

Democratic, GOP Candidates For Freeholder Declare Platforms

By SUSAN M. DYCKMAN
Specially Written For The Westfield Leader and The Times

ELIZABETH - Republicans are hoping to make a dent in the Democratic stronghold of 9-0 on the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders in the Tuesday, November 2 election.

Republicans Albert D. Dill of Summit, Richard A. Revilla of Elizabeth and Wally K. Shackell, Jr. of Cranford are challenging Democratic incumbents Linda S. Stender of Fanwood and Board Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari of Linden, along with newcomer Angel Estrada of Elizabeth for three-year terms on the board.

The freeholder position pays \$25,000 per year.

The Republicans have not won a freeholder seat since 1994. Democrats took over the majority in 1997, following five years of Republican rule.

Vying for the Union County Surrogate position at the head of the ticket are Democrat James S. LaCorte and Republican Linda Lee Kelly, both of Elizabeth.

While Democrats are running on their record of furthering county prosperity and enhancing the quality of life for residents, GOP candidates are focusing on what they see as excessive spending, an over-reliance on bonding and unsatisfactory representation of all residents' interests.

"I'm very proud of what we've accomplished," said Mrs. Stender, who has sat on the board for six years. "We have a Triple A bond rating and we're paying back (loans) in half the time required by law."

She spoke to the progress made by the board's economic development committee, which was initiated under her tenure as board chairman in 1996.

"I wanted to make economic development the yardstick by which we measure our actions," she explained.

According to Mrs. Stender, what is "now coming together" under the Union County Alliance is the identification and prioritization of all functions.

"We need to know who functions in what way so resources can be assigned in a way that promotes efficient funding without duplications and overlap," she said.

"The budget is out of hand," countered Mr. Dill, a former Summit councilman. "They're bonding a lot of money. They're borrowing a lot of money, and they've done nothing new or spectacular. I would look at every agency there is. As people

retire, look at the individual and operation. Do we need to replace that? What areas shouldn't the county be involved in?"

Elected, Mr. Revilla, who served as Elizabeth's Housing Authority Chairman in 1998, said the first order of business for Republicans is to serve as a watchdog.

"We would bring an exchange of ideas to the table that isn't there," he said. He criticized what he sees as the board's failure to reach out to all residents of Union County.

"They're not doing a good job of getting to county residents. They've a responsibility to let people know what a freeholder is and what a freeholder can do." He proposed holding open forums at town halls to talk about county issues.

"Televized meetings aren't enough," he added.

Mr. Estrada, a six-year member of Elizabeth's Board of Education, hopes to introduce some diversity to the freeholder board. He called it "some added representation that isn't there."

If elected, Mr. Estrada would continue some of the "good things" already in place, namely the Freeholders' Scholarship Program, which, he said, can help some people make educational decisions they might not otherwise be able to make.

"It's important to train individuals in Union County to meet the needs of business," added Mr. Estrada. "We want to attract new business. We need to make Union County more business friendly. More jobs means better things for residents."

Former Cranford mayor Wally Shackell wants to reform county government to make representatives more accountable to the people they serve.

"As it's set up, each freeholder is elected at large," he said. "In theory, they're responsible for everyone. In reality, they're responsible for no one."

The Republicans have proposed cutting the freeholder board back to seven seats from its current nine. They would divide Union County into three districts, with two representatives each. A seventh freeholder would be elected at large.

Mr. Shackell also questioned the validity of the Democrats' claim to having cut taxes in the county. He noted towns like Summit, Westfield, Berkeley Heights, Mountainside, New Providence and Scotch Plains have been "hammered" with taxes over the past two years.

"In a quarter-billion dollar budget, six one-hundredths of one per-

cent is not a lot of cut," said Mr. Shackell, referring to a \$105,000 decrease in the freeholders' present budget. "Towns on the eastern end have reaped the benefits."

Mr. Scutari reiterated that the overall tax rate for Union County has gone down three consecutive years under Democratic leadership, though, he acknowledged, not every municipality has benefited every time.

"This year it was 11 of 21 municipalities; the year before, it was 18 of 21; and all 21 the first year," he said. "They had a seven-year chance to lower it and they didn't. We're going in the right direction, and doing it while delivering all these other programs. I'm very proud of the (county employees') response to the challenge to do more with less."

Freeholder Scutari is particularly proud of the county's \$5 million downtown development grant program; Project Pocket Park; and the Union First program under which the county looks to use county vendors to provide contracts and services whenever possible.

The victor of the surrogate contest between Elizabeth residents Mr. LaCorte and Ms. Kelly will oversee a staff of 20. The term is five years at an annual salary of \$101,679. The former Surrogate Ann Conti passed away in July following 17 years of service.

When asked what makes him the preferred candidate for Union County Surrogate, Mr. LaCorte, an Elizabeth attorney, said, "It's a comparison of qualifications. I've had 25 years as a practicing attorney. I'm familiar with areas that come under the jurisdiction of the surrogate, e.g. wills and estates, adoption and competency hearings."

