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— S U E S E R I N O . C O M —

# Scuccimarra Battles Montgomery for Leg. 1 Seat

By David Propper

Two term incumbent Barbara Scuccimarra is running for another term against Philipstown Councilwoman Nancy Montgomery for the District 1 seat of the Putnam County Legislature. The district makes up all of Philipstown and part of Putnam Valley.

## Barbara Scuccimarra

In office for six years, Legislator Barbara Scuccimarra stands by her record of fighting for services for the



Barbara Scuccimarra

west side of the county. She wants to continue that work for another three years if re-elected.

"I believe I get it done," she said.

Scuccimarra, a Republican, said her biggest achievement is securing a senior center at the Butterfield redevelopment for the aging population in Philipstown. Currently, seniors gather at the American Legion, which Scuccimarra said is inadequate. The new 6,000 square foot facility is a worthwhile endeavor, she said.

She said the Butterfield location is the best place for the center because it is near the post office and medical offices. She said the costs are similar to other senior centers that the county has invested in and overall the space is being rented for half the market value.

"So we did get a deal," Scuccimarra said. "It's an investment in our seniors."

Scuccimarra said she wants to work on bringing more services over that would take place at the center, like county clerk services, domestic abuse support, and other programs.

"It's going to be a great thing," she said. "It's going to be positive, a lot of people are going to benefit from this center."

Scuccimarra said she has also been involved in fighting the drug crisis in the county, leading the county's task force on the subject. She recently pushed through a county law that would prohibit residents under 21 from purchasing tobacco and vaping products.

"If we can stop one kid from picking up a cigarette or vape pen, it's worth all the battle," she said.

Scuccimarra, chairwoman of the health committee, said she wants to reduce the carbon footprint in the county and is still hoping to ban plastic bags from being used within the county. If re-elected, she vowed to renew that effort.

If also re-upped for another three years, Scuccimarra wants to work more for people with disabilities and be an advocate for them.

Scuccimarra scoffed at the notion her opponent Nancy Montgomery would do more for the west side.

"What is she saying, 'she's gonna, she's gonna,' bottom line is I am," Scuccimarra said.

Scuccimarra dismissed Montgomery's accomplishments of voting to make Philipstown a "sanctuary town" and requiring safe storage of firearms because neither does much for Philipstown. She called both laws "feel good legislation" that are national level issues, rather than local.

"I'm getting it done and I have record that proves that," she said.

## Nancy Montgomery

Throughout her campaign, Nancy Montgomery, a Philipstown Councilwoman, has made it clear she wants to bring more county resources to Philipstown and Putnam Valley. With the amount of money sent over from the west side in taxes, Montgomery wants to a better return investment from county government.

Montgomery, a Democrat, said she wants to see more and improved



Nancy Montgomery

services for disabled people and seniors and stronger communication and training for local emergency services departments. It's important to bring back resources specific to each community, Montgomery said.

"How much support are we getting during disasters, there's not much communication," Montgomery said. "We always pick up the slack in Philipstown because the county's not stepping up."

Montgomery declined to comment on how well her opponent Barbara

Scuccimarra has performed and wanted to instead focus on the needs of the community she would represent. When commenting on the entire legislature, she said it appears that lawmakers take a one-size fits all approach rather than focusing on different towns. The legislature also seems to simply go along with the county executive administration, Montgomery said.

"I just don't feel like they're listening to the towns, let alone the constituents," she said. "So I think we could all do a better job at that."

When addressing the controversial senior center at Butterfield, Montgomery said she wishes the county handled the situation differently and worked with the American Legion to improve that facility for seniors. She called the soon-to-open senior center a boondoggle. The money spent wasn't planned out well, she added.

"Seniors need a lot more than what they're going to get at Butterfield," she said.

Pointing to her ten years on the town board, Montgomery, who was a 911 dispatcher and certified EMT, said she worked to examine emergency services to improve efficiencies that can be sustained. In order to fight the drug crisis, the Philipstown town board has put a medication take-back box in town hall and worked to have Narcan training. A drug prevention coordinator was also hired by the town board, Montgomery said.

Montgomery also passed legislation to make Philipstown a sanctuary town for immigrants in the community and require gun owners to safely store their weapons in the presence of children without supervision.

She has also worked for Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney's office.

Montgomery said she has a record of getting things done and implementing policies and funding for the needs of the community.

"Everything I do comes from me listening to my constituency," she said.

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# Castellano Defends Leg. 7 Seat Against Reing

By David Propper

*In the race for the District 7 seat of the Putnam County Legislature, two-term incumbent Joe Castellano looks to keep his seat against first time candidate Scott Reing. The district includes parts of Brewster and Mahopac.*

## Scott Reing

As a first time candidate, Scott Reing, a Democrat, is running for the county Legislature because he believes the district needs someone independent of the county executive administration.

Stating that his opponent, Joe Castellano, votes the way County Executive MaryEllen Odell wants a vast majority of the time, Reing criticized him for voting to give himself and fellow lawmakers a 14 percent raise while forcing retired county



Scott Reing

employees to contribute more to their health insurance. He questioned the overall fiscal management of county government.

"I'm independent of them, I don't have any old allegiance to any local party," Reing said. "I'm representing the people."

Reing said he isn't against the county owning Tilly Foster Farm and the Putnam County Golf Course, but money needs to be made. While the farm has made money, Reing said there is no indication the amount of interest that is being paid back, which could be a massive expense. He agreed it was

important to have the BOCES program on the farm, which current lawmakers have supported.

As for the golf course, Reing said more oversight is needed because elected officials, like Odell, should not be allowed to hold events at the golf course for lesser rates than other customers. (A LoHud report indicated Odell was getting better deals at the venue for campaign style events.)

