recreation Office by the Wednesday prior to each tournament.

Teen Programs for the Fall: Programs include but are not limited to: Teen Club/Sports Night at the High School gyms, Shawnee Ski Program and Teen Talent Night/Karaoke. The Babysitting Program for ages 11 to 16 will be held on Saturday, October 5.

Adult Programs for the Fall: Programs include but are not limited to: Aerobics, Yoga, Line Dancing, Adult dance classes, Self Defense, Co-ed Volleyball, Coaches Basketball Clinic, Walking Club, Senior Spirits and more.

Special Events: Special events include but are not limited to: Scotch Plains Day on September 28, Spelling Bee (TBD), Halloween Celebration on October 31 and Santa's Arrival on December 8.

Mayors Gala: Tickets are on sale for the Mayors Gala, on December 6, at the Recreation Office. In addition, nomination forms for Volunteers of the Year can be obtained at the Recreation Office.

Theme Park Tickets: Great Adventure, Hershey Park, Sesame Place, Morey's Piers, Camelbeach, Dorney Park and Mountain Creek at discounted rates. Tickets can be purchased at the recreation office.

Summer Concert: The next concert is scheduled Thursday, August 15. High School band, "Crystal Noose," will perform at 6:45 p.m. followed by "Renaldo Togliola" at 8 p.m. All concerts are held on the Village Green in Scotch Plains. In case of inclement weather, shows will be at SP-F High School.

The fall/winter brochure will be available at the end of August. For more information, contact the recreation office at (908) 322-6700.

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