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PolitickerNJ
YEAR 2013
in REVIEW
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

"WSW LEADING THE MOVE TO CREATE AN ALTERNATIVE TO GIANT FIRMS" ROLL CALL

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Editor's Note

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PolitickerNJ

2013: Year in Review

Gov. Chris Christie would not be beaten in 2013, and so Democrats chose love not war with this Hurricane Sandy-tested Republican governor, and all-but-sure future presidential candidate. Dinged a little after the election — by his own party, in fact — and now by GWBridgegate, the gov began the year by calling out and embarrassing individual legislators who opposed him.

Battleground Democrats in the general election cycle nursed a two-pronged mission: avoid Christie's bad side, and stay away from box-office poison Democratic gubernatorial candidate Barbara Buono. Keeping local, keeping regional, staying positive (independent expenditures like the Fund for Jobs, Growth and Security would handle the dirty stuff in a big way and allow the candidates to act morally aghast in good measure), they employed the uncomplicated politics of survival.

Christie preferred to call it "bipartisanship."

As Washington stagnated in Tea Party sepsis, New Jersey - or so the GOP governor with national ambitions kept telling people - had a good government story to tell. And safety-first Democrats happily helped him craft that narrative.

Until the final days of the campaign cycle, long past the time when he had shut down questions from the press, Christie stayed away from those South Jersey installations of opposition power and stayed away from battleground districts, allowing incumbent Dems to counter punch Republicans in individualized confrontations with the considerable assistance of out-of-state IEs, while singing their own echoing phrases of cooperation with Christie.

The Governor was too strong in the polls.

The only way to handle the thorny problem of his presence on the ballot would be to localize and savage the candidates of state Senate Minority Leader Tom Kean (R-21), and make them seem farther away from the governor than Democrats who work with him in a fully functioning Trenton Statehouse.

It worked.

Throughout the cycle, some insiders anticipated a tightening at the top of the ticket. But it didn't happen.

Democrats trusted in the 2011 legislative map, which favored their party. Even as Christie continued his ascendancy in the polls, Democrats could rely on deep blue districts and not have to slug it out with a popular governor adept at combat.

A threat to bipartisan establishment protocol occurred when Buono, seeking to arm herself for her fight with Christie, attempted to install Assemblyman Jason O'Donnell (D-31) as

chairman of the party. A Bayonne firefighter who had clashed with Christie in the past, O'Donnell planned to project a contrast argument. But as early as June incumbents knew they didn't want contrast. Contrast arguably helped Buono, who like O'Donnell had voted against the public pension and benefits overhaul championed by Christie and Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3), the signature piece of bipartisan reform both men could claim.

To Sweeney, O'Donnell mangled that message. So the party mangled O'Donnell, insisting he wasn't a real Democrat.

The party instead installed Passaic County Democratic Chair John Currie, who declared that anyone who defected from Democratic Party ranks would get the bat treatment, just before another stampede of Democrats crossed no man's land to endorse Christie.

Republican legislative candidates challenging incumbent Democrats were like Buono, or so sounded the message: they simply didn't understand.

Love abided. Partisan rancor subsided.

"If I wanted a party I'd have guests over," U.S. Sen.-elect Cory Booker (D-NJ) told County Chair Peg Schaffer and a group of long-suffering Somerset County Democrats on the Sunday night before election.

"If I wanted a party I'd have guests over," U.S. Sen.-elect Cory Booker (D-NJ)

The popular Booker had himself been disabled as an instrument in the governor's contest by Christie, who stayed clear of what might have been a dangerous collision when he scheduled the special U.S. Senate election on Oct. 16, rather than sully his own Nov. 5 date with the voting public.

Not eager to engage in hand-to-hand combat with Christie, Booker appeared to have no problem with that time table.

On his final tour of the state, in the last full week of the campaign, the Governor selected three close district contests in which to brand as "obstructionist" those Democrats imploring voters to recognize their capacity to work with the governor.

The ads – quick and generic and inconsistent with the rest of Christie's campaign talk - failed to resonate.

On the last night of the campaign, climbing in the polls, Christie went to Union City to stand on the same platform with his two most public Democratic allies: state Sen. Brian P. Stack (D-33) and Essex County Executive Joe DiVincenzo.

A day later he buried Buono by 22 points, Legislative Democrats maintained exactly their 48 and 24 caucus majorities respectively in the Assembly and Senate.

While recording the lowest turnout numbers in general election history, the 2013 love-fest proved the most expensive ever: with total state elections spending, including primary numbers, in the vicinity of $129 million, according to the state Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

Having dismantled Buono, Christie could now rid the Senate of Kean, who like Buono had tried to forge a contrast campaign and in the process irritated Sweeney. There was too much good government to be had for that. Yet with Christie focused on selling his historic election results, GOP caucus members resisted, and kept Kean, and in so doing whispered gently in the governor's ear what the election cycle had not — the old Roman epigram, "All glory is fleeting," as Christie continued his political march, albeit with some late-in-the-year challenges...

COURTESY OF MIKE PETERS/MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

Politician of the Year
CHRIS CHRISTIE

JEWEL SAMAD/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The national media gaped in bewilderment at the non-contest as the Republican incumbent ran for a second term in a state where registered Democrats outnumber Republicans by over 700,000.

Whether governing or campaigning, the governor knows how to wield power, and 2013 was an election year for him.

Unlike leaders who excel at many aspects of politics but fail to perfect their comfort-level with command-decision making, Christie thrives on building pragmatic coalitions out of the raw materials of power.

The national media gaped in bewilderment at the non-contest as the Republican incumbent ran for a second term in a state where registered Democrats outnumber Republicans by over 700,000. But the governor's mastery of politics simply reflected a very carefully considered understanding of his home state, where machines rule, complemented by his own superior instincts as a politician.

Still, a Republican with national ties to the Koch Brothers and hard-right politicians around the country was not supposed to cruise to re-election victory in so-called Blue New Jersey. But Christie finally relished a 22-point victory over Democratic challenger Barbara Buono based in large part on painstakingly cultivated relationships.

It is true that Team Christie had the advantage of his perceived masterful handling of Hurricane Sandy. But they had that advantage based on Christie's performance in a crisis, which drove the incumbent governor's approval ratings and enabled him to capitalize politically.

Christie doesn't miss political opportunities.

If it were just simply about Sandy, we would have expected to see Christie's numbers descend as we headed into an intensified election cycle. That never happened, as Christie translated his attentiveness to power players during his tenure into either critical early endorsements or into securing clear projections of neutrality.

The governor won the support of the Labor-

Politician of the Year
CHRIS CHRISTIE

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE/TIM LARSEN

"The governor used his national big donor GOP contacts to out-raise Buono $13 million to $3 million, while cozying up to the power brokers of the Democratic Party machine."

ers, Essex County Executive Joe DiVincenzo, state Sen. Brian P. Stack and many mayors and Democratic Party leaders, some of them impacted by Hurricane Sandy, enabling him to keep that message in the forefront, while forcing others to think twice about opposing him.

While never actually outright endorsing Christie, George Norcross III, whose South Jersey Democratic Party controls the largest bloc of votes in the Legislature, and powerful ally Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3) celebrated the governor's bipartisan support for the Rutgers merger, Atlantic City redevelopment, big labor projects, public pensions overhaul and charter schools initiatives.

In return, they wrote off Buono and championed lovefest-intent, bipartisan-messaged Democratic Party campaigns in the Legislature, as Christie personally stayed away from opposing any of their allies.

The governor used his national big donor GOP contacts to out-raise Buono $13 million to $3 million, while cozying up to the power brokers of the Democratic Party machine.

They knew Christie threatened that power from the start.

They knew about his considerable comfort, dating back to his tenure as U.S. Attorney and during his first term as governor, with what some call power and others call revenge.