Overall, Reing is bothered that county lawmakers participate in little debate and are never a check on Odell. But Reing stressed if elected, he would try to work with fellow lawmakers and would not be a contrarian for the sake of it.

"It's a waste of money to have a legislature right now," he said. "They just act as a branch for the executive."

Reing said the budget, while it remains under the tax cap, should not have to increase by two percent every year. He liked that the county pursued shared services this year, but would have liked to see the initiative better utilized.

While the county brags about the amount of debt they have paid off, Reing, a tax-real estate attorney, said the county should've used the money to invest further. Paying off low, long-term interest, Reing said, is a "net-negative" because the county could've made more money.

Reing, who has his own law practice with his father, works with clients on budgeting and helping with their retirement accounts. As a small business owner, he tries to reduce waste within his own firm.

Reing vowed to work harder than his opponent and believes he has a long-term connection going forward.

"I have a long-term interest in the area," Reing, a father of two young children, said. "I'm going to be here a long, long time."

## Joe Castellano

On the county Legislature for six years, Joe Castellano, a Republican, thinks he's been part of a team that's done a lot of good work for Putnam.

Saving taxpayer money and eliminating a large swath of debt, while investing in county properties have been some of the good work the legislature has done, he said. Castellano said he's most proud of supporting the rebuilt of Tilly Foster Farm and county golf course, which he said are now "self-sufficient."

He noted Moody has given the county Aa2 rating, which is a great bond rating to have for the size of the county.

Both county properties needed improvements, Castellano said, and were a drain on the taxpayers. Now he thinks they are destinations.



Joe Castellano

"I think they're enjoying what we did," Castellano said of residents.

Castellano also stood up for the

spending on the senior center at the Butterfield campus in Cold Spring, noting west side seniors deserve a good center. Seniors on that side have always been underserved, Castellano said.

Responding to his opponent's claim that he is not independent from the county executive branch, Castellano said there are plenty of times discussions are had where he disagrees privately before a final resolution is reached. He noted that he was against a proposed PBA union contract that Odell approved and was in support of Legal Aid moving to another location that Odell opposed.

Castellano was a former zoning board of appeals member in Southeast and has worked for the Westchester County Clerk's office for about 20 years.

Castellano hopes to help usher through a few projects if elected again that the county is working on like the extension of the bike trail and upgrades to the Morningthorpe Bridge, along with other infrastructure projects.

And he wants to keep finances in good shape. All six budgets put forward have been tucked under the tax cap and Castellano will continue to fight to keep budgets at bay.

"I'm very proud of our record," Castellano said, adding. "I think we've improved Putnam County quite a bit the last six years."



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# Maloney Looks to Keep 18th District Blue in Congress

By David Propper

Three-term Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney faces Orange County Legislator James O'Donnell for the 18th congressional seat. Maloney is a Cold Spring resident.

## Sean Patrick Maloney

After a failed attempt to nab the Democratic nomination for New York Attorney General, Sean Patrick Maloney is running for re-election to maintain his 18th Congressional seat.

Maloney, a Democrat, has stressed his bipartisan approach, even in the age of Republican President Donald Trump.

"I view it as my job to work with him where I can to get results for the people I represent," Maloney said during a videotaped interview with Lohud. He noted he passed 31 bills since he joined Congress six years ago. He said he does stand up to Trump when he pushes for racist and anti-LGBT policies.

He told Lohud he is against the newly enacted tax law because it is limiting the state property tax deduction to \$10,000 and also creating a bigger national deficit.

Maloney is against repealing the Affordable Care Act. He said pre-existing conditions need to be protected, warning Republicans would roll that protection back.

"We need more competition," Maloney said during the interview regarding



Sean Patrick Maloney

healthcare.

He also believes in a woman's right to an abortion, noting the new conservative majority in the Supreme Court could put a women's choice at risk.

When discussing the drug epidemic, Maloney touted on his website supporting legislation to prevent doctors from overprescribing opiates and providing parents with the resources to prevent addiction or find treatment for their children.

When addressing his run for AG, Maloney argued he has shown his



James O'Donnell

commitment to the 18th district by the work he's done grappling with large and small problems.

Maloney, who worked in the Bill Clinton administration, beat Republican Nan Hayworth twice and beat Republican Phil Oliva last election cycle.

"I'm focused on getting results for my neighbors in the Hudson Valley – despite the gridlock and dysfunction down in Washington," Maloney said, according to his website.

## James O'Donnell

Serving on the Orange County Legislature, James O'Donnell, a Republican, is running for Congress to be an ally of President Donald Trump.

Voicing support for Trump, O'Donnell warns that if Democrats take over the House of Representatives, progress could be stalled for Trump's agenda.

In an interview with Lohud, O'Donnell said Trump has done a "great thing" with the new tax bill. If the House goes to the Democrats, O'Donnell warned there would be talk of impeachment of Trump, rather than working on further tax cuts. But O'Donnell agreed with Maloney the property tax deduction limit wasn't high enough and would fight to raise that limit.

"You're going to have impeachment, you're going to have open borders," O'Donnell said.

According to his website, O'Donnell wants to further cut taxes, streamline regulations and support trade deals that are fair and free. The new NAFTA deal worked out by the Trump administration was applauded by O'Donnell in a press release earlier this year.

O'Donnell said he wants to protect pre-existing conditions and make health insurance more competitive by allowing companies to offer insurance across state lines.

He also wants to protect Social Security and Medicare for seniors so they can stay in the area, according to his website.

O'Donnell said he will never vote to allow a late-term abortion, calling it homicide in a debate earlier this month. He also noted his district needs to produce more high paying jobs, especially in Orange and Putnam counties.