Furthermore, Mr. LaCorte cited his experience managing the day-to-day workings of a law office. "A junior high school is a totally different atmosphere," he stated, in reference to Ms. Kelly's position as principal of Hamilton Middle School in Elizabeth. Mr. LaCorte is the son of the late former Mayor of Elizabeth, Nicholas S. LaCorte.

Ms. Kelly, who served two terms as a freeholder, served as Assistant County Counsel from 1983 to 1989. Her legal, administrative/managerial and government experience, plus an "ability to relate to people" are her stated qualifications for the surrogate position.

While acknowledging the "wonderful" work done by Mrs. Conti and the present staff, Ms. Kelly "would like to enhance the office and bring some other things in."

Emulating the work of other counties that use federal grant money under the Older Americans Act, she would like to provide will preparation services to older residents who demonstrate financial need.

Ms. Kelly would also like to educate residents as to what they can expect from the surrogate office by putting information brochures into the hands of funeral directors for distribution to clients.

"My philosophy is to help people before they reach this (surrogate) office," she stated.

Union County is home to 500,000 residents. There are 258,578 registered voters: 86,121 Democrats; 40,656 Republicans; 439 Independents; and 131,362 unaffiliated voters, who have not declared their allegiance to either party and have never voted in a primary election.

Democratic Minority Tries to Make A Dent in State General Assembly

By MELISSA BETKOWSKI
Specially Written For The Westfield Leader and The Times

TRENTON - On Tuesday, November 2, voters around the state will head to the polls to cast their ballots for the state's General Assembly.

Republicans hold a 48-32 majority. Democrats need nine seats to take over the leadership in the lower house, a

position which they have not held since 1991. The GOP also controls the Senate. That house will not be on the ballot until 2001, a gubernatorial election year.

Key districts being eyed by the Democratic minority are the fourth, 11th, 13th, 14th, 30th, 34th, 36th and 38th.

In the fourth district, the Democratic

challengers David Carlamere and Bob Smith are pitted against Republican incumbents George Geist and Gerald Luongo, respectively.

The race for the 11th district seats have Mike Beson and Dwayne Harris taking on incumbents Steven Corodemus and Thomas Smith.

The 13th district, with one seat currently held by Assemblyman Joseph Azzolina who got his start in the Assembly in 1966, features challengers Pat Gillespie and Alex DeSevo taking on Mr. Azzolina and Samuel Thompson, respectively.

The 14th district race features challengers Gary Guear and Linda Greenstein taking on Assistant Majority Leader Paul Kramer and Deputy Speaker Barbara Wright.

The 30th district pits Ed Werner and Ed Choquette against Republican incumbents Melvin Cottrell and Joseph Malone.

The race for the 34th district seats features challengers Gerry DiStefano and Bob Ruane taking on Assemblywoman Marion Crecco and Deputy Speaker Gerald Zecker, respectively.

The 36th district, home to Majority Leader Paul DiGaetano, features Rocco Mazza and Ken Sorkin facing Mr. DiGaetano and John Kelly, respectively.

Finally, in the 38th district, Assembly incumbents Rose Marie Heck and Guy Talario face pressure from Helene Herbert and Bob Riccardella.

Candidates Square Off On Issues at SP Forum

CONTINUED FROM PAGE B-7

From our standpoint, Berkeley Heights has opposed it and it's incumbent upon our local and legislative officials to move that forward. We need to move forward on the upper basin."

Mr. Wiener: "Where were (our state legislators) before the flood? You have to get to your legislators."

PUBLIC NOTICE

TOWN OF WESTFIELD

Public Notice is hereby given that an ordinance as follows was passed and adopted by the Council of the Town of Westfield at a meeting thereof held October 26, 1999.

Bernard A. Heeney
Acting Town Clerk

SPECIAL ORDINANCE NO. 1998 AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR VARIOUS IMPROVEMENTS AND EQUIPMENT FOR THE SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT AND THE APPROPRIATION OF THE MONIES NECESSARY THEREFOR AND THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES FOR THE FINANCING OF SAID WORK.

1 T - 10/28/99, The Leader Fee: \$18.87

PUBLIC NOTICE

TOWN OF WESTFIELD PLANNING BOARD

The Planning Board of the Town of Westfield, New Jersey will meet on Wednesday, November 10, 1999 in the Council Chambers at the Municipal Building, 425 East Broad, Westfield, New Jersey at 7:30 p.m. to hear and consider the following application:

99-17(V) SELECT MANAGEMENT SERVICES LLC, (Lessor to Hudson Physical Therapy)/APPLICANT and B & K REALTY CO., A NEW JERSEY PARTNERSHIP/OWNERS, 190 ELM STREET, BLOCK NO. 2405, LOT NO. 1 SEEKING PRELIMINARY AND FINAL SITE PLAN APPROVAL. Applicant proposes to use the building as a physical therapy facility contrary to the following requirements of the Land Use Ordinance:

Pre-existing nonconforming zoning conditions:

Section 11.26.E.2. of the Land Use Ordinance. Ordinance requires a minimum 10 foot side yard setback — 3 feet is existing.

