

## Panel Encourages Women To Participate in Pol. Process

By WAYNE BAKER  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

COUNTY — Most Union County voters haven't registered a political-party affiliation. That act is the key to maximizing political voice, political party representatives said at a forum last week sponsored by the Union County Women's Political Caucus.

Participants in the forum conveyed to attendees that there is an accessible pathway into politics in New Jersey participation in the county committee of the party of their choosing. Forum moderator Ellen Steinberg, a Millburn township councilwoman and former candidate for the legislature, said in Union County alone, there are 1,600 elected positions on the county Democratic and Republican Committees combined, with half of those positions reserved for women.

Forum members at the non-partisan event included: Ken Rotter, chairman of Westfield's Democratic Committee; Patricia Quattrocchi, vice chairwoman of the county's Republican Committee and vice chairwoman of Garwood's Republican Committee; Sandy Spector, Plainfield's Republican municipal chairman, and Clara Hareluk, Springfield's Democratic municipal chairwoman, township committee member and former mayor.

The panel presented the educational event in a non-partisan manner, and aside from a brief, partisan statement from an audience member near the end of the evening, the night was free of partisan squabbling.

### Sierra Club Meeting To Feature Highlands

AREA — The Sierra Club Loantaka Group will welcome Phil L'Hommedieu to its meeting on Wednesday, April 11, from 7:30 to 9 p.m. at The Library of The Chathams, located at 214 Main Street in Chatham.

Mr. Hommedieu will give a slide presentation on the Highlands region — a vital natural resource that supplies the drinking water for northern New Jersey. The program will cover where the Highlands are located, why they are important and how they could be better protected.

A conservationist and Highlands activist for 22 years, Mr. Hommedieu was a founding member of the Highlands coalition and helped design the Highlands Trail, a major regional trail that traverses the Highlands in the metropolitan area.

The meeting is free and open to the public. For more information, call (973) 263-0344.

Ms. Steinberg pointed out that New Jersey law establishes the county committees and some aspects of their structure. She said the law requires each party's committee to consist of one male and one female member from each district. Westfield, with 25 districts, has 100 committee members, with half Democrats and half Republicans; half are men, half are women. Scotch Plains has 21 districts, and 42 committee members of each party and each gender. Fanwood's seven districts put 28 people onto county committees.

Mountainside has nine districts, for 36 members. Garwood, with four districts, has 16 total members. Elizabeth, with 75 districts, puts 300 people onto county committees. Countywide, totals for more than 400 districts put more than 1,600 people onto the two county committees.

Mr. Rotter described the county committee as a "great opportunity to get involved." Ms. Steinberg, describing the county's voter makeup, noted a "significantly larger" number of registered Democrats over Republicans.

Data she provided after the meeting shows 229,340 total registered voters in Union County, with 77,702 registered Democrats and 35,221 registered Republicans. The remaining 116,417, more than half the total, are not affiliated with a party and, thus, cannot participate in the process of choosing candidates. The headline of a press release for the event describes the first step, "Join the Party."

Responding to a question about maximizing political voice, Ms. Spector described two ways to get started — either calling the county's voter registration office and asking to be mailed a party affiliation declaration, also called a "yellow card," or going to the polls on primary day and declaring one's affiliation by voting.

Later in the evening, in describing the process of getting onto the ballot for county committee, Mr. Rotter said in many districts of Westfield, a Democratic candidate need only gather four or five qualified signatures on a petition form.

The only note of caution regarding involvement in the political process came from an audience member who said she was a federal employee. She said government employees are subject to the Hatch Act, which limits partisan political activity by government employees. Those on the panel agreed with the statement.



Wayne Baker for The Westfield Leader and The Times  
WELL ATTENDED...Women from around the county attended last Thursday's forum sponsored by the Union County Women's Political Caucus at Springfield Town Hall.

## Gateway Chamber Names Vigilanti Mayor of Year

By WAYNE BAKER  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

ELIZABETH — The Gateway Chamber of Commerce named Mountainside Mayor Robert Vigilanti Union County's mayor of the year at its Mayors' Gala on Monday night. Earlier, Mr. Vigilanti earned the recognition for being the longest-serving mayor in Union County. Some mayors commented that their tenures were in the 85-day range, compared to Mr. Vigilanti's more than 19 years in office.