In order to end corruption, O'Donnell, who worked in a leadership position with the State Police, believes in term limits and strengthening laws to prosecute corrupt politicians, according to his website.

O'Donnell has dinged Maloney over his run for attorney general, arguing his heart isn't in serving Congress.

"Sean Maloney made clear that the people of the 18th Congressional District were his last priority," O'Donnell said the night Maloney lost his AG's bid.



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# Odell and Fleming Spar for County Executive's Office

By David Propper

County Executive MaryEllen Odell faces a challenge from Kent Supervisor Maureen Fleming for the top post in the county. Odell, a Republican who has served for seven years, is looking to serve one more four-year term before she is term-limited out.

## MaryEllen Odell

When County Executive MaryEllen Odell took over, she said county finances were in shambles, there wasn't much to do in the county and residents didn't understand what county government did.

During her seven years in office, Odell believes she's turned it all around.

"We had a vision and we put together a plan and executed on all of them," Odell said.

Each year, Odell, a Republican, has offered county budgets under the New York State tax cap and has eliminated short-term debt and put a dent in long-term debt. All of this has been done with the county being hit with unfunded mandates passed down from the state, Odell noted.

Odell flaunted the handling of Tilly Foster Farm and the Putnam County Golf Course and has defended the money put into both county properties that her administration inherited. She said county residents want to be able to stay within their county for entertainment and other activities. She called both properties "sustainable."

"They're built now for generations to come," Odell said.

When battling the drug epidemic in the county, Odell stressed she has supported programs like treatment court and several non-profits. She also pointed out by joining a lawsuit to fight big pharmacy companies for their roles in the drug crisis it shows residents how serious she's taking this problem. If the county is awarded funds from the lawsuit, it will go back to community providers, Odell said.

Odell said she has shown strong support for veterans, implementing the Row of Honor along Lake Gleneida,



MaryEllen Odell

bringing the Vietnam Traveling Wall to the county twice, and offering other programs to help veterans.

Odell also stood by the handling of the Cold Spring senior center, arguing that seniors on the west side of the county were underserved. She claimed the spending for the senior center, which the county is leasing at Butterfield, is on par with other senior centers. She said the design of the building and awarding a bid can take time, which is why the opening of the center has been delayed. She said for \$1.5 million, seniors now have a state of the art facility.

While Fleming has criticized Odell for raising taxes each year, Odell said the money spent is necessary because residents expect certain programs from government, including school resource officers and infrastructure fix-ups. She said there is nowhere to cut from the budget without services being hurt.

Odell touted a distillery business that is supposed to be built in Carmel and has advocated strongly for the Patterson Crossing project, which is still not off the ground but would bring retail to the county. Odell said she has fought hard for



Maureen Fleming

economic growth when it is appropriate for the county.

Fleming has hit Odell over corruption, but Odell dismissed those assertions. She said when it was discovered Jean Noel stole from the department of consumer affairs as director in 2016, safeguards were put in place and the justice system took care of the rest. When addressing former tourism director Libby Pataki setting up a second non-profit that led to her resignation, Odell said Pataki did nothing wrong and it was determined by the state attorney general's office no charges should be brought.

"I find it laughable," Odell said, arguing she took on the establishment in 2010 when she ran as an underdog against powerful former state senator Vincent Leibell, who eventually went to jail for corruption.

Ultimately, the county's finances have never been in better shape, Odell said and morale in the county is high.

"I have a proven record of accomplishments," Odell said. "We have a lot to be proud of."

## Maureen Fleming

As supervisor in the Town of Kent for five years, Maureen Fleming, a Democrat, believes she's proven herself to be a fiscal conservative who knows how to manage and lead. She now wants to bring that experience to the Putnam County Executive's office.

"I think we're throwing our money into areas we don't need to," Fleming said of current county leadership.

Fleming argued that the county has wasted funds on county properties like the Putnam County Golf Course and Tilly Foster Farm. She also criticized the spending at the Cold Spring senior center at the Butterfield redevelopment.

She noted that the county has lost money at the golf course and would like

to see the venue managed more wisely. She would hire a manager to take over the golf course and split the revenue with the private entity. She believes the county is currently meddling too much with the golf course.

Fleming would like to do a forensic accounting of spending at the farm and golf course if elected to figure out the next steps.

With Butterfield, she argued too much money has been poured into it and the county has paid rent for the space since last year without a senior using the facility.

"There could have been other partnerships we could've explored," Fleming said, adding the seniors deserve a good center.

Fleming said while she supported the lawsuit against big pharmacy companies that alleged the drug companies helped lead to the drug crisis, she thinks more services can be put together to help those suffering from drug addiction. Prevention is key, Fleming said.

As Kent supervisor, Fleming said she has helped the town become more transparent with more public comment and videotaped workshops. Facilities have also been improved, including at town parks and at the highway and sanitation departments, Fleming said.

Fleming has tried to shepherd more community events in the town with a winter festival and other community days to make up for Kent not having a traditional main street.

With economic development, Fleming said there is hope to have two hotels and a waterpark become realities in the town and a warehouse is being built that would bring in tax revenue. She noted that Kent is still a rural area with mostly residential zoning making drawing many businesses a challenge.

"Route 311 is ready to happen," Fleming said. "We had a very bad reputation (about drawing business) and I've made it a point to say we're open for business."

Most impressively, Fleming has not raised taxes in Kent, offering no increase budgets each year since she took over.

Fleming said she believes the county has dealt with cronyism during the Odell administration. She noted the county charter was changed to allow an attorney to become the county planning commissioner and other connections of Odell have been hired for county positions.

"It's like a fiefdom," Fleming said of county government.

Fleming asserted she could work with the county Legislature, which is mostly Republicans, noting she works well with her GOP majority on the town board.

