



ESSAY AWARDS - Mount St. Mary students receive awards for "Voice of Democracy" essays. Pictured, left to right, are: Olivia Mode, Eva Marie Wash, Mr. Frank Chupko, Alison Christie, Katie Sullivan and Brooke Fahringer, teacher of American History I.

Letters to the Editor

County Republicans Will Have Choice Of Candidates for Governor

Nearly 500 members of the Union County Republican Committee came together on Saturday, March 12, at their annual convention to endorse a Republican candidate for governor. After several hours and two rounds of voting, Doug Forrester won the convention and will appear on the county organization line on the Tuesday, June 7, primary ballot.

In addition to Mr. Forrester, there will be other candidates competing for the Republican nomination for governor in the primary election on June 7, at which time a Republican candidate will be selected to run in the November general election.

To vote in the June primary for a Republican candidate, however, you must register as a Republican. There are two ways of insuring that your vote will count in the primary. You can fill out a "political party affiliation declaration form," which can be downloaded from the Internet at http://www.state.nj.us/lps/election/parties_doe.html or by picking one up at your Town Hall. This form must be sent to the Union County Board of Elections, 271 North Broad Street, Elizabeth, New Jersey 07208, by Monday, April 18.

Alternatively, if you have never voted in a primary election before and have not registered with a political party, you can declare a party on the day of the primary, simply by going to the polling place that you normally vote at during the November elections.

While many of us don't focus on the Republican and Democrat candidates until the fall, it is important that we realize that the Republicans are offering a choice among their candidates on June 7, and that we, as citizens, take the opportunity to vote for the candidate that best represents your values and ideals, so that you have a true choice come November.

Phil Morin, Cranford
Union County Republican Chairman

Social Security Facts Are Understood But Problem Is Far Down the Road

In response to Rich Johnston's letter regarding people not being aware of the "facts" regarding Social Security:

I agree that as citizens we need to be informed to enter into public discourse, and to vote responsibly. It's interesting, though, that the Social Security trust fund money is dismissed as being "just government bonds." These bonds carry exactly the same government responsibility to be repaid as do the bonds we issue every single day to other countries (and to

some individual investors) to finance all government operations.

Yet apparently many of those who decry a looming danger with social security (albeit 40 plus years away) are not as concerned with the ongoing federal deficit and continue to support the tax cuts, which have worsened it.

If I owned a business drowning in debt and my creditors started grumbling about not loaning me any more money, is my most immediate concern how I'll support the retirement program in 40 years? Should I give my senior executives pay raises while I cut salaries for my low- and middle-income workers?

Perhaps I should worry about paying the bills today and tomorrow, so I'd have a business to run 40 years down the road. As our "CEO" we have the right to ask that President Bush take responsibility and action on our real, immediate problems first.

I'm reminded of President Bush's statement while in Westfield that he "likes going around the country saying 'we've got a problem'" with Social security (I've paraphrased). This is not surprising; if he can focus us on a problem 40 years down the road, we may ignore the myriad ones staring us in the face.

Even Mr. Bush acknowledges that the only proposal he's put forward on Social Security will not address in any way the "problem" he cites (speaking of which, don't we already have private retirement accounts, called 401Ks?).

Most of us do understand the facts about Social Security. It's just pretty far down the list of what we need to deal with.

Travis Hudelson
Westfield

Contract Reform Passes NJ Senate

TRENTON - The Senate approved a bill Tuesday, by Senators Ellen Karcher and Nicholas Scutari, to revamp state contracting procedures. It passed 40-0 and now goes to the Assembly.

The sponsors say the bill intends to save tax dollars, ensure accountability and avoid scandals of campaign-contributing insiders getting special treatment from the Administration.

Senator Scutari (D-22) said the bill, S-2194, addresses what the State Commission of Investigation found to be widespread mismanagement and manipulation of the contracting process by senior officials.

Among other things, the bill would permit a State agency to put notices of a contract on the Internet and ban conflicts of family ties, personal interest or financial links.

Westfield Girl Scout Dads Say 'Cookies Fear Me'

WESTFIELD — Tuesday, March 15, was the big day for Girl Scout Cookies in Westfield. More than 3,300 cases were delivered to the Westfield Armory where 55 volunteer cookie moms sorted and distributed them to the 95 troops selling cookies this year. A few cookie dads were enlisted for help also, including Dave Virzi who drove the forklift he donated to the effort. Chris Ames did a lot of heavy lifting. Dave and Chris wore their "Girls Love Me, Cookies Fear Me" tee-shirts.

All of the cookie moms and dads received a gift bag assembled by Democracy Essay Awards Presented

AREA — Mr. Frank Chupko, head of the area's Voice of Democracy essay contest and Past Commander of the Scotch Plains VFW Post, presented awards, medals, and savings bonds to four students in Mount Saint Mary Academy, Watchung.

Students had participated in the annual essay contest. Olivia Mode of Cranford placed first; Eva Marie Wash of Metuchen placed second; and Kathleen Sullivan of New Providence and Alison Christie of Edison tied for third place in the local competition.

Olivia Mode went on to win first prize in the county and Kathleen Sullivan placed third in the county. Mr. Chupko said it was the first time in his memory that a school "had a clean sweep" on the local level.

The each competition is based on a theme that encourages patriotism. This year's theme was, "Celebrating Our Veterans' Service." After writing the essay, students recited and recorded it for judging.

Douglass Cosmetics, which included items from their shop and coupons from Bittersweet Designs gift shop, Bella Bronze tanning salon and Curves gym for women in Westfield.

Cathy Kattak and Merry Wisler, the Westfield Cookie Managers, were pleased with the results of the cookie sale noting that in addition to the regular sales, the town Girl Scout troops donated over 950 boxes of cookies to the Westfield Armory to ship to the National Guard Unit. "All of the girls and parents were delighted to send an extra box of cookies to the Troops," stated Mrs. Kattak.

"Our goal was one box per serviceman and we doubled that," said Merry Wisler. If you would like to buy Girl Scout Cookies, please contact Washington Rock Girl Scout Council, at (908) 232-3236.



COOKIE MONSTERS...Cookie moms and dads unload more than 3,000 cases of Girl Scout cookies last week at the Westfield Armory.

Voters to Decide Whether State Has Lt. Governor Post

TRENTON — Voters will decide in November whether New Jersey should have an elected lieutenant governor to take over should a sitting governor leave office before completing their term.

A measure approved Monday by the State Senate comes in response to the resignation of Gov. James E. McGreevey from office 14 months early following the admission of an affair with another man which put Senate President Richard J. Codey in the governor's chair.

State Senator Tom Kean, Jr. of Westfield (R-21) voted in favor of the legislation while Senator Nicholas Scutari (D-22) abstained. The measure passed, 32-5.

Assemblyman Eric Munoz (R-21), Assemblyman Jon Bramnick (R-21), Assemblywoman Linda Stender (D-22) and Assemblyman Gerry Green (D-22) all voted in favor of the Assembly version of the bill, which passed

last month by a vote of 73-1-1. Mr. Codey has served as acting governor since November while at the same time serving as Senate President.

New Jersey is one of eight states without a lieutenant governor.

The debate on dual-office holding governors began in 2001 with Acting Governor and Senate President Donald DiFrancesco following the resignation of Governor Christine Whitman to head the Environmental Protection Agency.

Voters will be asked whether the state Constitution should be amended to create the post and whether the line of succession should be changed.

If approved, the first lieutenant governor would be elected with the governor beginning in 2009. Voters would elect the governor and lieutenant governor with a single vote, similar to the election of the president and vice president.

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