Along the way, Christie happily picked philosophical fights with those on the rightward reaches of his own party, including possible 2016 presidential contender U.S. Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY), and former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin.

Once he had the operation in place, Christie ran one of the most disciplined statewide campaigns in history, built on the governor's utter confidence with life as the frontrunner and as a political winner.

His particular relationships also enabled him to get a majority of New Jersey's Latino vote, just in time for 2016 and a chance to play for the country's largest growing minority when he runs for president.

He would end the year in an unfamiliar place, on his heels, having to announce the resignation of two of his allies at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey amid accusations of an agency that politicized government to the detriment of public safety.

But that didn't change the politics of the election.

Winner of the Year
STEVEN FULOP

As thrilling a win as Fulop's mayoral bid was in arguably the best race of the year, his run apparently didn't end locally, which put that much more of a victorious exclamation point on Fulop's 2013.

It started in Jersey City.

Notice the absence of Jerry Healy's name on the losers' list that accompanies this Year in Review. While dogged by some unfortunate storylines, the incumbent mayor ran an aggressive and worthy campaign in defeat.

But it wasn't enough to turn back longtime nemesis Fulop, the Goldman Sachs trader turned Iraq War veteran and perpetual Healy critic.

Fulop took his time building up to his successful win for mayor this year, cutting his teeth on school board wins to augment his own Ward E base until he eventually had a majority, the relationships citywide, and a well-timed change narrative to buck Healy.

The incumbent's allies in the Hudson County Democratic Organization (HCDO) tried to brand him an outsider and wimp, but the ex-Marine showed a tenacity in fighting back and defining himself as the better man in the race.

After Fulop won, the Democrat immediately set about polishing his standing as an emergent political star.

Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3) was making moves in South Jersey to take over for the sitting governor in the event of a Christie departure ahead of 2016.

By all appearances, Sweeney would have to contend with Fulop, who signaled a willfulness to unite a badly fractured North Jersey in a coming battle with the party-ruling South.

> **"The ex-Marine showed a tenacity in fighting back and defining himself as the better man in the race."**

Winner of the Year, Runners Up

GEORGE NORCROSS III

Recognizing the pointlessness of standing in Christie's way, GN3 put his energies into reclaiming a South Jersey-dominant majority in the Legislature, and it worked. The boss took the lead in putting the power pieces together to form the Fund for Jobs, Growth and Security, which poured $8 million into legislative contests. Norcross also made other Democrats work with him to again craft legislative leadership. And then there's his dominance of the Philly Inquirer.

STEVE SWEENEY

The ambitious Senator from South Jersey secured a third term as Senate president. Despite Senate Minority Leader Tom Kean's (R-21) sniping, he didn't appear to have to break a sweat in making sure all his allies won re-election in the Senate. The victories, coupled with his use of the bully pulpit as Senate president, put Sweeney in what he and his allies believe will be a prime position to succeed Christie as governor.

PATRICK MURRAY

The pollster from Monmouth University consistently called the outcomes in the elections he monitored, most noticeably in the general election for the U.S. Senate and in the governor's contest. Murray by the numbers: he predicted a 20-point victory by Christie over Buono; Christie won by 22 points. In the U.S. Senate Special Election, Murray called it for Booker by ten points. Booker won by 11 points.

CORY BOOKER

It wasn't pretty, but it was a win, and he made history in the process. Not only did Booker become New Jersey's first African-American senator, but one of only a few people in the Senate who have served as urban mayors. Despite having to weather stories questioning his stewardship of the city and his personal finances, Booker also showed his value as a public person with sufficient name ID and goodwill not to have to depend on Norcross or any other political boss.

RICHARD BERDNIK

Bruce Springsteen with a Badge was somewhere down South and endorsing the other guy in the race for Passaic County Sheriff, where incumbent Democrats should have again had trouble with Gov. Chris Christie at the top of the Republican ticket. But Sheriff Berdnik won handily, and finally shook off the monkey on his back named former Sheriff Jerry Speziale.

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Loser of the Year
WOMEN IN POLITICS

NICHOLAS HUNT

Clockwise from top: Milly Silva, Sheila Oliver, Connie Wagner, Shanique Speight, thrown out of a Newark Council seat by a judge and replaced with a male by the voters and Barbara Buono.

It was not a good year for women running for public office – or for women trying to hold onto backroom seats of power.

Up against the power relationships of the Democratic establishment and Gov. Chris Christie and without support from the Democratic National Committee (DNC), the all-female gubernatorial ticket of Barbara Buono and Milly Silva took a beating.

President Barack Obama unnerved progressives with his pro forma, 11th hour invocation of Buono despite having walked past her at the beach on his way to bear-hugging Christie, and the DNC actually started running ads against Christie after the gubernatorial election.

But it wasn't just Buono/Silva.

Women fared poorly around the state this year.

The Democratic Party dumped Speaker Sheila Oliver (D-36) and replaced her with a man. The Mayor of Edison, Toni Ricigliano, lost, replaced by a man. The lone female among powerful Democratic Party county chairs, Union County Democratic Committee Chair Charlotte DeFilippo, went down this year, and Assemblyman Jerry Green (D-22) replaced her.

Then there was veteran Assemblywoman Connie Wagner, who resigned. A man, Joe Lagana, replaced her.

On the other side of the aisle, Republicans recruited numerous women to run for legislative seats, apparently to blunt Buono, then abandoned those women when Buono failed to gain traction, favoring a message of bipartisanship with South Jersey Democrats that prevented the female GOP newcomers from being able to define themselves.

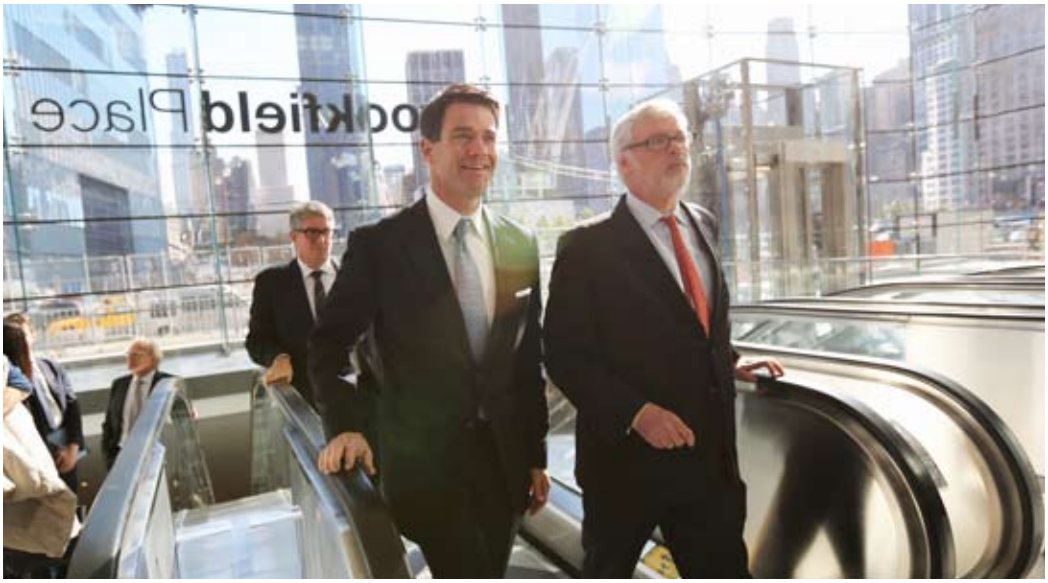
A future test for women in politics will fall on the shoulders of Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno, who could turn into the GOP version of Barbara Buono if Democrats and Republicans – in the ongoing name of bipartisanship - cement relationships in place now.

