



Peyton's Peek at the Week In Politics

By Paul Peyton of *The Leader/Times*

Former U.S. Att. Charged In Call-Girl Ring

A former U.S. attorney of New Jersey, Paul W. Bergin, was arraigned last week in Newark in connection with high-price call girl ring in New York City that catered to stockbrokers and professional athletes. He and two co-defendants were charged with money laundering, solicitation of prostitution and misconduct in connection with NY Confidential. He is represented by his former law partner, Anthony Pope, the attorney representing suspended Westfield police officer Greg Kasko in his current disciplinary hearing. Also charged are Mr. Bergin's law clerk and a former New Jersey state trooper and owner of a Bloomfield sports bar. He faces up to 25 years if convicted.

NJ Transit Director Warrington Resigns

NJ Transit Executive Director George Warrington last week announced his resignation after five years on the job, which pays \$289,000, according to *The Star-Ledger*. He had previously been the head of Amtrak. He listed an addition of 100 trains and 10,000 seats during daily schedules, expansion of bus lines, the debut of multilevel rail cars and additional parking at train stations as major accomplishments. Transportation Commissioner Kris Kolluri promised an "expedited process" to find a new director.

Sen. Connors Not To Seek Ninth Senate Term

Republican State Senator Leonard Connors, LD-77, has announced he will not seek a ninth term, politicsnj.com has reported. The leading candidate to

replace is his son, nine-term Assemblyman Christopher Connors. Mr. Connors becomes the fourth Republican State Senator to retire this year, joining William Gormley of Atlantic County, Robert Martin of Morris County and Joe Palaia of Monmouth County.

Dems Select Denver For '08 Convention

The Democratic Party has selected Denver, Colo. to host its 2008 national convention, according to the Associated Press. New York City came in second. The convention is slated for August 25-28 at the Pepsi Center. Republicans will hold their convention four days later in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn.

Sen. Chris Dodd Joins Field In Presidential Race

Connecticut United States Sen. Chris Dodd last week announced he will run for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2008. He joins a field that includes former North Carolina Senator and 2004 vice-presidential candidate John Edwards, Ohio Rep. Dennis Kucinich and Delaware Senator Joe Biden. Former First Lady and current New York Senator Hillary Clinton and Illinois Senator Barack Obama have not officially filed for the race.

Fmr. Brick Mayor Pleads Guilty to Extortion

Former Brick Mayor Joseph Scarpelli pleaded guilty last week to federal extortion charges. He admitted to accepting bribes from a developer and faces a prison term of 24 to 30 months. He resigned as mayor last month following a federal corruption probe that spanned two-and-a-half years.



SHARING IDEAS...Dozens of education, municipal and county officials meet on January 10 at Kean University to discuss shared services cost-saving ideas. Pictured, left to right, are: Brian Zychowski, Clark Township Superintendent of Schools; Union County Freeholder Chair Bette Jane Kowalski and Elizabeth Business Administrator Bridget Zellner.

Construction Begins On Esposito Park In Clark

CLARK— Union County Freeholder Chairwoman Bette Jane Kowalski has announced that the county has begun construction on the new 13-acre Esposito Park on Madison Hill Road in Clark.

Among its new amenities, the new recreational facility will include two tennis courts, a children's playground, picnic area, a skateboard park, restroom building, park benches, a flagpole, and a softball field with a soccer field overlay.

"Esposito Park conserves one of the Union County's last existing fresh water wetlands while allowing for public enjoyment," said Freeholder Dan Sullivan, who chairs the Union County Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund Committee.

The county had purchased the property, formerly known as the Esposito Farm in 2003 through the Union County Open Space, Recreation and the Historic Preservation Trust Fund.

The \$2.9 million project preserves the land's environmental qualities and creates public open space and recreation opportunities where none previously existed, Mr. Sullivan noted. The project will be funded by the Union County Open Space fund.

The construction portion of the project is targeted for completion by August 2007 although playable fields will have to rest an additional year for seeding to take hold.

The Esposito Park plan was developed by consensus with residents and community officials. Consultants actively worked with residents to integrate recreational facilities best suitable for site preservation and community recreation.

The addition to the Union County Park Systems creates public open space at the heart of several population centers, and is accessible by

walking, biking, public transportation, and motor vehicle.

The design for Esposito includes multiple recreation and conservation purposes. Both active and passive activities will be available for all age groups.

A half-mile paved walking path with exercise fitness stations and two footbridges will be built around the perimeter of the park providing scenic views of the fresh water wetlands while providing cross-park accessibility.

An earthen berm, heavily planted with trees and shrubs will separate Esposito Park from its Madison Hill Road frontage and create a greater sense of enclosure.

Evergreen buffer plantings will be utilized to designate specific areas of the park, and to shield the park from adjoining residences. Trees will be planted near the children's playground, park benches, and throughout the park.

Pedestrian access and a driveway entrance from Madison Hill Road will lead a 70-stall parking lot, including three handicapped accessible stalls. Also planned is a tribute to the Esposito family, and memorial gardens.