In other major awards, the Chamber named Union's Frank Bradley business administrator of the year; Springfield Mayor Kenneth Faigenbaum received the Jim Coyle Award for best speaker and Clark Police Chief Sandy Danco, about to retire after 40 years of police work, received recognition as the public safety official of the year.

Union County Freeholder Chairwoman Bette Jane Kowalski greeted the group with a description of the county and its advantages. Each of the 21 mayors had the opportunity to speak to the group of about 350 business and community leaders about his or her town and its plans and achievements.

Westfield Mayor Andy Skibitsky was the first of multiple mayors to point fingers at Trenton for "excessive" spending. He noted Westfield was recently named one of New Jersey's top 10 downtowns by *New Jersey Monthly* magazine.

Martin Marks, mayor of Scotch Plains, centered his comments on recreation and improvements. He touched on new field improvements in town. Taking advantage of the reputation business leaders have for playing golf, he said, "Scotch Plains has become a mecca for golf." Mr. Marks said Scotch Plains is the only municipality in the state to have a private golf course (Shackamaxon), a county course (Ashbrook), a municipal course (Scotch Hills) and miniature

golf (also at Scotch Hills). He also mentioned an upcoming major renovation to the municipal building.

Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr said three of four projects redeveloping South Avenue have broken ground. She mentioned the Fanwood Museum, opening in May, and the addition of a restored caboose to the museum's train station site. Responding to a question later, she said she believed the caboose would be in place by late summer.

Mountainside's mayor used his time to rail against Trenton, saying, "The town is the youngest brother of five bully sons." Mr. Vigilanti talked about Trenton's mandates, both direct and indirect, forcing municipalities to "spend needlessly." He cited a 1945 law establishing a funding formula for libraries as being out of date and the \$138-million court-mandated Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority upgrade.

Clark Mayor Sal Bonaccorso mentioned the forthcoming reconstruction of the Parkway traffic circle at exit 135. Union Mayor Brenda Restivo cited the "temporary inconvenience" of planned road improvements inside her town's borders.



Wayne Baker for The Westfield Leader and The Times  
MAYORS' GALA...Most of Union County's 21 mayors and other officials attended the Gateway Chamber of Commerce's Mayors' Gala, held Monday night at the Doubletree Hotel in Elizabeth.

## County to Receive \$4.5 Mil. Fed Transportation Grant

By PAUL J. PEYTON  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

ELIZABETH — The Union County freeholders will vote tonight on whether to accept \$4.5 million in state funding from the New Jersey Department of Transportation for transportation projects countywide. The board will also take action on a resolution for county officials to apply for and accept a \$105,115 grant from the Federal Highway Administration.

The DOT funding includes \$3.5-million for resurfacing roadways and \$1,006,000 for traffic control standards, signs and markings.

Freeholder Dan Sullivan, chairman of the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, said, "I am enormously happy that Union County is getting over \$4.5 million."

He said the NJTA worked hard "to make sure Union County got its lion's share" of state funding.

The federal grant includes a \$26,288 county match.

At tonight's meeting, the board will vote on a resolution to enter into an agreement with the Somerset County cooperative pricing system. Officials said they expect the agreement to provide the county flexibility in lieu of new campaign-finance restrictions for government contracts.

"This should help save money. It's no different than buying in bulk," County Manager George Devanney said.

Michael Yuska, director of purchasing, said: "Joining the Somerset County Cooperative is another avenue for flexibility and economy for [Union] County in its search for new ways to better share services with other governmental agencies." As the amount of the purchase increases, lower prices result, he said.

Mr. Yuska said the county has two types of cooperatives. In the first system, the county goes to bid on certain services, but asks the vendors if they would extend the price to other governments either in or near Union County. These services include air conditioning and refrigeration services, fire alarm

and fire sprinkler services, infield clay, waste disposal services, etc. The system was established in 2003.

Under the second co-op system, "the county solicits members with similar needs for goods and services," he said.

The county has had its own cooperative pricing system for more than 15 years. Twenty-two municipalities, including Fanwood, Garwood, Mountainside, Scotch Plains and Westfield, six school boards, including Scotch Plains-Fanwood, and two fire districts are members of the system.