Section 11.26.F.1 of the Land Use Ordinance. Ordinance requires a minimum of 40% of the street facade be window area — 29.5% is existing.

New C.40:55D-70C variances requested:

Section 17.02C.7.a. and Section 17.02B.4. of the Land Use Ordinance. Ordinance requires 15 onsite parking spaces — applicant proposes 7 spaces.

Section 17.05B and C of the Land Use Ordinance. Ordinance requires an access aisle — none is proposed (stacked parking is proposed).

Plans and application are on file in the Office of the Town Engineer, 959 North Avenue, West, Westfield, New Jersey and may be seen Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Kenneth B. Marsh
Secretary

1 T - 10/28/99, The Leader Fee: \$48.45

Six Freeholder Candidates Discuss Issues at Forum

CONTINUED FROM PAGE B-10

he said, noting that Westfield alone received \$450,000 for its Downtown Improvement Plan.

Mr. Shackell said "the downtowns are absolutely vital to all 21 communities" in the county. The candidate said he would continue to support downtown development if elected to the board.

Mrs. Stender, a former Mayor of Fanwood, added that the grant program "is something that will make a difference in our daily lives."

During closing remarks, Freeholder Scutari cited the Freeholder Scholarship Program that he initiated this year. County residents with a "B" or better average can earn full tuition at Union County College, a two-year school.

He noted the county's \$10 million long-range road improvement program where roadways, intersections and bridges are being fixed. Mr. Scutari also cited the Freeholders Access 2000 program which was available to all school districts in order to ensure all students computer and high speed Internet access.

Mr. Revilla said the Republicans, if elected, do not support holding on to surplus funds, noting they will support "growth, prosperity and financial accountability" on the board.

He called the board's 9-0 majority "not a democracy but pure dominance," specifically referring to the non-support of the reelection bid of Freeholder Donald Goncalves of Elizabeth by the county Democratic Party. Mr. Estrada was named in Mr. Goncalves place.

Freeholder Stender said had the GOP kept the majority the county might have had to go into default on its garbage incinerator in Rahway. The county has leased the \$290 million facility to Ogden Martin Systems of Union over 25 years to pay off existing debt in the new unregulated garbage hauling market.

She also noted that "there is more to be done" to continue the board's programs. She said the board needs the support of voters to continue its "commitment to economic development."

Mr. Shackell said "there is a clear difference" between the two slates of candidates." He said Republicans support cutting county spending, holding a line on freeholder salaries

and cutting what he deemed has been the hiring of friends and relatives of the freeholders.

On taxes, he said Berkeley Heights has witnessed a \$1.3 million tax increase the past few years, and Summit, \$400,000. He said the 1999 county budget increased spending by \$6 million.

The candidate vowed to cut two of the nine freeholder slots. He said the board "should look for ways to trim its payroll, not pad its payroll."

Linda-Lee Kelly for SURROGATE

Proven Administrative and Legal Experience for Union County!



Union County needs a **full-time Surrogate**. Not a politician who won't show up for work, or a person who will treat the office of Surrogate as a "part time bonus".

Union County needs Linda-Lee Kelly!

Linda-Lee Kelly will be a **FULL-TIME** Surrogate, emulating **Ann Conti's** stewardship of the Office!

Don't choose anything less than a full time Surrogate like Linda-Lee Kelly promises to be!

CHOOSE LINDA-LEE KELLY ON COLUMN B!

CHOOSE A FULL-TIME SURROGATE FOR UNION COUNTY

Pd for by Kelly for Surrogate, Robert C. Doherty, Treas., 771 Fairlakes Avenue, Westfield, N.J. 07090

CYAN YELLOW MAGENTA BLACK

Re-elect Greg McDermott

For Westfield Town Council, Ward 1

"As your Councilman, my job is to ensure that our quality of life is protected, and even improves with time. I have made a commitment to working hard to make this happen.

That starts with clean streets, green open spaces and a vibrant downtown. By working together, we can make Westfield an even better community for families and business."



Better Management of The Downtown

- New street and parking signs
- Privatization of Downtown Garbage Collection

Preserving the Quality of Life

As a father, Greg knows the importance of our parks and recreational facilities and has been active in the preservation of Brightwood

Cleaner Streets

- Addition of the Blue Machine - Westfield's first sidewalk sweeper
- Initiated successful Sidewalk Improvement Plan
- Worked to Secured \$450,000 Revitalization Grant

Greg McDermott

- First Ward Councilman
- Past Chairman Union County Improvement Authority
- Chair of Solid Waste Committee
- Member Parking, Transportation and Traffic Committee
- Lifelong Resident with four children



Re-elect Gregory S. McDermott for Westfield Town Council

Paid for by McDermott for Council, Ray Mattes, Treasurer, 423 Birch Place, Westfield, NJ