The only outcomes that prevented women from being a complete disaster this year were in Hillside, where Councilwoman Angela Garretson defeated incumbent Mayor Joe Menza; and in LD14, where veteran state Sen. Linda Greenstein (D-14) again showed her tenacity in prevailing over tough challenger former state Sen. Pete Inverso.

> **"A future test for women in politics will fall on the shoulders of Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno."**

Alert to the problems in her home state and seeking advantages for women, state Sen. Diane Allen (R-7) took charge of the National Order of Women Legislators.

Loser of the Year, Runners-Up



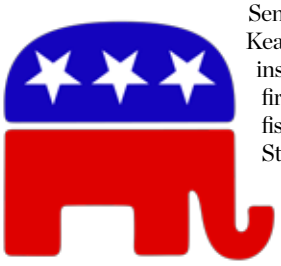
JOHN MOORE/GETTY IMAGES)

Bill Baroni, Port Authority Deputy Executive Director, left, and Patrick Foye, Port Authority Executive Director.

BILL BARONI

Once a determined rising star in the Republican Party, the deputy executive director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, a former LD14 state senator, resigned from his job after giving unsatisfactory answers to legislators who wanted to know what he knew about the closing of traffic lanes on the George Washington Bridge.

THE LEGISLATIVE GOP



Senate Minority Leader Tom Kean (R-21) ran around the state inserting himself into numerous firefights and starting repeated fistfights with Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3), and in the end came up empty-handed. The final results in LD14 and LD38 showed close contests – and ultimately missed opportunities.

PARTY ORGANIZATIONS

Chairmen in this state used to walk around in bowler hats and George Raft spats like legitimate power brokers. Not anymore. The combination of outside independent expenditures and brand names bigger than party, as was the case both with Gov. Chris Christie and U.S. Senator Cory Booker, relegated chairmen to forward observer status.

JON RUNYAN

He said he would serve eight years, and ended up done in four. A lovable gentle giant, the former Eagles offensive lineman apparently could not adjust to those Machiavellian body slams in backrooms and behind august pillars that you never see coming.

JOSE MUNOZ

Up for re-election next year, the Hudson County Freeholder heads for the scrap heap after recording conversations with West New York Mayor Felix Roque and failing to put the mayor away when Roque walked on federal hacking charges.

NELSON ALBANO

When Democrats said they entered the fray with 24 senators and 48 assembly people and would walk out with the same numbers, they meant it. Only the names and district numbers changed when Northfield Mayor Vincent Mazzeo, a Democrat from LD 2, replaced LD1's traffic stop-jammed Albano.

AL COUTINHO

The well-respected assemblyman from LD29 should have been Legislator of the Year based on the work he put into economic development legislation, but instead he ended up in court, trying to plea-deal embezzlement charges. His fall from grace wounded many in Newark's East Ward.

Jon Runyan.

COURTESY OF JON RUNYAN

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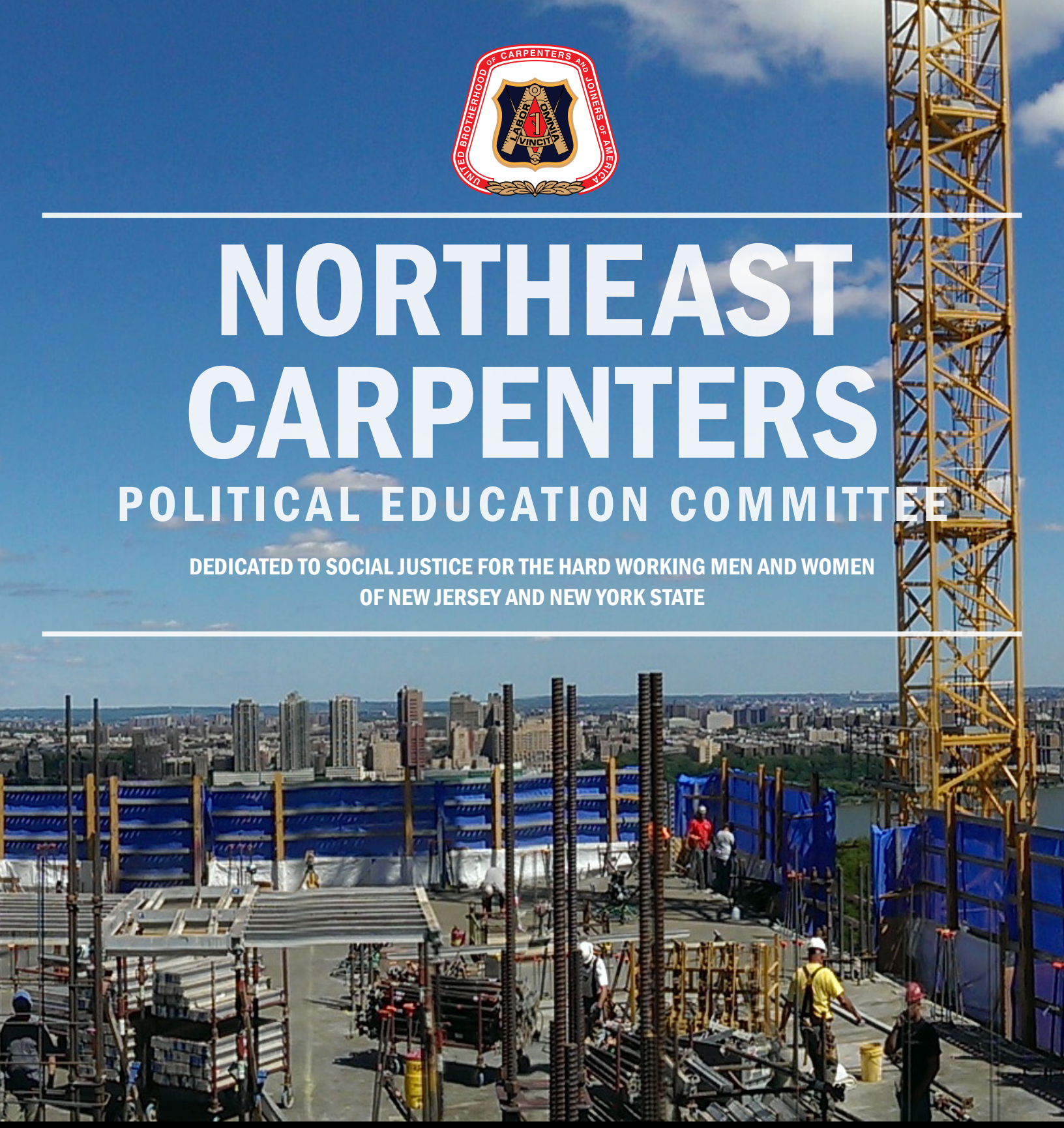

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Strategist of the Year

MIKE CAPELLI

When Ray Pocino and the Laborers broke for Christie, Capelli made his play not to endorse the governor and to put all his resources into electing pro-labor candidates to the Legislature. Add to that Capelli's hard play for Fulop in the Jersey City mayor's election, and it was a breakout political year for the Carpenters' Executive Secretary-Treasurer, who's close to both Assemblyman Troy Singleton (D-7) and political wiz Tricia Mueller.

Operatives of the Year

MIKE DUHAIME/ BILL STEPIEN

Bill Stepien and Mike DuHaime.

TOM WILLIAMS/ROLL CALL VIA GETTY IMAGES

The two belong together, particularly this year. Stepien served as Christie's campaign manager and micromanager of all things New Jersey, while DuHaime continues to build those relationships that Christie will employ nationally when he runs for president in 2016. By the end of the year, Stepien had taken a job with the RGA to apply nationally what he learned in Jersey.

