



FEEET FIRST...Scott's Shoes of 109 Quimby Street in Westfield pack up hundreds of pairs of shoes to send to victims of Hurricane Katrina. Scott coordinated their efforts after a Guillotine Salon and Spa employee's family member was stricken by the hurricane. Pictured, left to right, are Phil and Stan Baum.

Watchdog of Freeholders Wonders Where They Are Discussing Things

All Union County taxpayers should be very weary of Cranford Democratic Chairwoman Carolyn Vollhero's claim that an all-Democrat Cranford Township Committee would have benefits. "I think we will get things done a lot quicker with less bickering" she said in a recent *Star-Ledger* article.

In county races for Freeholder in 1998, which was the last year there was mixed representation on the board, the Democrats campaigned with the same rhetoric, saying that given total control they would be able to get things done a lot quicker with a lot less bickering. Unfortunately, the Democrats kept every word of that campaign promise.

Since they've taken total control of the 9-member freeholder board, they now pass resolutions with lightning speed, most times while not releasing information to the public until the night of the meeting. They not only don't bicker about anything during meetings, they don't discuss much business either and they don't answer the public's questions.

The public portion of the meeting is for public comments only. They vote yes on resolutions in unison without any public

debate, which leaves you to wonder where are they discussing things if not in public? And who are they discussing them with if not the public? Even one dissenting voice on the board — one outsider — would put a stop to all of that.

Also consider that in the same year that the Union County Freeholder Board went all one party rule, their campaign ridiculed the remaining Republicans because they wouldn't give a surplus of money back to the taxpayers. Since winning total control, the all-Democrat freeholder board has raised their portion of our property tax bills over 50 percent with not one sitting freeholder willing to ridicule the board for any of the causes of the tax hikes.

No matter what the party is, one party ruled government gives outside political powerbrokers too much sway over local issues; we need a balance at all levels of government. Only healthy public debate can lead to government of the people, by the people, for the people — all the people.

Please see unioncountywatchdog.org.

Tina Renna Cranford

Event to Celebrate Release Of Cancer Foundation Video

SCOTCH PLAINS — On Wednesday, September 28, the Emmanuel Cancer Foundation (ECF) will host a wine tasting event to mark the release of a new video chronicling the history of the Scotch Plains-based foundation.

The event will take place from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Stage House Restaurant and Wine Bar, located at 366 Park Avenue in Scotch Plains, near Front Street. It will be held in the Wine Bar.

A non-profit organization, the ECF provides free emotional, material and even financial support to families who are facing the emotional and physical difficulties of having a child diagnosed with cancer.

"As we reach out to New Jersey residents for material support and financial contributions, I felt it was important that we demonstrate the value ECF brings to families on the frontline of the fight against pediatric cancer," said Anthony Caruso, the board member who took on the leadership and responsibility for creating the video.

Since its inception in 1983, ECF has helped nearly 1,500 families. Today, the organization assists families throughout the state through its six regional centers in Midland Park, Mendham, Scotch Plains, Neptune,

Woodbury (Gloucester County) and Somers Point (serving Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland counties).

Recently, Acting Governor Richard Codey issued a proclamation marking September 2005 as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month and cited the Emmanuel Cancer Foundation as a resource for New Jersey's families. It was a re-issuing of a 1999 proclamation by then Governor Christine Todd Whitman.

Space is limited. Those interested in attending are asked to respond in advance by calling (908) 322-4323, extension no. 16 for availability. For more information on ECF, please call (908) 322-4323, or visit www.emmanuelcancer.org on the Internet.

Sacks Participates In Community Service

WESTFIELD — Perry Sacks, a resident of Westfield and freshman at American University, participated in a community service project in which freshman students contributed more than 10,000 hours of service at 46 sites around the Washington, D.C. area. Perry is a recent graduate of Westfield High School.

AU's Freshman Service Experience (FSE) brings new students together to build and encourage a strong foundation of volunteerism, immersing students into American University and Washington, D.C., and helping students make friends before classes begin. FSE is in its 15th year, having started in 1991 with only 30 students.

Students served and prepared meals, rebuilt homes, cleaned local and national parks and worked with children and the disabled.

Hiking Club Offers Various Activities

COUNTY — The Union County Hiking Club offers wholesome recreation and physical fitness through regular hiking and bicycling activities, mostly held in central and northern New Jersey. Membership dues are \$10 per year. To request a complimentary, six-month schedule, please call (908) 527-4900.

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CAMPAIGN RELEASE

Has Schoor DePalma Ended Its Pay-to-Play?

By Pat Quattrocchi, GOP Candidate for Freeholder



The Marcus Group is a political consulting firm in northern NJ. Founder, Alan Marcus, was quoted in a NY magazine article about James McGreevey and his financial backers. His quote has been appearing on the website, www.politicsnj.com, for months; a subliminal message tucked over to the right serving as a constant reminder of what is wrong with the political system here in NJ.

Marcus said, "In New Jersey, you contribute money not for access but results. Anybody who doesn't admit that is lying." It appears that one firm; Schoor DePalma of Manalapan, has decided to stop, according to this week's editorial in *The Times of Trenton*. Considered to be one of the "big boys" in the pay-to-play arena, Schoor DePalma is said to have notified its clients, which include municipalities and counties that they would immediately stop making corporate political contributions, and that employees were forbidden to provide or receive meals or entertainment with public officials or public employees.

Pay-to-play is the practice of making sizable monetary contributions to political organizations. In return, the contributor is awarded sizable contracts for services without the benefit to the taxpayers of competitive bidding.