"Taxes aren't Republican or Democrats, programs are not Republican or Democrats," Fleming said.

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# Serino and Smythe Clash for Senate 41 Seat

By David Proper

Republican incumbent Sue Serino takes on Democratic challenger Karen Smythe for the 41 senate seat. The district encompasses parts of Putnam and Dutchess counties.

## Sue Serino

Over the past four years in office, Sue Serino believes she's shown she's not afraid to be a voice for the constituents in her district.

As the aging committee chairperson in the senate, Serino said she has fought to ensure there is funding for senior programs and taxes are kept at bay so retired residents can remain in the state. Serino has advocated for programs like Meals on Wheels that are critical for seniors and she has also made the push to provide services for seniors that might be dealing with elder abuse, including an extensive hotline.

Serino, a Hyde Park resident, said she supported efforts to provide a middle class tax cut—the largest in 70 years—and cut corporate and manufacturing tax rates.

Serino argued the state needs to offer more funding if early voting is passed, but she agreed voters should be allowed to cast a “no-excuse” absentee ballot.

When discussing healthcare, while her opponent supports a universal



Sue Serino

system, Serino warned the cost would be a burden on business owners. Additionally, she said the law is too broad right now and people who are very sick could move from another state and get care. As for codifying abortion rights, Serino said no one is looking to roll back pro-choice options for women in the state.

When addressing her concerns with the Red Flag bill, Serino said law enforcement needs to be more involved

in crafting it. She stressed she supports school resource officers in school facilities and providing more mental health services for students.

“They feel much better with having the school resource officer,” Serino said of students.

Serino doesn't believe legislators should receive a pay raise and thinks lawmakers should still be able to receive outside income. By raising the pay and making the job full-time, Serino said it would make lawmakers lifelong politicians and result in more corruption.

“Our outside jobs are real life experience,” Serino, who believes in term limits, said.

Within the district, Serino has secured funding for an overpass at the dangerous Pudding Street intersection along the Taconic State Parkway and for the senior center at the Butterfield redevelopment in Cold Spring.

Serino said as a single parent, she understands the struggles of residents in her district, which she believes her opponent, who was able to sell her family business, does not.

“I know what it's like to struggle and we still have people struggling,” Serino said. “That's probably one of the biggest differences between us. I'm not afraid to be their voice.”



Karen Smythe

than if they had insurance and received preventative care or earlier treatment, Smythe said.

“We need to do something that actually covers everyone,” she said.

Smythe supports the Red Flag bill, a gun control measure meant to take guns away from people that could be mentally unstable. There are too many instances where gun violence could have been stopped if this law was passed, she argued, with different community stakeholders allowed to report people they believe to be a danger.

In order to keep schools safe, Smythe said she supports having an armed police officer stationed at school buildings.

To stop corruption at the state government level, Smythe said eliminating limited liability loophole in campaign donations is important so a person can't set up as many corporations as they want to skirt donation limits. The measure is being stalled by the GOP majority, Smythe said. She also believes limiting outside income is critical and would support legislators becoming full-time positions with a pay increase.

In order to make the state more affordable, Smythe said the state should explore taxing a family or person based on what they can afford, rather than the property they own.

Within Putnam, Smythe said she would fight to make sure the money allocated for the Pudding Street Overpass becomes a reality. Roads also need to be taken care of, she added, and some communities are in need of sewer systems.

Smythe ran a union construction business that had been in her family for four generations and has been involved in a number of non-profits.

“I am someone that will bring a fresh perspective to Albany,” Smythe said. “I will stand up for the people of the mid-Hudson Valley.”

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# Harckham Takes Aim at Murphy for 40th Senate Seat

By Rick Pezzullo and Martin Wilbur

In a hotly contested race, NYS Sen. Terrence Murphy is hoping to be re-elected to a third term in office as he takes on former Westchester County lawmaker Peter Harckham. The district represents parts of upper Westchester, Putnam, and Dutchess counties.

## Terrence Murphy

State Senator Terrence Murphy (R-C/Yorktown) is proud of his record serving approximately 325,000 residents in the 40th District over the last four years and is looking forward to continuing working tirelessly for his constituents if reelected on November 6.

"I represent everybody. I try to do my best to help people," said Murphy, who succeeded Greg Ball, extending the Republican dominance in the seat to 104 years. "It has been an honor and a privilege. I never thought I would do this and get to do some really good things."

Murphy, 52, grew up next to Wilkens Fruit Farm in Yorktown. He decided to study nutrition after graduating from Yorktown High School. He went on to receive a bachelor's degree in nutrition and a doctorate of chiropractic from Life University College of Chiropractic. In 1999, he opened the Yorktown Health and Wellness Center on Commerce Street in Yorktown.

He was elected to the Yorktown Town Board in 2009 and reelected in 2013. His Senate District serves Peekskill, Cortlandt, Somers, Yorktown, Croton-on-Hudson, Buchanan and other municipalities in Westchester, along with parts of Putnam and Dutchess counties. He has been endorsed by 250 different unions and the New York League of Conservation Voters, among others.

"We've done so much stuff in the last four years," Murphy said. "I try to be proactive, not reactive. It's about representing the people."

Murphy stressed he was particularly proud of his efforts in trying to combat the heroin and prescription opioid crisis. The father of three was appointed co-chairman of the Senate's Task Force Against Heroin & Opioid Addiction. Murphy later introduced a legislative package with a four-prong approach to tackling the problem through prevention, treatment, recovery and enforcement.

"We crafted the most comprehensive legislation not only in New York State, but in the nation," Murphy said.