Operative of the Year, Runners-Up

TOM BERTOLI

After years of run and gun political warfare, Bertoli racked the biggest win of his career when Fulop defeated Healy in the Jersey City Mayor's race. The card-carrying carpenter, a former challenger to Nick Sacco and a proud graduate of the Blackboard Jungle, Bertoli overnight went from regional renegade to state-wide power player.

Tom Bertoli

> **"Bertoli overnight went from regional renegade to state-wide power player."**

ADAM SILVERSTEIN

The Bergen County Democratic operative and right-hand man of Chairman Lou Stellato served as a boots-on-the-ground advisor to the Booker campaign, where the candidate turned a big plurality in Bergen; helped elect James Tedesco freeholder to give the Bergen Democratic freeholders a veto-proof majority; and celebrated the successful re-election of all Democratic legislative candidates in Bergen.

Pablo Fonseca.

PABLO FONSECA

Formerly Cory Booker's chief-of-staff, Fonseca reanimated himself as a close advisor to Acting Mayor Luis Quintana and to West New York Mayor Felix Roque. He also notched a win in the much-watched Hillside Mayor's race.

MIKE MULLER

The veteran Democratic political consultant coordinated all campaigns for the Democratic State Committee and despite some tense moments in LD38, held onto Assemblyman Tim Eustace and supplanted Albano with Mazzeo to maintain a clean Democratic majority in both houses. Another great year for Muller.

MITCH SEIM

The Democratic Party operative took advantage of a badly damaged GOP mayoral candidate to get a win for Democrat John Ducey in Brick Township.

Mike Muller.

Legislator of the Year

NICK SACCO

Sacco, the North Bergen power broker senator/mayor from LD32, had at least four significant victories this year. First, unlike others in the Hudson County Democratic Organization (HCDO), he decided to stay out of the Jersey City Mayor's race, thereby producing the opportunity for a closer relationship with eventual winner Steve Fulop.

Second, he secured the chairmanship of the HCDO for North Hudson.

Third, he presented a more unified legislative front than Essex to South Jersey, compelling GN3 to the negotiating table. Sacco's savvy secured the speakership for his district-mate and close ally, Assemblyman Vincent Prieto (D-32), giving the powerful senator sway over the lower house.

In the name of strengthening the county politically, Sacco also made peace with his younger rival, neighboring state Sen. Brian P. Stack (D-33).

Sacco's leadership enabled Hudson, wobbling with wars for years emanating out of North Hudson, to supplant Essex County in statewide power politics.

Sacco received the Legislator of the Year award based strictly on power.

But others strongly contended on other merits.

Number of bills passed? Quantity could be a factor, but appending one's name to any number of bills as a co-sponsor is something of an art form in Statehouse gamesmanship.

Number of press conferences held? Volume level of speeches on the chamber floor? Quantity of emails dispatched? Factors all, but merely getting the attention of the folks on the second floor of the Statehouse alone is not enough.

There are several candidates who were considered, from Senate President Steve Sweeney to Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg to Sens. Bob Smith and Ray Lesniak to others in the majority party.

One even could make a case for Sen. Tom Kean Jr. for his deft imperson-

Legislator of the Year Runner-Up

M. TERESA RUIZ

ation of Bill Mazeroski. He remains the minority leader despite what some pundits saw as overwhelming odds against him in the aftermath of Nov. 5, and that counts for something.

We considered many factors: Type of bills championed, bipartisanship tempered with the ability to slap the administration's knuckles when needed.

If you are looking for a lawmaker who pounds a fist on the table in order to get the TV cameras swiveling their way, Senator M. Teresa Ruiz (D-29) is not your legislator.

But if you want someone who defends the critical causes she champions with a low-key tenacity, then the assistant majority leader from Essex is

"Sacco's savvy secured the speakership for his district-mate and close ally, Assemblyman Vincent Prieto (D-32)."

your team captain.

For two years now, the Education Committee chair has prime-sponsored – with Democratic cohorts - a host of classroom-oriented bills that are helping to reshape the way New Jersey students are taught.

Last year, for instance, she helped to steer through the teacher accountability act that changed how tenure is achieved, an effort to ensure students have effective teachers.

This year, she has bills in various stages of the committee process: studying full-day kindergarten, recruiting minority men to teach in failing schools, improving teacher-preparation programs.

All of those pale in comparison to the task now before her.

She has become one of the main spokespeople in the Legislature for what has become a critical issue in the final weeks of 2013 and what possibly may be the critical issue in 2014, one with implications that reach far beyond the state, considering Gov. Chris Christie's looming presidential aspirations.

S2479 would allow undocumented students to pay the lower, in-state college tuition, and it would allow them access to financial aid.

Considering the rancor over the ongoing debate in Washington, D.C., over immigration reform in general, the decision reached in New Jersey this month over tuition equality will reverberate around the country.

Before his re-election, Christie publicly supported the concept, and it can be argued that position helped him gain some key Latino endorsements.

After the election, Christie began saying he can't support the specific bill winding its way through the Legislature.

Senate Democrats negotiated with the front office to craft a bill that would pass muster, eventually deleting financial aid access in the final bill.

"DREAMers are New Jerseyans whose families contribute to the growth of the economy and the strength of our state, so when we talk about moving our state forward we need to include everyone who lives here. This is about fairness and equity," Ruiz said in late November.

There are legislators who seek out the spotlight for its own sake.

And there are those who fight for causes that end up pulling them into the spotlight. That is what is happening regarding the tuition equality bill.

Certainly, Ruiz is not the only Democrat who has made this an important matter to fight for. Certainly, Ruiz is not the only Democrat who has made this an important matter to fight for. The bill carries a great deal of heavy-hitter Democratic names. Senate President Steve Sweeney, a potential gubernatorial candidate next time around, lent his support to the front office talks that led to a bill last week that was OK'd, conditionally vetoed as planned, then concurred with by both chambers all in one whirlwind final legislative day before the holidays.

The tuition equality fight emerged as one of the most closely watched battles of 2013/2014 in Trenton. People watched how Christie conducted himself in this matter. They did the same regarding Ruiz.

Best Campaigns

This is a very tough category this year because of the influence of independent expenditures. IEs make it increasingly hard for operatives with Burger King ear-pieces to put on that mastermind vibe, like they were the ones responsible for the political strategy that re-elected their bosses. There were several that stood out, however.

CHRIS CHRISTIE

The Republican statewide campaign was one of the best of all time. No, it did not have the added drama of a well-financed challenger and polls showing give and take. But it was precisely Team Christie's suffocation tactics that prevented Buono from expanding any meaningful support.

FULOP FOR MAYOR

Ridiculed for putting out an ad of himself in a wetsuit swimming in the Hudson River, Fulop by the end of it had put together a compelling message, which ended with him directly making his case to the voters outside the diner where the FBI caught Jerry Healy on camera talking to Solomon Dwek.

DON GUARDIAN

The Republican insurgent candidate in Atlantic City took out entrenched incumbent Mayor Lorenzo Langford to give the GOP a surprise win in the southern gaming city.

Linda Greenstein.

