



Courtesy of Vicki McCabe PATRONS...State Senator Tom Kean, Jr. center, (R-21, Westfield), presents Michael and Ruth Lipper of Summit with a Joint Ceremonial Resolution on behalf of the New Jersey Legislature at a New Jersey Symphony Orchestra event on April 11 in recognition of their extraordinary and long-standing commitment to the symphony and the arts in New Jersey.

# Pallone Discusses Economy, Energy and Healthcare Law

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

SOUTH AMBOY — Rep. Frank Pallone (D-6th), a former state Senator and current seven-term incumbent Congressman from Monmouth County, spoke about everything from gasoline prices to the Affordable Care Act now being challenged before the United States Supreme Court during a roundtable with reporters at a South Amboy diner Monday morning.

The Congressman, whose Sixth Congressional District will now cover Monmouth and Middlesex Counties and will no longer represent Plainfield in Union County, said jobs and the economy is the primary issue in the 2012 campaign.

"My position is that we have to grow the economy," Mr. Pallone said, noting that he supports increased federal spending to help turn the economy around. "The problem is that we don't have a consensus (between Democrats and Republicans)...the (Rep. Paul) Ryan budget is very much contrary to what Obama and the Democrats have put forward." He said a five-year transportation bill passed by Senate Democrats stalled in the Republican-controlled House where the GOP only wanted to renew it for three months.

In addition, he said, interest rates on student loans are set to jump from 3 to 6 percent unless Congress renews the 3-percent rate before July 1. "So far, the Republicans haven't been willing to do legislation to do that," he said.

Mr. Pallone said the President's budget gives money back to the states to rehire teachers, firefighters and police officers who have been laid off. "You know the towns just can't afford it any more," he explained, citing municipal government layoffs. "The whole idea is to grow the economy... And when tax dollars are coming back into the coffers then you don't need the federal help anymore, but in the interim you do" when asked by The Westfield Leader and The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times how towns will pay for the additional fire and police personnel once the federal grants expire.

"The Republican budget eliminated them [police and fire grants], I think. I know they did last year. And we had to restore them," Mr. Pallone added.

On gasoline prices, the Congressman said President Obama has said his administration would start cracking down on the act of speculating on oil futures markets by adding enforcement officials at the federal level and by increasing penalties on speculators. In addition, he suggested the use of the nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserves

"as a way of sending a signal if the speculation is based on the fact that it appears that oil supplies are going to be cut off."

Mr. Pallone said America needs to become energy independent, noting that he supports increasing domestic oil production, increasing fuel efficiency for cars and trucks per new EPA regulations, and increasing renewable energy sources such as wind power, solar power and geothermal. Mr. Pallone said he supports tax credits for manufacturers to enter the renewable energy industry, although he said House Republicans are not supportive of those tax credits. The President wants to end billions of dollars in federal subsidies to oil companies and use that money for tax credits to encourage manufacturers to produce renewable energy, the Congressman explained.

President Obama has proposed to renew the wind energy tax credit, which is set to expire at the end of 2012. An additional cash grant for small renewable energy companies expired at the end of 2011, "and the (House) Republicans refused to renew that," Mr. Pallone said.

"I agree with the President that we really need to expand and continue with energy tax credits or subsidies for solar and wind [renewable energies] and all the renewables. But some of them have already been allowed to expire because the Republicans in the House wouldn't renew them," Rep. Pallone said. "It's (renewable energy) a huge job creation opportunity in my opinion," he said, noting that China is "trying to corner the market on the manufacturing and production" of renewable energy parts such as wind turbines and wind panels "which we could be producing ourselves."

In discussing the Affordable Care Act, the Congressman said he believes the U.S. Supreme Court will rule that the law is Constitutional. He said part of the national healthcare bill would enable small companies to join exchanges whereby more benefits would be available and affordable to employers who would also be eligible for tax credits.

"By having an exchange it's almost like you are a big company" when purchasing health insurance, the Congressman said. "I think for anyone who wants to provide insurance, this (Affordable Care Act) is a great deal." He said the lack of insured patients being admitted to hospitals today would "almost all go away" under the Affordable Care Act.

When asked about his future political plans Mr. Pallone said, "I always wanted to run for (U.S.) Senator and if there was an opening I would seriously consider it."



Courtesy of Janice Siegel FUN RAISER...Westfield Democrats gathered for a "Fun Raizer" at Garwood Lanes on Sunday, April 22. They were happy to have the opportunity to meet with state Assemblyman Upendra Chivukula (pronounced "Chevy cola") (D-17, Somerset) who is running for Congress in the Seventh District.