Murphy said he was also in the forefront of the fight to prevent the U.S. Coast Guard from anchoring barges in the Hudson River, secured \$500,000 for

meadow restoration at Croton Point Park and was able to get \$24 million placed in a cessation fund that was intended to be only for communities affected by the closure of the Indian Point nuclear power plants in Buchanan.

Instead, in what he called "a bait and switch" by Governor Andrew Cuomo, who reached a deal with Entergy to shut down the plants in 2021, the cessation fund was also made available to other municipalities in the state facing similar financial struggles. Murphy unsuccessfully called for the plants to stay open until 2030 to allow more time for a smoother transition.

Noting his father worked for Con Edison for 50 years, Murphy said he has held NYSEG's "feet to the fire" for being "a complete failure" in dealing with storms and upgrading equipment. "This is 2018. We shouldn't be going out with electricity

every other week," he said, stressing greater transparency was needed from the Public Service Commission.

Regarding gun control measures, Murphy said, "I've signed on to every piece of legislation that would protect our kids' safety. With gun control you need to use common sense. Anybody with a mental illness should

never have a gun. Do I believe in your Second Amendment rights? I certainly do."

Murphy said the SAFE Act was approved before he was elected and his opposition to it is the way it was done.

"You have good, law abiding citizens who would lose their guns because they forgot to register them," he said. "The SAFE Act is not going anywhere. The reality is we have to protect our community."

As for the Child Victims Act, which has passed multiple times in the Assembly but has not been supported in the Senate, Murphy said there "should be a compromise somewhere."

The legislation would extend statutes of limitations for sex abuse cases by allowing victims to file suit up to 28 years old and increase the maximum age for a victim to file suit from 23 to 28. Civil suits could be filed until the victim is 50 years old.

"Every victim deserves some form of justice," Murphy said. "Should something be done? Absolutely. 100%."

Murphy voted against renaming the Tappan Zee Bridge and supports term limits (no more than three terms). He also made no apologies for posing for a photo with President Donald Trump when Trump was a candidate. It's a photo Murphy's Democratic opponent, Peter Harckham, has widely circulated.

"Do I think he's (Trump) doing a good job on policy? Absolutely," Murphy said. "On politics? He should probably learn to

shut up."

## Peter Harckham

Peter Harckham had been approached to run for the 40th state Senate District on two previous occasions.

The former county legislator said neither time was right for him to take the plunge, with his children still in high school.

But 2018 is a different story as the political landscape at the national and state level has been turned on its head. Harckham, 57, who worked in two separate state authority jobs from mid-2015 until this April, said some of those same constituents, including the governor, once again appealed to him to get into the race in hopes that this could be the year the long-held Republican seat could turn Democratic.

"It was the belief that we had to do better at this level and we had to have a unified state government against the Trump assault on New York," he said of his decision to try to unseat two-term Republican incumbent Terrence Murphy. "You can't have your hand tied behind your back. You can't have a Senate majority that just sits on bills and abdicates its responsibility."

While this campaign has careened from silliness to nastiness, particularly as Election Day draws near, Harckham said the issues where he believes the majority of the district's residents need greater protection are reproductive health rights, gun safety and seeking justice for child abuse victims.

Harckham said Murphy has also failed to do his part to even out the disparity in state education foundation aid to the Hudson Valley. The Senate Republicans' Long Island power base keeps Nassau and Suffolk districts grouped with New York City schools in the Regional Cost Index, while the northern suburbs are paired with districts as far north as Ulster County.

As a result, Harckham cited a Brennan Center for Justice report stating that schools in the 40th Senate District have lost about \$77 million because of the inequity.

"While the property taxpayers have been shortchanged \$77 million, Sen. Murphy and the Republican majority have voted to send tens of millions of dollars to charter schools," Harckham said.

Harckham said stronger gun laws are critical. Most notably, he wants the red flag bill, which can take a gun away from someone who is considered a threat to themselves and others. Banning bump stocks and raising the age to buying a gun to 21 is also needed.

"It's simply protecting the public or protecting an individual, it goes to suicide prevention as well," he said.

Harckham is a supporter of single-payer health coverage, a move that would guarantee health care coverage for all. He claimed the shift would not be more expensive for the state; rather than employers and employees paying insurance companies with a premium, that money would be moved into a payroll tax.

"Republicans in Washington are cutting protections to the Affordable Care Act, it's important to find other ways to deliver these services more cost-effectively and

to give people peace of mind that they're not one illness away from bankruptcy," Harckham said.

Another protection would be the Reproductive Health Act. He insisted that with a Conservative majority now on the U.S. Supreme Court the protections for women in New York since the state passed abortion legislation in

1970 could be weakened or lost. The bill would

The number of high-profile sex abuse cases has highlighted the need to pass the Child Victims Act, Harckham said. The legislation has passed multiple times in the Assembly but

It would extend statutes of limitations for sex abuse cases by allowing victims to file suit up to 28 years old and increase the maximum age for a victim to file suit from 23 to 28. Civil suits could be filed until the victim is 50 years old.

The measure would also provide a one-year period when victims of any age could file suit, a crucial component of the law, Harckham said.

"All of these organizations have been documented to have been aware of predatory behavior and not done anything because they were concerned about the bottom line," Harckham said. "This is abhorrent and justice for victims has to be the driving factor of this legislation."

Harckham said Murphy has failed to come to grips with Indian Point's scheduled 2021 closure, a move made by Entergy and other operators because nuclear power is unprofitable. He said he would press for a dedicated cessation fund for Cortlandt and the other entities hurt economically by the plant's closure.

Harckham favors a get-tough policy with the utilities, particularly NYSEG, to build a more resilient grid and communications for severe weather. If neither the Public Service Commission nor legislation can't accomplish that, then threatening loss of license would have to be considered.