The Esposito Farm property was one of the largest farmsteads in Union County, and the freeholder board's decision spared the site from a proposed high density housing development.

The park was named in honor of the late Peter J. Esposito, who originally owned and operated the farmstead.

NJ Turnpike Privatization Needs a Roadblock

By DANIEL SCHULMAN
American Forum, Washington, D.C.

If you've ever traveled cross-country on I-90, you've driven the Indiana Toll Road, a major trucking artery that stretches 157 miles across the length of northern Indiana. What you may not know is that last June, the "Main Street of the Midwest," as it's locally known, was turned over to a foreign consortium — made up of the Spanish construction firm Cintra and Macquarie Infrastructure Group (MIG) of Australia — in exchange for \$3.8 billion.

The privatization of the nation's highways, a trend touched off in 2005 when the City of Chicago sold a 99-year-lease on the Chicago Skyway to the same consortium, has so far received little attention. It is, however, big news in the investment banking world and major firms such as Goldman Sachs and the Carlyle Group have already set up infrastructure funds to invest in what they expect to be a very lucrative market.

Goldman, the primary dealmaker in the toll road market thus far, is pushing privatization aggressively around the country, advising Indiana and other states considering privatization even as it has created a fund whose sole purpose is to maximize returns by picking up infrastructures for the best price possible.

The idea seems to be catching on. In all, more than 20 states have passed legislation allowing so-called public-private partnerships to lease and operate toll roads. And recently, states including New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey have raised the possibility of leasing major turnpikes, while other states, from Florida to Alaska, are now considering inviting the private sector to build and operate highways and bridges.

In New Jersey, the plan Governor Jon Corzine has floated to privatize the state's 148-mile turnpike, along with other public assets, deserves particular scrutiny, given his history as Goldman's former chairman and CEO.

The Indiana deal inked by Governor Mitch Daniels will yield hundreds of millions of dollars in tax breaks for the consortium, which also receives immunity from most local and state taxes. Under the deal, the consortium collects all the tolls, which it's allowed to raise to levels far beyond what Hoosiers have been used to. In fact, one analysis found that if the toll regime in place in

Indiana and Chicago had been applied to New York's Holland Tunnel for the past 70 years, the toll could stand at \$185 rather than the current \$6. Another analysis found that the value of the road over the 75-year term could be as much as \$11.38 billion — a nice return on MIG-Cintra's investment, but a potential net loss of more than \$7 billion to Indiana taxpayers.



For companies seeking to buy up American infrastructure, the financial stakes in privatizing the nation's transportation arteries are potentially huge. In 1956, a Republican president, Dwight Eisenhower, convinced Congress that an integrated, public highway system was vital to economic development, commerce, and even national security. Today, Ike's legacy is at a crossroads. The federal highway trust fund, financed by the proceeds of the federal gas tax, is running out of money, in part because lawmakers have not dared to raise the tax since the mid-90s. At this rate, the fund will be in the red by 2009. Meanwhile, states and cities desperate for repairs to decaying roads and bridges, not to mention new highways, are struggling to find ways to pay for transportation projects.

Enter privatization, which promises a quick fix — and a means to outsource difficult political decisions, like raising tolls or taxes, to entities that don't have to worry about getting reelected. The notion has the enthusiastic backing of the Bush administration, but some politicians are worried that, as Congressman Peter DeFazio, D-OR put it during a congressional hearing on highway privatization last May, we are "outsourcing political will to a private entity."

"It's a scam, basically," Rep. DeFazio, the incoming chair of the House Subcommittee on Highways, Transit, and Pipelines, later said in an interview. "It just does not make sense for an integrated national transportation system."

With the highway trust fund headed toward running on empty, it's clear that new transportation funding options are needed. But before the nation heads further down the privatization road, there needs to be a national dialogue — and not just among the nation's investment bankers.

Editor's Note: The author, Daniel Schulman, is Mother Jones Magazine's Washington, DC-based Lannan Investigative Fellow. He can be reached at (202) 536-2654.

Westfield Gets its First South African Store

WESTFIELD — Everything at Earthchild, the new children's clothing store in downtown Westfield is made in Cape Town, South Africa. Even the décor of the store, expressed in a driftwood finish, portrays a natural ambience from the continent, which the owners hope will lift customers' spirits, calm their senses and prepare them for a shopping experience unlike the hustle and bustle of today's modern world.

Downtown Westfield is the first U.S. location for Earthchild that has six stores in South Africa, one in Toronto, Canada and one in France. Earthchild Clothing is an international chain, established in South Africa in 2004, following in the footsteps of the mother brand, Earthhaddict.

The store features a range of children's clothing marketed as fashionably unique with comfort, durability and natural feel.

Earthchild promotes a "100 percent natural" philosophy with design, manufacture, natural cottons and colors contributing to a distinctive look, while geared for comfort and ease of wear.

In the Western Cape of South Africa, the company says they play an important role in the local community as well as providing job opportunities.

