



Peyton's Peek at the Week In Politics

By Paul Peyton of The Leader/Times

Mahr Faces no Opponent; Russitano Joins Freeholder Race
Two developments occurred by last Wednesday's press deadline to fill candidate vacancies for the November General Election. No Republican candidate filed to challenge Democratic Mayor Colleen Mahr in her bid for a second term. Also, Westfield resident and town public works employee John Russitano has been named to replace Wally Shackell of Cranford on the GOP ticket in the race for county freeholder.

Mila Jasey Named to Replace Hackett in Legislature
Mila Jasey of South Orange, a member of the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education, was officially nominated last Wednesday to run for the seat in the state legislature from the 27th district on the Democratic ticket. She replaces Orange Mayor Mims Hackett, who resigned following his arrest on bribery charges connected to a federal corruption probe of the Pleasantville Board of Education.

She will run for the seat in the heavily Democratic district on a ticket that includes Senate President Dick Codey of West Orange and Assemblyman John McKeon, who also serves as West Orange mayor.

GOP Seeks Special Session to Take Action on Ethics Reforms

In light of the recent arrests of 11 public officials, including two state assemblymen, Republican legislative leaders have called on the Democratic majority leaders to order the legislature into a special session to discuss ethics reforms proposed by both political parties, according to a letter posted on the Senate Republi-

cans' website.
Governor Signs Ethics Package Including Dual Office Ban

Earlier this month, Governor Jon Corzine signed an ethics reforms package of bills. They include: a ban on elected office holders from holding more than one office after February 2008 and the creation of the crime category "corruption of public resources" for the illegal misuse of taxpayer dollars and other public resources. Anyone convicted of that crime would face a maximum of a 20-year jail sentence and/or a \$200,000 fine, according to a press release on the Governor's webpage.

Another new law authorizes state courts to assess additional fines up to \$500,000 in corruption cases that involve awards and payments of local, county or state contracts. A separate bill Governor Corzine signed requires the state to post the complete daily voting records of state legislators on the state website.

Taxpayers Could Be on Hook For \$30 Million on Stadium

The New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority, which runs the Meadowlands Sports complex, last week voted to finance debt of some \$30 million on the new billion-dollar stadium under construction for the Giants and Jets football teams, according to *The Record*. This follows a change of status of the bonds on the project from tax exempt to taxable because, under an IRS law, public land used by private companies does not qualify for tax-exempt status. The two teams are paying for the construction of the stadium, slated to open next to the current Giants Stadium in 2010.



Debbie Hoffman for The Westfield Leader and The Times
GOP GOES GOLFING...New Jersey Assemblyman Jon Brannick (LD-21) watches as State Senator Tom Kean Jr. (LD-21) takes his turn at a miniature-golf match at Hyatt Hills Golf Club in Clark this past Sunday. The two legislators, both candidates for re-election this November, played in the annual family miniature-golf tournament to benefit Union County Republican candidates for sheriff and freeholder. Nice weather brought in a crowd for the event, which had been rained out earlier this summer.

County Receives \$4 Million Grant to Remove Lead Paint

ELIZABETH – The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders has announced that the county will receive up to \$4 million in funding from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to continue its work in reducing health hazards from lead-based paint in low-income residential properties.

The grant will expand an existing \$1 million Union County program in which loans are repaid into a special fund. For three years, the county has dedicated this fund to cleaning up lead-based paint in low-income properties. The expanded program will include training for contractors and workers in reducing exposure to lead-based paint at work sites.

The county will reapply approximately \$1 million to the fund, bringing the total amount of new funding for lead reduction to \$5 million, officials said.

Of the 65 state and local governments that received grants this year under the federal Lead Hazard Reduction Program, Union County was one of three counties to obtain the top award of \$4 million.

In house paint, lead was an inexpensive way to enhance durability. Air-

borne lead particles are now known to be a significant health hazard, especially in fetuses and young children.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, lead interferes with brain development, causing learning disabilities, behavioral problems, and mental retardation. Very high exposure can cause seizures and death.

Despite restrictions made in the last 30 years, lead-based paint remains in many homes built before 1978, especially those built before 1950.

Children who are old enough to avoid eating paint chips may still be at risk, county officials said. When old paint deteriorates, it releases lead-contaminated dust particles that can cause serious health problems.

A new coat of lead-free paint helps to reduce the hazard, but children are best protected when trained professionals remove the old paint properly.

Low-income children who live in older homes are more likely than the general public to have elevated blood lead levels, county officials said, noting that children who lack adequate nutrition also absorb lead more easily.

For more information, visit the National Lead Information Clearinghouse at epa.gov/lead/pubs/nlic.htm.

Freeholders to Vote Tonight On Rt. 22 Pedestrian Shuttle

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

ELIZABETH – The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders plan to vote tonight on a measure that would approve a pilot pedestrian-transportation-shuttle program along Route 22 in Union, Springfield and Kenilworth. The six-month program, to be offered weekdays during morning and evening rush hours, would begin October 1, officials said last Thursday.

The county purchased two 20-seat, handicapped-accessible shuttle buses, for \$125,000 apiece with state Community Development Block Grant funds. The county has also received a \$280,000 Department of Transportation grant for the service, officials said.