Terrence Murphy



Peter Harckham



# Longtime Lawmaker Galef Faces Fresh Face Chiulli

By Rick Pezzullo

Voters who go to the polls on November 6 will see a sharp contrast in the race for the 95th State Assembly District between incumbent Sandra Galef and challenger Lawrence Chiulli beyond their political affiliations.

Galef, 78, who is a Democrat, has served in the Assembly since 1993. Prior to that, the former school teacher served 13 years as a Westchester County Legislator.

Chiulli, 21, who is a Republican, is a Croton High School graduate currently attending Westchester Community College. This is his first attempt at elected office.

"I think experience really does matter," Galef said. "We sometimes have 15,000 bills before us. I've been there as a full-time elected official."

"My running is nothing against my opponent," Chiulli said. "I think we need to get new eyes on things."

The 95th Assembly District covers the City of Peekskill, Town of Cortlandt, Town and Village of Ossining and parts of Putnam County, including Cold Spring and Philipstown.

A longtime Ossining resident, Galef has been a leading advocate for legislative reform in Albany as well as being heavily involved in matters pertaining to education, taxes, energy, consumer issues, health, and senior citizens.



**Sandra Galef**

Another major focus of Galef has been ethics reform. She currently has 14 separate bills pending as part of a package that calls for banning large campaign donors from securing state contracts; enacting term limits for the Assembly speaker and Senate president; prohibiting political consultants from lobbying lawmakers; and preventing legislators from giving state money to non-profits



**Lawrence Chiulli**

that employ their relatives, among other proposals.

In addition, Galef has introduced 13 election reform bills to promote transparency and encourage more people to vote, such as early voting and same day registration.

Chiulli lives in Cortlandt and is a member of the Army National Guard. He supports term limits and believes election

reform is needed to protect the process.

"I don't want anything to be rigged in any way or be manipulated," he said. "I definitely support election reform so that we get messages out to voters."

He said he also "wholeheartedly" agrees with ethics reform, commenting, "We are elected officials and we should be held to a higher standard."

One issue Chiulli would like to focus on is creating a plan for the future of the Indian Point nuclear plants property in Buchanan, where operation is set to cease in 2021.

"The people that live in that area are going to be affected," he said during a forum at the Ossining Library. "When people are moving out of Buchanan and Verplanck they're going to want to move here."

Galef said she and Senator David Carlucci (D/New City) were able to secure \$800,000 in Foundation Aid for the Ossining School District, but acknowledged the district was still owed about \$14 million. "Foundation Aid is a really big issue in Ossining and Peekskill," she said. "Hopefully we'll have more success next year."

Meanwhile, Galef said she prides herself in keeping constituents informed through town meetings and forums, newsletters and a cable television program.

## Don't Forget to Vote Next Week on November 6

## Your Vote Matters Polls are Open All Day





# Incumbent Byrne Looks to Fend Off Challenge from Gashi

By David Propper

First-term lawmaker Kevin Byrne, a Republican, is looking to keep his seat in the NYS Assembly against Democrat and first-time candidate Vedat Gashi. The 94th district represents parts of upper Westchester and Putnam counties.

## Kevin Byrne

In his first term in office, Kevin Byrne believes he's been able to pass legislation and support policies that have improved the lives of many residents in his district.

Introducing eight laws that have now been enacted is among the most for a freshman lawmaker in New York, Byrne said.

He said he's supported programs and legislation that has helped veterans and first responders. One of those pieces of legislation was offering cancer coverage to volunteer firefighters, Byrne said, which was already offered to professional firemen. He also helped name a roadway after a fallen



Kevin Byrne

have done that," Byrne said.

While Byrne's opponent voiced support for the Red Flag Bill and the New York Health Act, Byrne defended opposing both measures. He said the Red Flag Bill would take a person's gun, but not provide mental health or other services to the person who lost their weapon. (He did note he supports a ban of bump stocks, which allows a rifle to function as a fully automatic firearm and doesn't want convicted domestic abusers to possess firearms.)

"If you just take their property and you don't address the needs of the individual there's a real danger of escalating the situation," Byrne said of the Red Flag proposal.

He said by turning the state's healthcare into a single-payer system, it could ration care and delay medical help for those that need it. The costs are also too high, Byrne said. He called it "dangerous" legislation where quality and access to care that would go down.

Byrne doesn't support early voting because of the unfunded mandates counties would be forced to carry, but does want to pass a "no-excuse" absentee ballot so a person can vote



Vedat Gashi

early that way.

Within his district, Byrne advocated to get part of Route 6 paved, for positive train control implementation, and to get better services from power companies in light of major storms.

When asked about his opponent pointing out he's one of the most conservative members in the Assembly, Byrne didn't shy away from the label. He said he was proud to be someone that believed in less government and taxes while protecting everyone's constitutional freedoms.

"I've worked hard every single day," Byrne said. "I hope I've earned their vote based on my record and performance."

## Vedat Gashi

Knowing that in 2018 extremes can be the loudest, Vedat Gashi believes there is still a base of voters that wants to address problems directly in a serious manner.

Wanting to see taxes as low as possible while still investing in schools and infrastructure, Gashi, who is running for NYS assembly as a Democrat, wants to represent to the entire community in

the 94th district.

Gashi has shown support for progressive legislation that he thinks would better New York while arguing his opponent does not own up to certain votes regarding the local and state deduction and gun control measures. When discussing the Red Flag Bill meant to take guns away from mentally troubled and potentially dangerous folks, Gashi, who is a gun owner, said he believes it is sensible legislation and if a person is unstable, they should not have access to a firearm.