LINDA GREENSTEIN

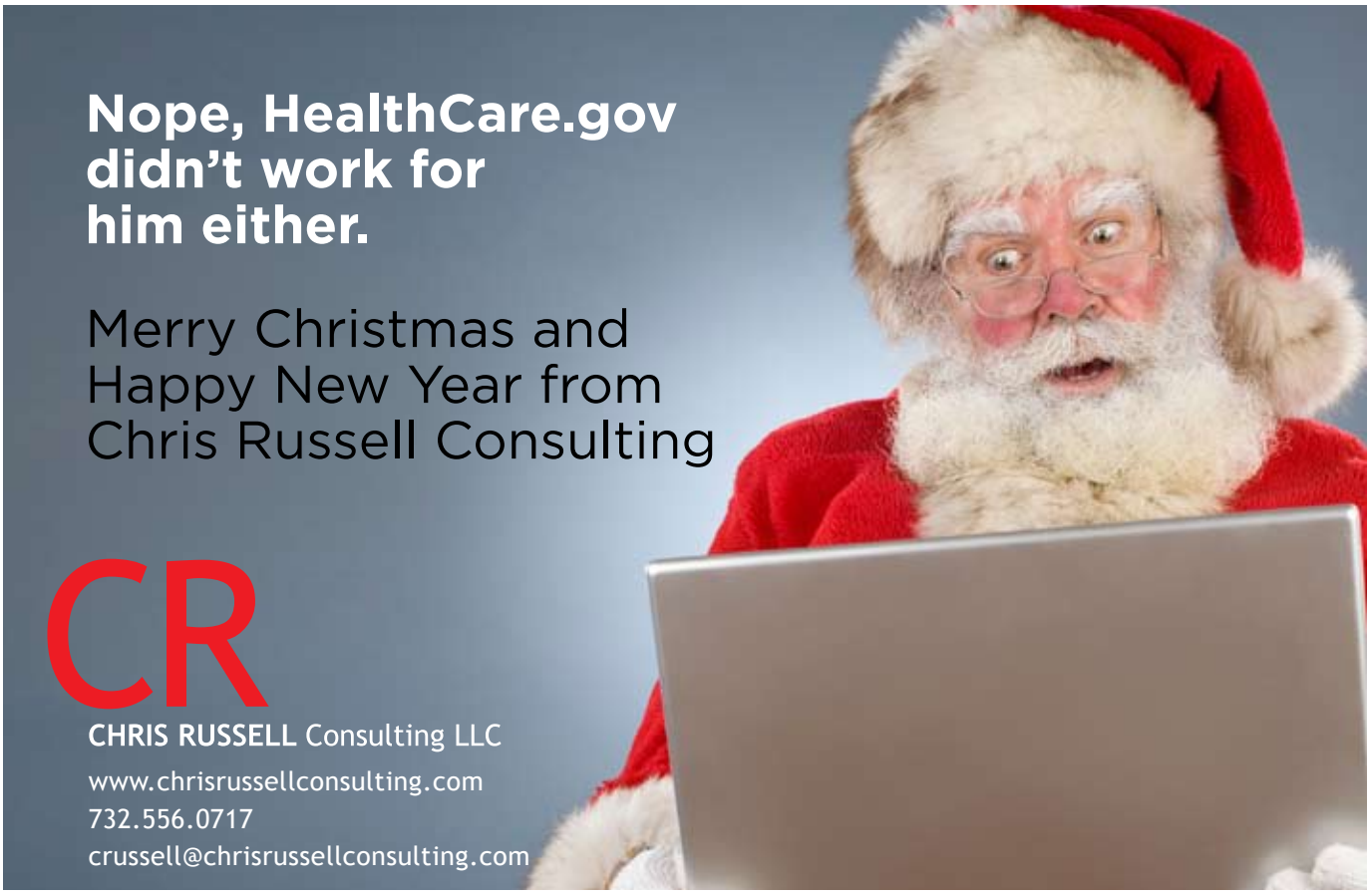
The sparkplug senator from Plainsboro in classic split-ticket voting LD14 now has wins over Tom Goodwin, Richard Kanka and Pete Inverso.

JEFF VAN DREW

Republican polling showed they shouldn't bother going after Van Drew, but the senator still had to confront the handicap of one running mate leaving the ticket and a second one severely compromised. Faced with a very credible challenger in newcomer Susan Adelizzi-Schmidt, Van Drew won by 19 points – the biggest win of his career.

ANGELA GARRETSON

The Hillside Councilwoman capitalized on relationships built over many years as she put together a coalition of party players from Newark and Union County to defeat incumbent independent Mayor Joe Menza.



Worst Campaigns

“Unable to galvanize people in her own party, those people became critics and some of them became enemies.”

BARBARA BUONO GOVERNOR

It was a disaster. The state senator from LD18 challenged Christie without securing relationships within her own party. Money? She had trouble raising it, and finished the race with $3 million to Christie’s $13 million. Unable to galvanize people in her own party, those people became critics and some of them became enemies.

JOHN SANGIOVANNI FOR MAYOR OF BRICK

The retirement of Republican Mayor Steve Acropolis set up an opportunity for Sangiovanni, who ran into a personal bankruptcy issue on the campaign trail, which John

Ducey’s allies amplified. In a town where registered Republicans outnumber Democrats and Christie topped the GOP ticket, Democrat Ducey unofficially received 13,764 votes to Sangiovanni’s 8,446.

JOHN MITCHELL FOR BERGEN FREEHOLDER

The classy incumbent GOP freeholder was hampered by in-fighting in his own party, as a longstanding rift between Bergen County Executive Kathe Donovan and Bergen GOP Chairman Bob Yudin turned Mitchell into collateral damage.

SHEILA OLIVER FOR U.S. SENATE

From the way it started – an announcement in a backroom - to the way it ended (in flames), Oliver’s attempt to be the people’s champion never took hold. A skillful debater, Oliver never had the money or organization to expand her message, leaving people guessing about why she was even in the race. She ended up with less than 4% of the vote.

CORY BOOKER FOR U.S. SENATE (GENERAL ELECTION)

Okay, he won. But in the process the campaign accomplished the impossible by turning an inspirational candidate into a bore. People who hated everything he stood for found themselves jumping up and down for Steve Lonegan – just because he ran a real underdog campaign – an old-school Jersey campaign.

EDUCATORS IN THE LEAD

for GREAT public schools.

New Jersey Education Association

Wendell Steinhauer, President
Marie Blistan, Vice President
Sean M. Spiller, Secretary-Treasurer
Vincent E. Giordano, Executive Director
Richard Gray, Assistant Executive Director

Political Stories of the Year

"The only thing Christie had to worry about was the scheduling of the special U.S. Senate election. Otherwise, he would encounter little resistance from the upper echelons of Democratic Party power."

CHRISTIE'S SHORT-CIRCUITING OF HIS RIVAL AND THE WAR OF THE DEMOCRATIC CHAIRS

Christie made the Democratic Party look like Saddam Hussein's army during the first Gulf War, and you can almost picture Colin Powell sitting in on some of the strategy sessions with Stepien and DuHaime and talking about how to cut off the enemy "and kill it." By the time Barbara Buono's choice for party chair, public sector-peeved Assemblyman Jason O'Donnell (D-31), found himself up against the GN3-backed veteran state Sen. Ray Lesniak (D-20), Christie could essentially hit the snooze alarm on the election. The only thing Christie had to worry about was the scheduling of the special U.S. Senate election. O'Donnell's collision with Lesniak produced the compromise of Passaic County Democratic Committee Chairman John Currie, who mostly stayed quiet during the general election season and allowed South Jersey to run – without the interference of what would have been O'Donnell's bullhorn-bullet points of contrast – a bipartisan-messaged re-election campaign similarly employed by Christie to win over independents and Latino voters. As Democrats fought themselves in an attempt to surrender to his executive dominance, Christie proved the master of William Tecumseh Sherman's maneuver warfare.

THE DEATH OF FRANK LAUTENBERG AND THE ELECTIONS FOR THE VACANT U.S. SENATE SEAT

The state lost a U.S. Senator this year, a man who made his mark on politics as a genuine New Jersey leader. A self-made business man from the streets of Paterson and the son of a factory worker who died young, Lautenberg scorned the image of a N.J. politician controlled by bosses and prided himself on seeking greater protections for workers and the environment. His death created

ANDREW BURTON/GETTY IMAGES

an intra-Democratic Party brawl for his seat, and considerable intrigue around the timing of the special election. Seeking to avoid a face-off with front-running U.S. Senate candidate Cory Booker, whose presence on the general election ballot could galvanize Democrats, Gov. Chris Christie scheduled the costly federal election on Oct. 16, three weeks prior to his own scheduled election. On a short runway in the middle of August, the Democratic Primary proved no great collision, as the financially well-connected and well-known Booker cruised past his challengers, U.S. Rep. Frank Pallone, U.S. Rep. Rush Holt and Speaker Sheila Oliver (D-34).

