

## Around the State

### Ocean

**ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL.** George Gilmore, who is not given to preliminary pronouncements about the results of county conventions, told the Asbury Park *Press* that the March 30 gathering isn't likely to endorse Donald Trump or anyone else. Several county luminaries expressed reservations about the GOP front-runner. The problem is the Governor doesn't have such reservations and might insist that the county parties go along with his choice. Of course, when Erik Larsen brought up the pending nomination of Freeholder Jack Kelly to the Parole Board and a looming fight to unseat Freeholder Ginny Haines as National Committeewoman, Gilmore just said, "I don't care about that."

### Union

**ALL POLITICS.** One of our wags advises the Kean University Political Science department to study the outcome of the battle between Ray Lesniak and Steve Sweeney over whose guy should get to conduct a review of allegations that the university has engaged in discriminatory practices: The solution? Hire both guys, which is what the school did.

### Municipal Madness, cont.

**COMMERCIAL TWP.** Mayor Judson Moore, elected as an independent to the Township Committee in 2013 by 15 votes, resigned with nine months to go in his term. He isn't suffering from bad health. Nor did he plead he wants to spend more time with his family. All he said was "Sometimes you just get too busy in life and want to move on to other things."

**GLOUCESTER TOWNSHIP.** Mayor Barbara Wallace's problems began the day three new Council members took office in January 2015. At the reorg meeting, the Democratic majority introduced an ordinance cutting the salaries of several officials, including the Mayor. Newly elected Councilwoman Angela Donato, who lost a mayoral primary to Wallace in 2014, led the new Democratic majority's effort. Donato and her allies also fired Solicitor John Armano, who sued to get his job back. Also wending its way through the courts is a suit over who would replace Armano. And it gets better. The Council voted to have the municipality pay its members' legal expenses. Wallace vetoed that. Now, she not only says she's running for reelection; she also says she's "not concerned about a primary. I think our Democrats will be totally united."

**JERSEY CITY.** Even though the voters passed a non-binding referendum to move the municipal elections to November, Steve Fulop didn't proceed to have the City Council enact an enabling ordinance. Instead, the Council, with Fulop's backing, passed a resolution to put a *binding* referendum on the ballot this November that will effect the change. To counter that move former Corporation Counsel Bill Matsikoudis helped found the Jersey City Civic Committee, a 501(c) (4) to address the election day change and other issues like the controversial cancellation of a property reval.

**LAKEWOOD.** To fill a projected \$12 million hole, the Board of Education's budget eliminated courtesy busing (a blow to 10,000 yeshiva and private school students), cuts 68 teachers, and cancels middle school extra-curricular activities.

**LOPATCONG.** Judge Thomas Miller ruled against Mayor Thomas McCay, who had sued three members of the Township Council, the Town Clerk, and Township Attorney Michael Lavery for refusing to allow him to replace Lavery, hire a labor lawyer, and provide him with adequate information about municipal boards and commissions. Miller accused the Mayor of adopting "an over-simplified and unsupported legal theory that is also based on a misreading of the applicable law;" said his contention "ignores or perverts for his own ends the principles of separation of powers as well as the significance and ramifications of the 'advice and consent' provisions of the law;" and conclud-

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A Weekly Electronic Newsletter on Politics in NEW JERSEY

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ed that authority to enforce the law **“does not give him the power to make the law by himself or decide what the law is.”** Tell us how you really feel, Judge.

**MOORESTOWN.** When a citizen sued to see the minutes of the Township Ethical Standards Board’s October 2012 meeting, Township Manager Scott Carew called a hurried meeting. Why? Because the Board meets only when it receives a complaint and failed to approve the 2012 minutes whenever it met in the past four years, most recently last October. Only 30 towns have an Ethics Board, and, because of situations like Moorestown’s, Tom Kean has a bill to eliminate them.

**ORANGE.** Mayor Dwayne Warren, who is being challenged by Councilman Kerry Coley, hired Marie Amin as Assistant Business Administrator. She once got elected to the Elizabeth Board of Ed on a Ray Lesniak/Chris Bollwage ticket but flipped sides at the re-org to give the other side a majority. We wonder if this will inspire Lesniak to get involved in this campaign.

**PALISADES PARK.** Democratic Chairman Mike Pollotta, who has held the post since 1961, resigned a week after the Municipal Committee voted to oust him even though there’s no statute that allows such an move. He has been feuding with Mayor James Rotundo since June, when he accused the Mayor of being interested only in jobs for himself and his family.

**PATERSON.** No sooner did Joey Torres get the City Council to approve a budget (with a 5.8 percent -- rather than 6.1 -- tax increase) than WNBC ran some video of Public Works employees doing work on Mayor Joey Torres’s house. (The tapes were made by a private investigator hired by a local developer.) Torres says that the men built some shelves for him on their own time and that he paid for the materials and their time. The tapes appear to show the men moving boxes and tools, washing a scooter, and removing debris -- at least some of it on city time -- though. Some of the workers told the station that Torres also asked them to work on the site of business his nephew was opening. The PI and the workers have been subpoenaed to appear before a state grand jury in Trenton next week.

**TOM’S RIVER.** Mayor Thomas Kelaher got himself in a heap of trouble when he described efforts by real estate agents seeking to get residents of the North Dover section of the township to sell to Orthodox Jews from neighboring Lakewood as “an invasion.” Kelaher says he was merely reflecting the sentiments of some residents and denied being anti-Semitic. Lakewood Mayor Menashe Miller called on him to apologize, but even Rabbi Avi Schnall of Agudath Israel of America said that a handful of agents, who are telling people they’ll be the only non-Orthodox in the neighborhood if they don’t sell, are “overly aggressive and making a bad name for the others.”

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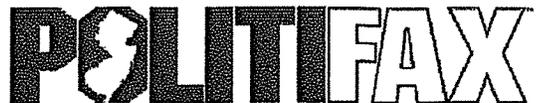
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