*'I think we're ready for some results, I think we're ready for serious answers to questions we have. I'm running to do that.'---Vedat Gashi*

As for the New York Health Act, Gashi said studies show the state would save "billions" of dollars if New York became a single-payer system. He noted opponents of the bill have "scared mongered" it with regards to the costs and other factors. When growing up, his sister broke both of her ankles and without insurance at the time, the cost were more than his family's savings, making healthcare personal for Gashi.

"People are scared by their rising healthcare costs," Gashi said.

Gashi said he would like to see early voting in the state, calling the low voter turnout in New York "reprehensible." He said creating further hurdles, instead of opening up access, would discourage people from voting.

Locally, Gashi wants to see the proper amount of funding for school systems and roads.

He stressed his willingness to engage and talk with the other side to reach compromises and solutions. Gashi, who is an attorney that works and lives in Yorktown, is involved in the local Rotary Club and activities at his children's schools.

"I think I'm a hard worker, I care about the district," Gashi said. "I'm running because I'm fed up with empty rhetoric and pretending that they're doing something about the problems we face when they're only having these task force meetings. I think we're ready for some results, I think we're ready for serious answers to questions we have. I'm running to do that."

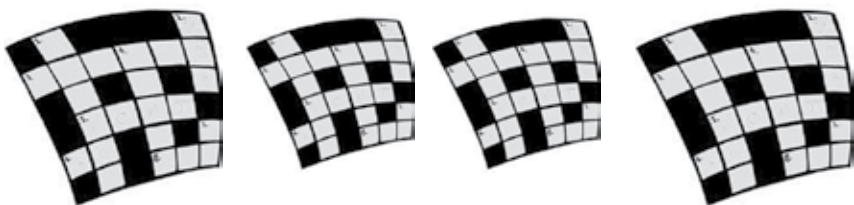
*'When I first ran, I said I wanted to lead the charge for change to fight for a more affordable New York. I believe I have done that.' --- Kevin Byrne*

serviceman, Clayton Carpenter, who lived in Yorktown and graduated from Lakeland High School. Byrne voted to stop patrons from using vape products in different establishments, in which he was one of the few Republicans to support that measure.

"When I first ran, I said I wanted to lead the charge for change to fight for a more affordable New York. I believe I

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# Ruthven and Link Face Off for Kent Town Board

By Anna Young

Following the resignation of Scott Chin earlier this year, a spot is open on the Kent town board. While Councilwoman Christine Woolley is holding the seat, she will step down to make room for one of the two candidates--Chris Ruthven and Gary Link--running this November.

## Christopher Ruthven

With roughly two decades spent working for Putnam County, first-time candidate Christopher Ruthven believes his experience as the deputy commissioner of parks has provided him with the necessary expertise to enact beneficial change to the Town of Kent.

As a longtime Kent resident and county worker, Ruthven, a Republican, said he's ready to apply his hands-on knowledge with local government, purchasing, budgets, contracts and negotiations to work effectively with his colleagues to benefit the community if he's elected to serve on the Kent Town Board.

"I bring a vast amount of knowledge to the issues that are affecting the Town of Kent and every resident," Ruthven said. "I'm a hard worker and I'll be dedicated to this job and give 110 percent."

While never serving in a political position before, he said his insight with the county has provided him with a keen outlook on the necessary changes that need to be made within the community. Ruthven, 46, said his focus, if elected, will be to improve the lake quality, the infrastructure along Route 52, and attracting new business to the community.

"Improving the Route 52 corridor and promoting smart business is all tied to having the right infrastructure and sewer system in place," Ruthven said. "We need to improve the infrastructure, clean up the lakes and beaches, and ensure smart sensible growth."

Citing the roadways as disastrous, Ruthven said the town needs to use their resources to create a comprehensive plan to rebuild and repave the roads in a time sensitive manner and provide the highway department with the funding to maintain them. It costs much less to maintain good quality roads than to replace the roads completely, he said.

He added that smart sensible devices need to be put in place to produce better lake water quality and prevent water run offs from affecting homeowners. Ruthven, who has a degree in natural resource conservation, said a vortex unit or bioretention ponds would prevent run offs into the lakes and reduce the lakes



Christopher Ruthven

algae.

Ruthven added that the sewer system on Route 52 has been underused, adding that there hasn't been any long-term push to put any development within that area. He said the sewer district needs to be expanded if it's not getting enough use.

"Our roads, beaches, lakes and our shopping are the main components that affect everybody," Ruthven said. "It's important that we address and fix those problems."

If elected, Ruthven expressed the importance of working together to forge a better path for the town, stating that political party shouldn't matter when officials want to do what's best for the residents. He said he has an open mind and is willing to work in bipartisanship with board members to benefit the community.

"The community means a lot to me and I'm going to be here for a long time. With the issues currently affecting Kent, it's the right time for me to get involved and I think I bring a lot of knowledge to the table," Ruthven said. "I want to contribute and make this town better for my friends, neighbors and the residents of Kent."

## Gary Link

First-time candidate Gary Link is determined to better his community and improve the quality of life for taxpayers if he is elected to serve on the Kent Town Board.

As a resident of Putnam County for 50 years and Kent for 30, Link, 54, said he wants to give back to his community by executing his municipal background and ensuring the town continues to advance and move forward. Link, who previously worked as a real property appraiser for Carmel and the town assessor for Kent, currently serves as deputy assessor of Greenburgh in Westchester County.



Gary Link

"Working in this new position has given me the opportunity to expand my knowledge of assessing in a larger and more diverse district, gain additional insight, while advancing and strengthening my ability to find ways to help address tax concerns of business owners and residents," Link said.

While Link, a Democrat, has never served in a political position, he said his familiarity with local government, specifically Kent's board and departments, will benefit the community if he's elected. With no desire to serve a higher office, Link said he only wants to focus on the needs of the entire community.