THE U.S. SENATE SPECIAL GENERAL ELECTION

Armed with a large cash advantage over his Republican opponent, Democrat Booker started with a 17-35-point lead in the polls and marshaled a campaign strategy of staying away from Steve Lonegan, the former mayor of Bogota. But Lonegan ran arguably the most aggressive campaign in recent memory, probably since Lonegan's last election, against Chris Christie in the 2009 Republican Primary for governor. As Booker cleared the state to avoid the Tar Baby Tea Party craziness of his rival, Lonegan descended with a vengeance on Newark and attacked what he cited as Booker's poor stewardship of the city. While he didn't win, Lonegan exposed the shaky political foundations of Booker-world and, as a movement conservative at the height of the wildly unpopular federal government shutdown, came within 11 points of upsetting Booker. A victorious Booker made history – as New Jersey's first African American elected to the United States Senate.

Ras Baraka

THE DEVELOPING NEWARK MAYOR'S RACE

When the African American elders convened and anointed Ras Baraka as the black candidate of choice to succeed Cory Booker as mayor, the South Ward Councilman – son of controversial former State Poet Laureate Amiri Baraka - became the frontrunner in a city where blacks have the upper-hand in raw numbers. But North Ward Councilman Anibal Ramos oversaw an impressive kickoff at the Robert Treat Hotel and former assistant Attorney General Shavar Jeffries impressed people with an incredible resume and life story. The presence on the battlefield of former Mayor Sharpe James intensified the intrigue, while the City Council's selection of Councilman Luis Quintana

Stories of the Year

GABRIEL BOUYS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

to serve as council president and, subsequently, acting mayor, blunted Ramos' attack plan. Complicating Ramos's designs was his political ally Essex County Executive Joe DiVincenzo's decision to back Republican Christie in the governor's race.

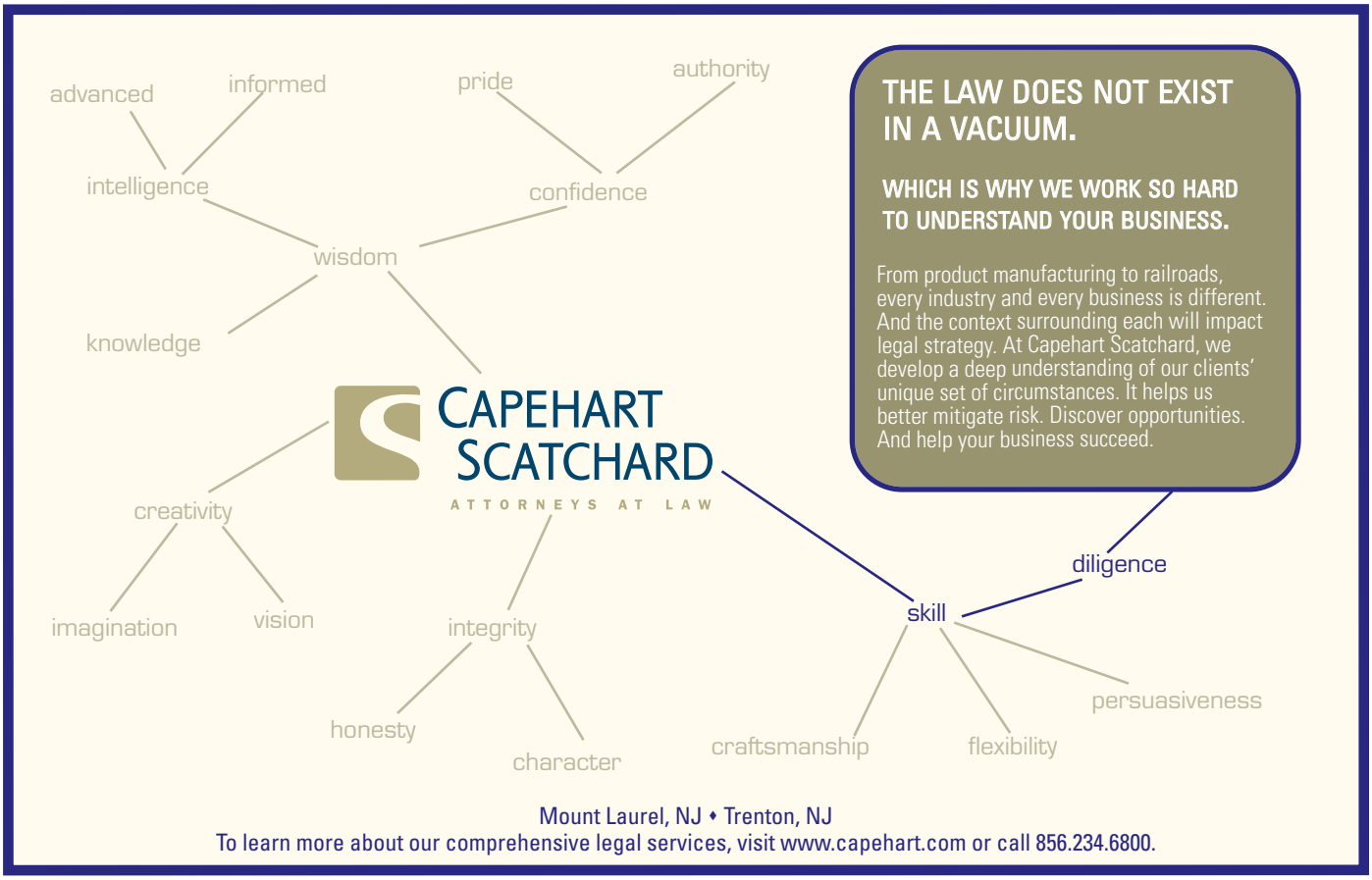
"Well-organized, well-funded and persistent activists forced the issue of marriage equality legislatively."

MARRIAGE EQUALITY VICTORY

Well-organized, well-funded and persistent activists forced the issue of marriage equality legislatively, where they encountered Gov. Chris Christie's veto. Unable to secure the required veto-proof majority to reverse the Republican governor, Garden State Equality sought relief and found it in the courts. "There is no 'public interest' in depriving a class of New Jersey residents their constitutional rights while appellate review is pursued," wrote Judge Mary C. Jacobson of State Superior Court in Mercer County, enabling same-sex couples to marry in New Jersey.

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP SHIFT AWAY FROM ESSEX TO HUDSON

When Speaker Sheila Oliver (D-34) began talking behind the scenes about running for U.S. Senate, Essex could no longer mask the developing movement by GN3 and other Democratic Party power players away from Essex County Executive Joe DiVincenzo. Joe D's endorsement of Republican Gov. Chris Christie gave Norcross public cover for why he made the shift,



Stories of the Year

Thomas Kean, Jr.

JEFF FUSCO/GETTY IMAGES)

but the reality was Essex Democrats did not present a united front. In state Sen. Nick Sacco (D-32), South Jersey found a willing ally to replace DiVincenzo ally Oliver with Assemblyman Vincent Prieto (D-32), an acolyte of Sacco's.