The new Westfield store, located at 111 Central Avenue, held its grand opening last Saturday, January 13. Casey Horgan, Susan Markowitz and Toshi Gibson are partners in the business. The store's phone number is (908) 518-0300. For more information, e-mail kasutousa@yahoo.com.

PUBLIC NOTICE TO VOTERS OF WESTFIELD

PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 19:12-9, YOU ARE HEREBY ADVISED OF THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURE TO USE FOR THE SPECIAL SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS TO BE HELD ON JANUARY 23, 2007.

- (1) ANY PERSON ATTEMPTING TO VOTE MAY BE CHALLENGED BY A CANDIDATE, BY THE DULY AUTHORIZED CHALLENGER OF A POLITICAL PARTY OR ON A PUBLIC QUESTION, OR BY A MEMBER OF THE DISTRICT BOARD OF ELECTIONS, BECAUSE THE VOTER'S NAME APPEARS ON A CHALLENGER LIST PREPARED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF ELECTION (IF ANY) OF THE COUNTY OR BECAUSE THE CHALLENGER OR BOARD MEMBER HAD GOOD CAUSE TO BELIEVE THAT THE VOTER IS NOT ENTITLED TO VOTE;
- (2) MEMBERS OF THE DISTRICT BOARD AND ALL DULY AUTHORIZED CHALLENGERS ARE PROHIBITED FROM CHALLENGING, DELAYING OR PREVENTING THE RIGHT TO VOTE OF ANY PERSON BECAUSE OF THAT PERSON'S RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, EXPECTED MANNER OF CASTING A VOTE OR RESIDENCE IN A PARTICULAR WARD; HOUSING COMPLEX OR SECTION OF A MUNICIPALITY OR COUNTY;
- (3) A PERSON WHO IS CHALLENGED BECAUSE THAT PERSON'S NAME APPEARS ON A CHALLENGER LIST MAY SEEK TO ESTABLISH HIS OR HER RIGHT TO VOTE BY SWEARING AND SIGNING AN AFFIDAVIT ATTESTING TO THE VOTER'S QUALIFICATIONS AND/OR PROVIDING A SUITABLE IDENTIFYING DOCUMENT FOR INSPECTION, WHICH MAY BE—BUT NOT LIMITED TO—THE FOLLOWING: A VALID NEW JERSEY DRIVERS LICENSE, A SAMPLE BALLOT WITH THE VOTER'S NAME AND ADDRESS, AND OFFICIAL FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL DOCUMENT, A CURRENT UTILITY OR TELEPHONE BILL OR TAX OR RENT RECEIPT OR A PIECE OF MAIL POSTMARKED ON OR AFTER THE 60TH DAY BEFORE THE ELECTION; A COPY OF THE AFFIDAVIT SHALL BE GIVEN TO THE CHALLENGED VOTER; THE DISTRICT BOARD SHALL DETERMINE THE VALIDITY OF THE CHALLENGE BY VOTING ON IT PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 19:15-24;
- (4) ANY PERSON WHOSE NAME DOES NOT APPEAR ON A CHALLENGE LIST BUT WHO IS CHALLENGED BY A DULY AUTHORIZED CHALLENGER OR BY A MEMBER OF THE DISTRICT BOARD OF ELECTIONS MAY SEEK TO ESTABLISH HIS OR HER RIGHT TO VOTE BY SWEARING AND SIGNING THE AFFIDAVIT AND/OR PROVIDING THE PROOF DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH (3) ABOVE; THE DISTRICT BOARD SHALL DETERMINE THE VALIDITY OF THE CHALLENGE BY VOTING ON IT PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 19:15-24;
- (5) ANY CHALLENGER WHO SUCCEEDS IN DENYING A VOTER THE RIGHT TO VOTE MUST SIGN AN AFFADAVIT STATING THE REASON WHY THE VOTER IS NOT ENTITLED TO VOTE AND MUST FURNISH A COPY OF THE AFFIDAVIT TO THE CHALLENGED VOTER; THE DISTRICT BOARD MAY, IN ITS DISCRETION, REQUIRE THAT THE CHALLENGER AFFIDAVIT BE SIGNED WHEN THE CHALLENGE IS MADE;
- (6) A PERSON WHO IS DENIED THE RIGHT TO VOTE BY REASON OF A SUCCESSFUL CHALLENGE MADE AT THE POLLS, MAY SEEK TO VOTE BY GOING BEFORE A SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE TO SEEK A COURT ORDER ALLOWING THAT PERSON TO VOTE; THE APPLICANT SHOULD TAKE COPIES OF ANY AFFIDAVITS GIVEN TO HIM OR HER AT THE POLLS AND ANY PROOF SUBMITTED AT THE POLLS IN SUPPORT OF THAT PERSON'S RIGHT TO VOTE;
- (7) FORMS TO REGISTER COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF AN ELECTION SHALL BE AVAILABLE AT EACH POLLING PLACE IN THE COUNTY.

FURTHER INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE UNION COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS (908) 517-4123.

UNION COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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