With over 15 years working with different town boards and departments, Link said he will utilize his experience to reduce the tax burden, accelerate the growth of responsible businesses in the downtown, revitalize the Route 52 corridor, address lake quality, improve the sewer district and maintain and strengthen the quality of services residents deserve.

If elected, Link said he will focus on finding ways to attract new development and businesses to existing properties along Route 52, citing many abandoned, unoccupied buildings and viable undeveloped land. Link said he wants to create

a committee and hold forums with residents and other officials to create a responsible and lucrative plan that will entice business into the community.

Link added the sewer district is one major entity that should have had a positive impact on development but has continued to stall. He said if more businesses could utilize the existing sewer district it could lower the special district rates for its users.

"It's a matter of getting down to business and doing the work," Link said. "I know how local government works first hand and I know what to do and how to get things down within town government."

Link noted that the town has an array of committees that rarely meet to solve Kent's most pressing issues. If elected, he said he hopes to create an open dialogue between board members and focus on doing better.

"If that means I have to chair every committee to get things done I'll do it," Link said.

He also stressed the importance of working in conjunction with the Carmel School District's Board of Education if they choose to build a transportation facility within the town or put a referendum back of for a vote.

Link said he hopes to lead by example and work with his colleagues in a bipartisan manner to make decisions and enact legislation that benefits the town and the residents. If elected, he said he hopes board members can put aside their politics, egos and personal issues to put residential needs first.

While he wants his platform and experience to catapult him to victory, he hopes whoever is elected will step up, represent the residents, and work collaboratively to better the town.

"I can't make people do anything, but it's not about me, it's about the residents and it's about doing what's right for the Town of Kent at the end of the day," Link said. "I'm hoping if I'm elected, I can push that message through and we can set aside whatever differences we have and work for the better of the town."





# Montanaro and Larca Battle for Vacant Southeast Seat

Following the sudden resignation of former councilwoman Liz Hudak, a special election is being held in Southeast. Melina Montanaro is running against Eric Larca with the main campaign topic a proposed project from Northeast Logistics.

## Melinda Montanaro

After running for the Southeast town board last year, but falling short, Democrat Melinda Montanaro is running for the same reasons she did so a year ago.

Her primary concern is development within town that has changed the town code and defied the Comprehensive Plan.

"I find it problematic," she said, adding the zoning code and comprehensive plan protect property values and keep the character of the town "I want to fight and prioritize for the residents, not the developers."

The major project in front of the town right now is a large-scale logistics center off Route 312 that has caused outrage within the town. Montanaro has come out strongly against it, stressing she would not support it in its current form. The project would require a zoning change, which Montanaro said she would not vote for if she were on the town board.



Melinda Montanaro

She said the project would bring in too many tractor-trailers resulting in increased traffic and environmental concerns. The project would be too close to a residential area, Montanaro argued. She also believes whatever tax revenue the development would bring in is not enough to change the zoning code. Because property values

could go down, that would result in less tax revenue overall for the town, Montanaro said.

Montanaro argued another business that fits into the community better and has higher paying jobs could go into that parcel on Puglsey Road.

Montanaro would also work to secure state funding to enhance community projects, including the Old Town Hall revival that would hopefully bring entertainment to the Main Street of Brewster. She would also fight for state funding for recreation programs and organizations that serve residents. Building up the community would be imperative to her.

"The money is out there and I'm committed to securing more of it for Southeast," Montanaro said.

She also stressed she would fight to ensure that the budget remains under the tax cap, which the town is expected to do this year.

Montanaro is a former marketing executive who managed multi-million dollar budgets and she owned a small business in Southeast after her daughter was born. When she moved to the community, her and her husband began volunteering at local community organizations like the Brewster Theater Company, Cultural Arts Coalition and helped put the Brewster Fall Festival together.

Montanaro said she wants to be a voice for residents before any other interest.

"I would want them to remember that I, as an elected official, I pledge to be a committed, hard-working public servant to the residents of Southeast," Montanaro vowed.

## Eric Larca

As a lifelong resident of the town, Eric Larca, Republican, wants see Southeast reach its full potential and wants to contribute to that success. He believes he can bring value to Southeast on the town board.

"Hopefully getting on the town board, I can have more of an effect on continuing to improve the community," Larca said. "I really want to promote more community spirit."

Larca said he believes in smart growth and making "common sense" decisions after reviewing data and input.

Larca, who is on the planning board, said he has concerns about the proposed logistics center, but also can't comment as freely about it because he is on a board reviewing the application. Town planner Ashley Ley sent Larca a letter encouraging him not to publicly pre-judge the application and any possible zoning changes attached to it.

He has voiced concerns with



Eric Larca

increased traffic and noise and light pollution. Additionally, there are concerns how the volunteer first responders would handle the property in the event of a fire, he said.

"I'm hearing all of the community's concerns," Larca said.

When asked if he ever considered resigning from the planning board to speak more freely, Larca said no because speaking out against the project could still leave the town in liability if he were to get on the board and cast a vote regarding the project. There are also other projects Larca is involved in and wants to continue to work with his planning colleagues to serve the town.

"I'm in this for the best of the community," he said.

Larca, whose professional career is managing budgets, said he would want to get into the "nuts and bolts" of the town budget to find ways to save money. The town board has done a good job of building up its fund balance after being in a dire financial situation dating back to 2011, Larca said. As reserves build up, he would like to see that money invested in the community.

He also wants to a steward of the town to promote more unity.

Larca is the director of business analyst for a company, which focuses on strategy, process and efficiency. The Brewster High School graduate has attended every planning board meeting and staff meeting as a member and almost every town board meeting.

"I've been concerned with this town before I was even on the planning board and wanting to get involved," Larca said. "I'm driven to do this because I want what's best for this community."

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