# DWC Talks of Closing Roads For Girls Night Out in Future

By DOMINIC A. LAGANO  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD — Most of the focus of the Downtown Westfield Corporation's (DWC), the management entity of the Special Improvement District (SID), Monday night monthly board of directors meeting focused on the success of the DWC's most recent incarnation of the Girls Night Out event. The shopping and dining experience is held biannually in town during spring and autumn.

According to DWC Executive Director Sherry Cronin, the downtown area was filled with patrons as many shops and restaurants opened for the evening. Ms. Cronin said approximately 73 businesses and restaurants participated in some form or fashion.

While reporting on the event for the board, Ms. Cronin stated simply, "Girls Night Out was a huge success."

The Girls Night Out event is used to generate revenue for participating businesses and restaurants that generally offer promotions for the event. Many of the businesses involved also provided samples of their wares or other giveaways.

Ms. Cronin reported that there were 1,650 registrants before the DWC closed the online registration process the night before the event. The participants came from 135 towns across New Jersey and seven other states.

Of the first 1,000 online registrants, over 71 percent checked in at the DWC booth the night of the event, while 69 percent appeared from the remaining 650 registrants. Ms. Cronin stated that the DWC would analyze the acquired data on the registrants to determine how to increase those numbers.

Ms. Cronin further stated that some registrants may have reported to the event but did not register in person at the DWC booth, possibly skewing the numbers.

Ms. Cronin also commented on the large number of people in the downtown area during the event and wanted to thank all the DWC volunteers for assisting with the event and with the traffic congestion.

"I had a number of volunteers who came and as the crowd went up to the corner, people were into the street, so there were gentlemen stationed out

there in the crosswalks, helping people and making sure the cars didn't hit people as they were going by," Ms. Cronin said.

As Urban Outfitters will be moving into the historic bank building at the corner of Elm and East Broad Streets, Ms. Cronin said the DWC booth for Girls Night Out will most likely be moved to a new location, possibly assisting in alleviating congestion.

During the Town Council liaison report from Town Administrator Jim Gildea, the question arose regarding the closure of several streets during the Girls Night Out event in the downtown area due to foot traffic.

"We may want to consider besides location, maybe asking for crossing guards and/or special police officers to go down there. I was down on the corner, too, and for a good 45 minutes, traffic backs up, people are everywhere. It's a nice problem to have... We've talked about it (closing streets) in the past, it's something to consider...it probably warrants that plus some kind of safety patrolmen," Mr. Gildea said.

In past years there have been closures of some streets in the downtown area during events such as the DWC-sponsored Downtown Westfield 5K and Pizza Extravaganza and the Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce (GWACC) - sponsored Spring Fling and Festfall events.

Mr. Gildea also related that Mayor Andy Skibitsky "reported" on the Girls Night Out event for local cable channel 36. The mayor explored the downtown area and interviewed several participants. The program featuring the mayor will be uploaded to the town's website and will most likely be uploaded on the DWC's website as well. The program also will run on cable channel 36 in the near future.

During the GWACC liaison report, Robert Dowdy publicized one of the organization's signature events for the year — the Spring Fling. It is scheduled for Sunday, May 6, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The DWC's next board meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 21, at 7:30 p.m. The DWC office is located at 105 Elm Street.

# UCC Cranford to Host Job Fair on Sat., May 2

CRANFORD — Companies in the transportation, logistics and distribution industry are invited to recruit at Union County College's Job Fair scheduled for Wednesday, May 2, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., in the Victor M. Richel Student Commons on the College's Cranford Campus. Over 65 employers attended last year's job fair.

Jersey Transit, Smith and Solomon, A. Diue Pyle, and Wakefern Inc. The event will be open to all job seekers, not only Union County College students. That means professionals in TLD or other industries with skills transferable to TLD jobs as well as entry-level candidates will be able to attend. In addition, representatives from the Union County One Stop Career Center will be available to discuss employer incentives and programs.

Union County College is hosting this Job Fair in cooperation with the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders, the New Jersey TLD Talent Network and the Union County Workforce Investment Board. The following companies will be present at this year's fair: AT&T Mobility, Avon, Aflac, Westfield Y, Primerica, Edward Jones Investment, Life Station, Inc., Corbin Exterminating, Cintas, Port Logistics, New Century Transport, New

Companies interested in hosting a table for recruitment may obtain a registration form by sending an e-mail to Nancy Toomey at Toomey@ucc.edu or calling (908) 527-7207 to request a form via mail. For more information, visit www.ucc.edu/go/ibi and look for the link to TLD Event News.

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