By informing their clients that they would stop making political contributions, they have, in effect, shined a light in the pay-to-play closet. Between October of 1999 and March of 2004, Schoor DePalma forked over an excess of \$2.1 million to campaigns in New Jersey with \$95,400 of it going to the Union County Democratic Committee.

NJ Elect (Division of Elections) records indicate that this figure does not include what they have contributed to the campaign coffers of individual UC Democratic candidates for the state senate and assembly. Political contributions made by Schoor DePalma during that five-year period fill 110 pages on the Division of Elections/Elect website! It should be noted that they were able to reap over \$4.1 million in no-bid contracts from the Union County Freeholder board, the reward Alan Marcus was talking about.

Has Schoor DePalma decided to take the high road and rely on their excellent work reputation to secure jobs? Or perhaps has it just gotten all too confusing for their accounting staff? When one considers the fact that they have to track where the contributions have been made and what kind of return they have received on their investment they may have said enough is enough already.

But perhaps there is something more going on here. Recently the firm was implicated in a scandal in Ocean County, which involved a former chairman of that sewage authority and an unidentified elected

official. The chairman pleaded guilty to a single count of extortion for accepting a \$15,000 kickback from the engineering firm and splitting it with the official. Federal guidelines call for at least a two-year prison term but the former chairman hopes to win a lighter sentence by cooperating with prosecutors.

Schoor DePalma denies any wrongdoing, and in a statement said that the firm will not allow its good name to be discredited. Truth be told, the damage has already been done and it is a sure bet that the Feds will be looking at every move that Schoor DePalma makes from here to eternity.

It remains to be seen if other "professional services" companies will follow their lead and discontinue the practice of making contributions to political campaigns since it appears that these contributions can morph into something far more serious. A good look needs to be taken at the practice of awarding contracts without competitive bidding.

Currently at the county government level there are no restrictions in place and the taxpayer is the one who ultimately bears the burden of funding political campaigns that they perhaps don't support.

The team of Quattrocchi, Kline and Dill believe that the Union County Board of Freeholders has a responsibility to the residents of Union County to see to it that their tax dollars are being spent wisely and that they are getting what they are paying for.

Please visit our website at UnionCountyGOP.org or call (908) 789-0200 to learn more about the issues or to volunteer.

Club Invites Public To Image Seminar

SCOTCH PLAINS — The College Club of Fanwood-Scotch Plains will present an "image seminar" at its next meeting on Monday, September 26.

Free and open to the public, this program will be conducted in the Union Catholic High School library on Martine Avenue in Scotch Plains and will immediately follow the club's 7:30 p.m. meeting.

"The Art of Looking Good" is the topic of an informal interactive seminar presented by Janet Cargill. Ms. Cargill is an image consultant and fashion expert.

After working in the retail industry with names such as Liz Claiborne, Ralph Lauren, and Brooks Brothers, she started her own company, Cargill Imaging Consulting.

The Fanwood-Scotch Plains College Club is devoted to providing scholarships for local young women of high school and college age. For more information about the event, please call Carolyn Dittus at (908) 233-2948.



THE HAIR UP THERE...Hair stylist Michelle Manso cuts and puts hair color on a client at the New Salon Visage in Westfield. Salon Visage recently ushered in the grand opening of their new location at 240-44 North Avenue West.

S.A.R. Chapter to Welcome Legislative Staffers Monday

WESTFIELD — Senate and Congressional staff members are scheduled to attend the Monday, September 26 meeting of the Westfield Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution.

The meeting will begin at 8 p.m. in the Community Room of the Westfield Municipal Building at 425 East Broad Street. It is open to the public and refreshments will be served.

The topic will be protecting New Jersey's Revolutionary heritage for future generations. Guest speaker Kevin Tremble will give a presentation on "Preserving the Hudson River Battlefield." Mr. Tremble is Vice President of the Crossroads of the American Revolution Association and is affiliated with various other history organizations.

Participants will then discuss the "Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area Act;" the "Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Battlefield Protection Act" and the "Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Battlefields Commemorative Coin Act."

Arboretum Cancels Harvest Festival

SUMMIT — Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Reeves Reed Arboretum has cancelled its annual Harvest Festival that had been scheduled for Saturday, October 1.

Located at 165 Hobart Avenue in Summit, the arboretum will still hold its Great Grapes Wine Tasting tomorrow, Friday, September 23; its Holiday House Tour on Thursday, December 8, plus garden tour outings, children's classes and adult workshops.

For more details on any of these programs, please call (908) 273-8787 or visit Reeves-ReedArboretum.org.

Brett Harris Makes List For Top Minority Lawyers

WESTFIELD — Brett Harris of Westfield, a shareholder of the Woodbridge-based law firm of Wilentz, Goldman & Spitzer, P.A., has been named a leader among women and minority lawyers in New Jersey by the *New Jersey Law Journal*. The August 29 supplement, entitled "Women and Minorities in the Legal Profession," presented a portfolio of lawyers emblematic of the growing enrichment of New Jersey's legal profession by high-achieving women and people of color.

Ms. Harris, along with 49 other lawyers, was chosen based on various cri-

teria such as: length of practice, demonstrated acumen in their field, success in making law, recognition as an authority, peer recognition, merit-based memberships, bar-association leadership and a demonstrated record of public service and pro bono activities.

Ms. Harris serves on the Board of Trustees of Temple Emanu-El of Westfield "I Have a Dream" Foundation, Inc., a public charity providing scholarships and educational support for students in Plainfield.

Ms. Harris resides in Westfield with her husband, Mitch, and their children, Alicia, 4, and Cooper, 2.

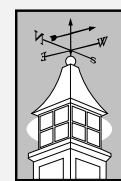


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