Mr. Yuska said the county must apply every five years with the state for renewal of its co-op pricing system. He said the pay-to-play law requires the process for government contracts to be "fair and open" to prospective bidders. Contracts that exceed \$17,500 are subject to the state's new pay-to-play campaign-finance law.

The board expects to vote on a \$43,945, one-year contract with James M. Davy Associates of Pennington to provide shared consulting services. The contract commences April 1.

Mr. Davy, a former Westfield resident, served as human services commissioner under former Governor Jim McGreevey. His wife, Lucille Davy, currently serves as the state's education commissioner.

Mr. Davy's consulting firm was established in January 2006, according to his website.

Board members will also vote to accept a half-million-dollar grant from the state's Department of Children and Families' Establishment and Expansion of Child Advocacy Centers. The grant would provide funds to the county for a new child-advocacy center to replace the current Elizabeth center.

"They have outgrown that facility dramatically," Mr. Devanney told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times*.

County Prosecutor Ted Romankow told the board that the project would not require county funds, as the Friends of Child Advocacy Center of Union County, Inc. will raise private funds.

The board will vote on four resolutions regarding the June Primary Election. The first authorizes a \$12,500 contract with Full Service Mailers, Inc. of Garfield for postal and mailing of Primary ballots. The second is for a contract with Royal Printing Services of West New York to print the ballots at a cost of \$200,000.

The third approves a contract with B&B Press, Inc., of Kenilworth to print absentee ballots for the primary at a cost of \$30,000. The last resolution authorizes the county clerk to spend another \$30,000 "to make any and all purchases of foods and/or services" in preparation for the Primary.

The board will also vote on a \$70,500 contract with CCMS Corporation of Colts Neck for professional consulting services for upgrading the security system in the new annex complex at the Union County Courthouse.

**ALL OUR DRIVERS FINISH IN VICTORY LANE**

State Farm's money-saving discounts and award-winning service will make you feel like you're in the winner's circle. Call me today.

**Christine Cosenza, Agent**  
2 Elm Street  
Westfield, NJ 07090-2140  
Bus: 908-233-9100  
www.christinecosenza.net

LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR STATE FARM IS THERE.®

Providing Insurance and Financial Services

State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company  
State Farm Indemnity Company • Bloomington, IL  
statefarm.com

**MARIO C. GURRIERI, ESQ.**  
Chair of the Family Law Department of  
**DUGHI & HEWIT**

340 North Avenue ■ Cranford, New Jersey 07016

**DIVORCE QUESTIONS?**  
Specializing in all aspects of Family Law including divorce, custody, visitation, alimony, child support, division of assets, palimony, premarital agreements, domestic partnerships, restraining orders, post-divorce motions due to changed financial circumstances, residence removal from New Jersey, visitation modifications and transfers of custody.

- 32 years of continuous practice in Family Law
- Union County Early Settlement Arbitration Panelist 25 years
- Court-appointed Standing Master & Guardian
- Accredited Mediator
- Formerly Senior Partner at Snevily, Ely, Williams & Gurrieri, Westfield (1972-2000)

For More Information:  
**908-272-0200**  
www.dhplaw.net

**WE'VE MOVED . . . TO A LARGER and NEWER FACILITY!**

When you need *pure, soft water . . .* experience counts!

**The Portasoft Company**

**Portasoft . . .**  
NJ's oldest, largest and most successful Water Treatment Company

**TOTAL WATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS**  
Residential & Commercial

**FREE WATER ANALYSIS**  
Expert Service • Affordable Prices  
Sales • Rentals • Installation

Whatever your water problem, **Portasoft** has the solution.

Water Softening • Pure Drinking Water • Iron Removal  
Acid Correction • Nitrate Removal • UV Disinfection of Bacteria  
Taste and Odor Removal • Chemical IVOCI Removal • Salt Delivery

**RELOCATION SPECIAL**  
"Pick Up" 6 Bags of Salt  
**GET ONE FREE**  
Offer Expires 09-01-07

**469A South Avenue, East Westfield**  
(Near the Garwood Border)  
**908-233-4300**  
www.portasoftinc.com

Mention This Ad And Receive 1 Month FREE RENTAL For New Customers (On An Annual Contract)

Emergency Service 24 Hrs/Day

Improving Water Quality Since 1945

CERTIFIED WATER SPECIALIST  
Water Quality Associates