

**MEET THE CANDIDATES**  
**Pat Quattrocchi, Candidate**  
 For Union County Freeholder

**Freeholder Board Did 'Right Thing' in Reconsidering Veterans' Monument**

Two weeks ago, the public learned that \$1 million which the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders had put aside specifically for a monument in Elizabeth, the county seat, to honor Union County's veterans, was to be used for other purposes and there would not be a memorial.

I have to say I felt an unexpected pang to my heart, so I was relieved that the board executed a political save last week when it announced that a committee was to be formed to develop a plan to erect a monument, not quite the grandiose scope of what was originally planned, but a suitable memorial just the same. Freeholder Mirabella is quoted in the local papers as saying, "We had it in our minds that we were going to do something."

Admittedly, I rarely have kind words for this board, but in this case, I must say that it is doing the right thing.

Being a Veterans Day baby was not easy growing up. This may seem silly, but those who celebrate their natal days on legal holidays can appreciate the feeling of never going to the mailbox to find a surprise birthday card on your special day, since there is no mail delivery.

Or in grade school, not bringing cupcakes in to share with the class; the day before just wasn't the same and a day later was, well, anticlimactic. My late father, a WWII Vet to his credit, understood, and as soon as I was old enough to grasp the concept, started to instill in me a sense of what made my day special, who the veterans are, and what a privilege it was that

I shared my day with them. My father was right.

My appreciation of the veterans deepened when my own son joined the military directly out of high school. He was stationed at Fort Stewart in Georgia, and I will never forget the feeling when I watched the evening news that Columbus Day weekend and saw those rapid deployment units being dispatched to Kuwait.

My son got no farther than Savannah living out of a duffle bag on 24-hour alert for months, taking the situation in his stride, but we back home were on the edge of our seats until the war in Kuwait ended and things were back on track until my next close call.

The scenario repeated itself often during his almost 10-year attachment to the Army and the NJ National Guard.

Our family was truly blessed that our soldier remained out of harm's way just by the luck of the draw; however, my heart goes out to those moms who are not as fortunate. As a mother, it doesn't matter how old our children get. We still want to protect them, and when bad things happen to them, we wish that we could take their places so that they could be spared.

I cannot even begin to imagine the feeling of losing a child in the military, but it must be something somewhere between overwhelming despair and extreme pride, combined with utter helplessness; it must be indescribable.

These women, the Gold Star Mothers, are my personal heroes. Perhaps a fitting tribute would be to include them in the county's veterans' memorial in some way; I suggest a gold star embedded in the pavement to represent the piece of their heart that they have so bravely and generously given to the rest of us.

*"When it absolutely must get there."*  
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Courtesy of Sherman Feller  
**SUMMER VACATION...Lake Maggiore in Italy near the Swiss border is viewed from the Lido Palace Hotel in the small town of Baveno, Italy. It was a favorite spot of Winston Churchill and Queen Elizabeth over 50 years ago. The island in the photograph is owned by the Borromeo family, of significance in Italian history.**

**Military Academy Fair For HS Students Set Sept. 8**

AREA - Rep. Mike Ferguson will host an Academy Fair for 7th District high school students at Raritan Valley Community College (Conference Room A and B) in North Branch on Saturday, September 8 from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Representatives from each of the nation's service academies - the Air Force, Marines, Navy, Army, Merchant Marines and Coast Guard - will attend the event to answer students' questions and explain the academies' required qualifications and selection process. Mr. Ferguson's staff and members of his academy advisory board will explain the congressional nomination process.

Service academy alumni from New Jersey also have been invited to attend the event to share their personal insights and experiences with students and parents.

"One of the most important parts of my job is nominating highly qualified 7th District high school students to the nation's

service academies," Mr. Ferguson said. "It's my hope that this special Academy Fair will be an important one-stop information shop for interested students and parents."

The nation's service academies are the Army's U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y.; the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo.; the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md.; the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, N.Y.; and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn.

Ferguson's Academy Fair is free and open to all high school students in the 7th District, which includes portions of Hunterdon, Middlesex, Somerset and Union counties. However, because of space limitations, all students are encouraged to RSVP to Roni Desmond in Ferguson's Somerset County office at (908) 757-7835.

**MEET THE CANDIDATES**  
**Matt Sontz, Candidate**  
 For Westfield Council, Ward 3

**Police Presence in Westfield Ward 3 Required to Curb Rampant Speeding**

Speeders are a rampant problem in the otherwise quiet neighborhoods of the third ward of Westfield. Speeders come flying over the Central Avenue bridge from Clark.

They cut through the neighborhood, south of Jefferson School between Rahway Avenue and Central Avenue, so as to avoid stopping for the train.

They fly down Boulevard and Summit Avenue to catch trains and avoid the lights on Central Avenue.

They peel off Central Avenue down Massachusetts Street, Connecticut Street and Roger Avenue just to get to Cranford a few seconds faster.

They barrel past Windsor Park on Windsor Avenue, which is full of children on most days of the week.

All the while, speeders ignore the dangers they pose to us and our children, both as we cross the street and walk the sidewalks. They also ignore the danger they pose to our cars parked on the street and other cars in which they share the road.

As I have visited my neighbors in the third ward, so many have asked me why the town hasn't done more to stop the speeders. They have asked why more police haven't been stationed in our neighborhoods to catch them - the only real deterrent.

Many residents have asked why the town designated one traffic "hot spot" in the third ward (at Park Street and Boulevard) and ignored the rest of our neighborhoods.

In fact, at one point this summer, home-made signs that read "Slow Down" had been put on telephone poles south of Jefferson School on Summit Avenue.

Several residents on Summit Avenue and Boulevard told me they would even allow the police to station themselves in their driveways to catch the speeders.

Also, this summer, as I was campaigning door-to-door, I found myself just a few blocks away from the Clifton Street/Boulevard intersection when a young man on a motorcycle was hit by an individual who blew past the stop sign.

News of the accident spread quickly and residents were, sadly, not surprised. They impressed upon me the absolute critical nature of the speeding problem and demanded that the town take steps to correct the situation immediately.

I want my neighbors of the third ward to know that I have heard you loud and clear. As your councilman, I will push for more police presence on our residential streets in all neighborhoods of the third ward.

While I will continue the council's efforts to correct problem "hot spots," I will not do so at the expense of other intersections and streets in our ward.

My name is Matt Sontz, I am a candidate for the Westfield town council in the third ward, and I hope you will consider me when you vote this fall.

**Laganga to Discuss Preparedness, Sep. 19**

FANWOOD - Ben Laganga, Director of Union County Emergency Response, will speak at a workshop on Wednesday, September 19 at 2 p.m. at the Chelsea at 295 South Ave.

Mr. Laganga will discuss the application of science, technology, planning and management to deal with extreme events that can deeply affect a community.

To RSVP or for more information, call Linda Caminiti of the Chelsea at (908) 654-5200.

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