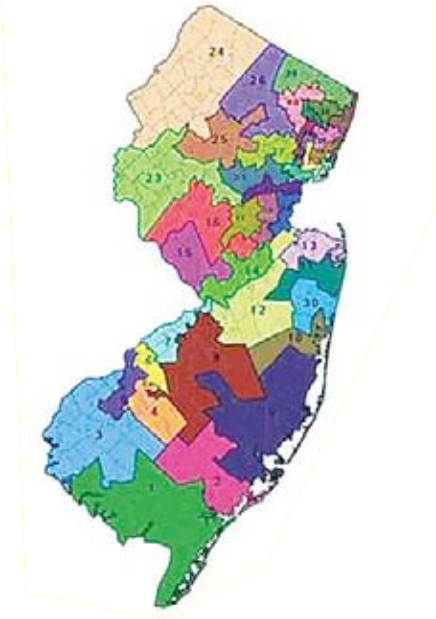
KEAN'S SURVIVAL AND THE WOUNDING OF CHRISTIE

When Gov. Christie started talking openly about "consequences" to elections, the Senate minority leader looked like the most obvious coming political decapitation.

Kean had fought in the backrooms with Team Christie over legislative strategy, and when he came up utterly empty-handed on Election Day, Christie and state Sen. Kevin O'Toole (R-40) had a narrative in place to get rid of the sitting minority leader. But while Christie stampeded the state on a victory tour, Kean sweated the phones, and summoned a list of backers in the GOP caucus. When O'Toole made his move with the front office's blessing, Kean resisted with a majority of senators on his side, not only surviving the coup but exposing a real rarity: Christie's weakness in a political fight.

THE MAP

Christie's black SUV parked in front of the Heldrich Hotel endures as an image from the 2011 legislative redistricting process. And as it turns out, Christie knew the stakes. The Democratic map selected by the late Prof. Alan Rosenthal helped pole-axe GOP efforts to win legislative seats and the popular incumbent Republican governor had no coattails on Election Night.



Quote of the year

"You're a freeholder in Hudson County and you don't know what 'trust' is? You don't know what the five-letter word TRUST is? You're telling the jury you don't know what 'trust' is?"

Attorney John Azzarello

Stories of the Year

"It looked like a Menendez meltdown at the annual Chamber Walk."

THE ACCELERATION OF INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURES

Garden State Forward, the IE belonging to the NJEA, and The Fund for Jobs, Growth and Security, the IE organized by George Norcross III, poured $14 million and $8 million respectively into legislative contests this year while other independent groups laid on heavy artillery fire from district to district, literally putting candidates in a passive posture amid ongoing air wars designed and delivered by outside entities. The total IE contribution to this year's elections madness ended up at $41 million of a total $128 million spent, according to the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC).

SEN. BOB MENENDEZ'S BREAKOUT YEAR AS CHAIR OF FOREIGN RELATIONS

Coming off his re-election victory last year, Menendez relished the chance to take on a new role as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. When John Kerry went to secretary of state, Menendez moved up to fulfill a longtime ambition. Once in the seat, Menendez found himself contending with stories putting him in the Dominican Republic and trucking with prostitutes while allegedly doing the bidding of a shady Florida-based doctor. It looked like a Menendez meltdown at the annual Chamber Walk, with Matt Katz snapping an elevator shot of a disheveled U.S. Senator, before the threat of war with Syria cast the stories adrift and put Menendez in the international command chair.

BRIDGEGATE

It looked like another uncomplicated story of vanquished foes and a fortified governor-elect after Christie trampled over Democratic challenger Buono. But the story of a Port Authority underling who may have punished the mayor of Fort Lee for not endorsing Christie suddenly engaged the same national Democratic Party and media functionaries who had spent the election cycle in snooze mode.

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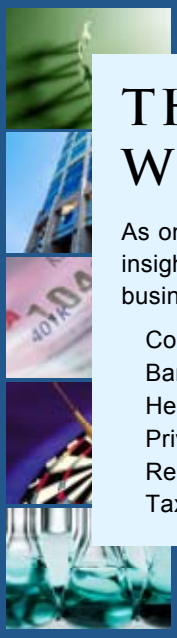

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APPEARANCES SINCE 2007
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Harold L. Hodes
William J. Maer

2013 WOMEN'S
POWER LIST MEMBER
(AS COMPILED BY SEN. WEINBERG)
Tracie DeSarno

PARTNERS
Joseph DeSanctis
Tracie DeSarno
Matthew S. Halpin
William J. Maer
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Best Legislative Committee Award

ASSEMBLY/ SENATE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEES

MARK WILSON/GETTY IMAGES

Above, Sen. Bob Smith and Assemblywoman Grace Spencer.

In the months after Superstorm Sandy the administration wanted to trumpet Stronger than the Storm for anyone who would listen.

In the midst of the groundswell of popular support for a Jersey Tough governor stampeding toward an easy re-election who never failed to have a quip or anecdote on hand for the beachgoers who jammed his summer boardwalk press stops stood two legislators who dared to tug on Superman's cape.

Sen. Bob Smith (D-17) and Assemblywoman Grace Spencer (D-29), the chairs of their chambers' Environment Committees, dared to raise their hands in class and point out to the teacher that the math problem on the chalkboard had the wrong answer.

In an era when constituents apparently prefer their politicians to tell them what they want to hear as opposed to what is actually happening, Smith and Spencer joined forces and convened their joint committee on four occasions around the state, from Atlantic City to Jersey City, from the Statehouse to Toms River.

Their mission? To elicit sometimes unpopular testimony from those victims that the storm-recovery forces were leaving behind.

Months after the storm hit New Jersey, more than a few displaced homeowners and business owners were still finding their road back to normality blocked by an army of insensitive insurers, ill-trained bureaucrats, and conflicting federal/state rules.

These were the brutal truths the administration was so intent on counterattacking that on each day the joint Environment panel dropped its gavel, the state made sure to email press releases out about the latest initiative the state was undertaking to get money to folks in need.

It is safe to say that the Christie administration does not see eye to eye with Smith and Spencer on what is sound environmental policy under normal circumstances, so what made these committees so important in this era — and especially in the aftermath of Sandy — is that they were committed to shining a light into dark, debris-filled corners.

It's not to say these committees are perfect. Not all bills before them pass. Not all bills before them should pass or are even unanimously championed by the environmental lobbyists. Heck, the controversial bill environmentalists detested to allow construction on urban piers got through only to be trash-canned by the front office.

But Smith, Spencer and some others are pushing a package of Sandy bills dealing with critical issues such as county control of beaches and regulations on house-raising.

Some others, such as one lifting local land-use restriction laws from homeowners' shoulders so they can get their houses raised above flood levels, already are law.

The committee memberships have a healthy give and take. On the Senate panel, for example, Sen. Jennifer Beck often functions as the fiscal conscience, raising questions of cost and unintended consequences so that by the time a vote is taken the issue has been thoroughly discussed.

Smith often is fond of kicking off sessions by telling visitors: Welcome to the most interesting committee in the Statehouse. That could go for the lower-chamber companion panel as well.

The saga of rebuilding post-Sandy will rumble through 2014, dealing with legislation that could shape the fate of the state for decades, and the Environment committees will be at the forefront of the work.

Worst Committee Award

JOINT COMMITTEE ON ETHICAL STANDARDS

It's not that this panel, whose job is to investigate citizens' complaints about legislators, is poorly run. The problem is that it rarely meets.

You can count the number of times this committee met in 2013 on one hand, and you wouldn't even need two of your five fingers.

In addition, people file complaints only to grumble that over a year later there still is no resolution. Meetings often are scheduled, then canceled.

Complaints are shunted to a side track because they were filed too close to an election, then they are eventually redirected back to the main line, but all of this just means that the process drags on and on.

This wheels-of-justice-turn-slowly thing can be frustrating to the complaining citizen and the targeted lawmaker alike.

Committee members have gone to great lengths at past meetings to explain why these probes take so much time. They emphasize that fairness to both sides and thoroughness to an investigation are of paramount importance.

