

# Traveling on the Congressional Campaign Trail With Incumbent GOP Candidate Mike Ferguson

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

Seventh Congressional District Representative Mike Ferguson is 32 and running for his second term in office. On August 19 he was on the campaign trail, and *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times* tagged along every step of the way.

At 1:37 p.m., Congressman Ferguson's Campaign Manager Chris Obudho arrived in Clinton at the Clinton Elks Lodge, meeting the campaign's Political Director Karen McClintock. The barn at the Clinton Elks Lodge was converted into a political campaign barn, as Mr. Obudho and Ms. McClintock distributed campaign literature, bumper stickers and pens at each of the picnic tables. On the sides of the barn, Mr. Obudho stapled "Ferguson for Congress" signs. "This is what we do," said a sweating Mr. Obudho, as he re-enters the barn with boxes of stickers and posters for the third time.

Congressman Ferguson arrived at the Clinton Elks Lodge a little after 2:00 p.m., with his driver, Field Director Andrew Wynne. Immediately after arriving, Congressman Ferguson took the stage and addressed the more than 50 picnic attendees. "I appreciate all your support, and am glad to be back in God's Country," Congressman Ferguson said.

After him, Buster Soaries took the stage. Mr. Soaries is running against incumbent Congressman Rush Holt in the 12th District this year. Mr. Soaries had nothing but praise for Congressman Ferguson. "He's the best freshman congressman and the president's favorite congressman. I look forward to him being my mentor in Congress next year," Mr. Soaries said.

When Soaries left the stage at the completion of his speech, he walked right over to Congressman Ferguson and gave him a hug. The warm relationship between these two candidates this year for Congress is apparent.

A little before 3:00 p.m., Congressman Ferguson was busy making rounds, talking to every member of the picnic. A high school student, interested in volunteering, approached Mr. Wynne. He took his name down, and looked at Congressman Ferguson in admira-

tion. "Ferguson for Congress" shirts. The posse was growing. Congressman Ferguson's grandfather owned a bakery in Manville, so Congressman Ferguson considers himself to have special ties to the area. "Pierogies on the house!" said a stand at the Manville Fair as they

Ferguson said. Next stop was Congressman Ferguson's picnic in Warren for all his volunteers. On the way there, he talked about campaigning. "I love to spend time and talk to everyone. It's one of the most rewarding parts of my job," he said.

Congressman Ferguson asked Mr. Wynne to drop him off at the Watchung Hills Elks (across the street from the picnic) when they arrived in Warren at 5:00 p.m. He entered the bar, and is greeted with people almost in disbelief upon his arrival there. "We're going to a picnic, so I just figured I'd stop in and see my pals," said Congressman Ferguson to the bar guests.

One man at the bar questioned Congressman Ferguson on his true identity. "You're really Mike Ferguson? You really do look like you do in the news!" the elated man said.

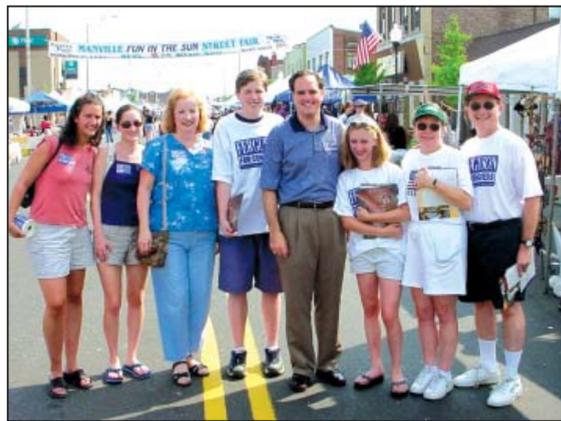
At 5:15 p.m., Congressman Ferguson's family arrived at the picnic. Wife Maureen and two kids, Jack and Gracy, unload from their SUV with the help of Congressman Ferguson. Every volunteer who approached Congressman Ferguson is greeted by name by the freshman Congressman, who already seems to know everyone at the picnic.

Congressman Ferguson addressed his volunteers at 6:05 p.m. to express his thanks. "I really want to thank you for everything you've done with me so far. Just to have you all present in the process makes this more meaningful for me," he said.

Next he introduces his immediate staff to the volunteers, each receiving a rousing round of applause. As the party winds down just before 7 p.m., Ferguson chatted with a father/son team of volunteers about his time on Air Force One with the president as the volunteers listen wide-eyed.

"This was great seeing everyone come together two and a half months before my first reelection. We're excited," said Congressman Ferguson.

As the last volunteer leaves, Congressman Ferguson takes a few minutes to play with Jack on the jungle gym. For the next two and a half months, a few minutes are all Congressman Ferguson will have.



CAMPAGNING WITH FERUGSON...Congressman Mike Ferguson, seventh congressional district representative, poses with campaign volunteers in Manville, New Jersey during a busy day on the campaign trail.

tion. "That's when you know the candidate is getting the message out, when people come up to you to volunteer," Mr. Wynne said.

Congressman Ferguson leaves the picnic at 3:15 p.m., en route to the Manville Street Fair. Mr. Obudho described what it was like witnessing local Clinton residents meet Congressman Ferguson. "Tears almost well up in their eyes. They're just so happy to see a Republican Congressman come to their area," Mr. Obudho said.

At 3:52 p.m., Congressman Ferguson and his small crew of Mr. Wynne and Mr. Obudho arrived in Manville, and are welcomed by over 10 volunteers wear-

ing Congressman Ferguson, his staff and volunteers approaching. The next 10 minutes are spent eating pierogies with some Manville residents.

As Congressman Ferguson is leaving, he spots Ray Walsh standing by the side of the road. Congressman Ferguson described Mr. Walsh as "a great community activist," someone involved in the Food Pantry and Fire Squad. Mr. Walsh had nothing but praise for Congressman Ferguson as well. "Nobody treated better than Mike treats you. He treats you like a friend, not a constituent, and I like that," said Mr. Walsh.

On the way out of the Fair, Congressman Ferguson discussed what Manville was like for him. "It's a blue collar town where they don't care whether you're a Republican or Democrat. They just want to know who you are, if you're friendly and what you can do for them," Congressman



TALKING HOME DEFENSE...Seventh congressional district representative Mike Ferguson met with Westfield Police on Tuesday, August 20 to discuss home defense on a local level. He specifically had many in depth conversations with Westfield Police Chief Bernard Tracy.

## 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, Mountaintop \$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](http://www.westfieldnj.net).



CHILDREN TOUR POLICE STATION...Mike Ferguson, after his home defense meeting with Chief Tracy, bumps into two young children who are taking a tour of the police station.



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