Freeholder Dan Sullivan told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* the shuttle would be aimed mostly at so-called "box stores" along the highway, such as Target and Home Depot.

"[The employers] were totally in favor of it," he said.

The freeholder said NJ Transit had resisted the idea of having bus drivers pull off the highway to drop off and pick up passengers.

The freeholders will vote tonight to amend a contract with Chicago-based Connex Transit to operate the

service by \$55,975 for a new agreement of \$2.6 million. The company currently provides transportation for the county's Welfare to Work and Paratransit programs.

The \$55,975 is unspent monies from a Fiscal Year 2006 Federal Job Access Commute (JARC) grant received by the county, according to assistant human services director Karen Dinsmore. The Connex contract runs for another year.

The freeholders also took action to appropriate \$10,000 to hire legal counsel to review the county's options concerning the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) approval of a redesign of air space over the metropolitan area.

Elizabeth has already filed a lawsuit to stop the plan from being implemented, arguing that it would create significantly more air noise over the city.

Board members will also vote tonight to apply for a 2008 Sharing Available Resources Efficiently (SHARE) Grant from the state Department of Community Affairs to provide fiber-optic connections between the county and Berkeley Heights, Cranford, Roselle Park and Plainfield.

County Manager George Devaney said the county would maintain the website server for the towns, thus offering them high-speed Internet service and faster connections to their websites and e-mail. He said this follows a successful program the county initiated in Berkeley Heights.

"It will allow towns to save money because the county will be able to take over the connection... We can do it for a fraction of the cost and more efficiently," Mr. Devaney said.

The board will also vote tonight on resolutions to mark the 80th anniversary of the Cranford Historical Society and the 50th year of the Union Historical Society.

The board went into executive session to discuss the FAA issue, as well as ongoing negotiations with the New Jersey State Golf Association and the Union County Improvement Authority concerning a project at the county-owned Galloping Hill Golf Course and contract negotiations regarding the acquisition of land from St. Agnes Roman Catholic Church in Clark.

Union County Caucus Hosts Meet-and-Greet Reception

WESTFIELD – This Sunday, from 1 to 3 p.m. at Westfield's B.G. Fields, located at 560 Springfield Avenue, the Women's Political Caucus of Union County will host a meet-and-greet brunch reception for all candidates running for office in Union County on both the county and municipal levels.

The meet-and-greet reception provides an informal setting for Republican, Democratic and Independent candidates to introduce themselves to the public.

This year, on the county level, the election will decide three seats on the Board of Chosen Freeholders.

On the local level, there are municipal elections in Berkeley Heights, Cranford, Fanwood, Garwood, Kenilworth, Linden,

Mountainside, New Providence, Plainfield, Roselle, Roselle Park, Springfield, Summit, Union, Westfield and Winfield.

There will be contested elections for mayor in Kenilworth and Summit.

The caucus is a multi-partisan organization dedicated to increasing the number of progressive women in elected and appointed positions in government, protecting reproductive freedom and promoting equal rights for women.

To make reservations for the September 30 event, contact Lenore Scurry at (908) 232-1913.

For more information on the caucus, contact Ellen Steinberg at ellen@ellensteinberg.us or (908) 686-0500.

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LEMELSON VINEYARDS THEA'S SELECTION PINOT NOIR \$32.99

We don't know who Thea is but she sure can select. Complex mineral tones backup lots of forward black cherry and blueberry fruit. There are notes of dark chocolate, smoke and tarragon. Rich chicken or duck are our first picks, but smoked Gouda might be perfect.

OVER THE SHOULDER SAUVIGNON BLANC \$14.99

Australia is not widely known for its sauvignon blanc, largely because its climate is mainly too warm to grow it well. But the Yarra Valley, outside Melbourne, is influenced by Antarctic weather. This is not too mineraly, like some Loire, too grapefruitly like some New Zealand, too oaky like some California. This is its own thing. Citrus, green minty tones and a bit of guava. Try some fresh tuna.

Your Favorite Wines

Blackstone Merlot	\$8.99	750ml
J Lohr Chardonnay	\$10.99	750ml
Simi Chardonnay	\$13.99	750ml
BV Coastal Cabernet/Merlot	\$7.99	750ml
Hess Select Chardonnay	\$9.99	750ml
Toasted Head Chardonnay	\$10.99	750ml

Your Favorite Value Wines

Mondavi Coastal Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay	\$16.99	1.5L
Beringer Founders Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay	\$15.99	1.5L
Woodbridge Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay	\$10.99	1.5L
Vendange Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay	\$6.99	1.5L
Fetzer Cabernet/Chardonnay	\$12.99	1.5L
Cavit Pinot Grigio	\$12.99	1.5L
Walnut Crest Cabernet	\$8.99	1.5L
Cesari Pinot Grigio	\$10.99	1.5L
Bolla Soave	\$10.99	1.5L
Beringer White Zinfandel	\$8.99	1.5L
Franzia Burgundy/Chablis/Chianti	\$10.99	5L
Carlos Rossi Burgundy/Chablis/Paisano/Sangria	\$9.99	4L
Opici Homemade Barbarone	\$11.99	4L

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