And for a while the committee went without meeting because there was a lack of members, but former state Supreme Court Justice John Wallace just took the helm, so this could become a committee worth watching in 2014.

In fact, the Ethics panel has issued its schedule of meetings for 2014, which for the moment bodes well for increased public activity. It has planned meetings in 10 of the 12 months next year.

The Best Bill of the Year Award

THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT

It began as S2583, and had bipartisan sponsorship. But by the time that bill had been substituted by A3680, there were more fingerprints on it than a doorknob.

It trimmed five business tax incentive programs down to two while simultaneously increasing their reach.

The Economic Redevelopment and Growth Grant's purpose is to help close gaps in financing on projects and help build critical infrastructure. The Grow N.J. Assistance program is a jobs retention and business attraction initiative, designed to better combat competing states' packages.

The bill generally enjoyed strong support. But still, it drew a conditional veto from Gov. Chris Christie. Mainly, he red-lined two provisions: Prevailing wage protections and hospital site re-use provisions. (Those are just two of the jettisoned pieces some lawmakers are still hoping to restore.)

On CV concurrence votes, the bill drew strong bipartisan backing and finally became law.

At the same time the bill's prospects were on the rise, its prime Assembly sponsor, Albert Coutinho, a Newark Democrat, was plummeting from grace, first announcing he would not seek re-election for personal reasons, then acknowledging he was under investigation, and finally pleading to theft for taking money from a charitable foundation all in less than one month's time.

Meanwhile, original Senate-version sponsor Sen. Ray Lesniak was fuming over the crayon marks on what originally was his blueprint.

He has introduced an EOA II to try and restore the ability to re-use old hospital properties, provide a film production tax credit that could particularly benefit Jersey City, and restore $200 million for low-income or special-needs housing, among other things. His original bill, Lesniak believes, had protections for vulnerable citizens that became casualties of the horse-trading that goes on underneath the golden dome.

As the bill become more complex, it became increasingly noteworthy for southern New Jersey, where regions that often in the past would have been ineligible for some of these tax incentive programs now would become prime ground for growth.

If parts of Southern Jersey, where one can stand to this day and not spy a high rise anywhere on the horizon, look quite different ten years from now, this bill will be a prime reason.

But its supporters, Senate President Steve Sweeney of West Deptford prominent among them, point out forcefully that the recession clobbered Gloucester, Cumberland, Salem and other south counties harder than many other regions.

The EOA – coupled with the higher-education reorganization of 2012 - can help it get back on its feet, they argue.

There are other gripes: Environmentalists insist sensitive regions are going to become vulnerable to development; Assemblyman Joe Cryan has a bill to restore the prevailing wage clause.

But this bill consumed more time, involved more compromises, and endured more arguments than almost any other this year.

Gay marriage was a signature issue this year, but was primarily settled in the courts. Increasing the minimum wage will be a main topic for years, but was primarily settled by the voters.

The Legislature, as a group, wrestled over the future of the state's economy, its ability to keep jobs from leaving the state, its ability to lure new jobs.

EOA is what it came up with. It's not perfect.

If bipartisanship reduces idealistic goals to achievable compromises, EOA is Exhibit A.

If bipartisanship reduces idealistic goals to achievable compromises, EOA is Exhibit A.

The Worst Bill of the Year Award

S2680/A3933

Although S2680/A3933 was sharply criticized in committee by numerous environmental groups, it passed the Legislature and landed on Gov. Chris Christie's desk.

The bill would have allowed for more development that now is allowed essentially just in Atlantic City: Building on piers in high-hazard areas.

Supporters, who included a former Assembly member, Steve Corodemus of Monmouth County, argued that the bill would have a limited application, mainly to piers in some Hudson River towns, and that the standards in place would be more than acceptable in a post-Sandy world.

The development opportunities should not be passed up, Corodemus argued, in an economy that still is not completely on track.

He was succinct in his veto message that the bill would jeopardize some towns' national flood insurance eligibility.

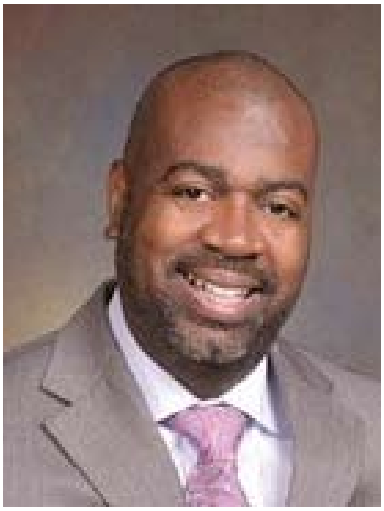
But the opponents said it was just not an acceptable risk to build on such urban piers considering what the state endured last year with Superstorm Sandy.

They argued that this bill would intentionally place people in harm's way and was pure folly.

Christie agreed. He was succinct in his veto message that the bill would jeopardize some towns' national flood insurance eligibility.

"I cannot condone such a risk," he wrote.

People to Watch



FRANK BARAFF

RAS BARAKA

JON BRAMNICK

CHRIS BROWN

TAI COOPER

MIKE DOHERTY

WILLIAM DRESSLER

JEFF DUBLIN

LOU GREENWALD

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JOHN MOLINELLI

RAHMAN MUHAMMAD

VINCENT PRIETO

LUIS QUINTANA

CHRIS RUSSELL

MILLY SILVA

JAY WEBBER

Those who do not know the plans of competitors cannot prepare alliances.
Those who do not know the lay of the land cannot maneuver their forces.
Those who do not use local guides cannot take advantage of the ground.

Sun-Tzu, *The Art of War*

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Guy Gregg
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Jason Orlando
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Cage Matches

SWEENEY VERSUS KEAN

They say opposites attract. Not in this case. Something went terribly, terribly wrong here between the ironworker and the governor's son, and no can figure out exactly what it is, but suffice to say that to the detriment of the state – and eternal gratitude of the Statehouse Press Corps, the rift continues to worsen.

FERNANDO ALONSO VERSUS JOHN DRISCOLL

The LD38 GOP pre-primary battle proved just as intense – and close – as the general election, as attorney Alonso took on his former running mate Driscoll for the party's state Senate nomination and won.

Steve Sweeney.

SWEENEY VERSUS FULOP

Both sides denied theirs was a testosterone-fueled war of alpha males in search of the governor's office. Fulop made his comments as he went a few rounds with heavyweight contender Tomasz Adamek, while Sweeney spoke to the press between bursts of an M-16 at the State Police Barracks.

JOE DIVINCENZO VERSUS BARBARA BUONO

In his best Machiavellian/Adubato mode while Senator Dick Codey deliberated about governor, DiVincenzo told Buono he wanted to make nice with her and accepted her invitation to Metuchen for tea and cookies. When Codey announced he wasn't running, DiVincenzo dumped Buono and reportedly said, "Next time try Scordato."

JOHN WISNIEWSKI VERSUS BILL BARONI

Seeking answers in the closure of lanes to the George Washington Bridge, the Assembly Transportation Committee Chairman's grilling of the deputy executive director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey proved highly effective, toppling Baroni out of his job.

Brian Stack.

BRIAN STACK VERSUS JOE DIVINCENZO

It started out as a friendly flirtation for the title of Christie's go-to Democrat, intensifying when Stack proclaimed that every Union City boy born during the election cycle would bear the name "Chris," and DiVincenzo upping the ante by saying every county worker on the payroll would legally change his or her name to "Chris." But it turned very ugly when acolytes in both camps began voluntarily offering themselves as human sacrifices for the Christie cause.

INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURES VERSUS LIFE AS WE KNOW IT ON PLANET EARTH

It was hard not to get caught up in the Close Encounters of a Third Kind narrative during this last campaign cycle as ELEC's Joe Donohue channeled Richard Dreyfus trying to make contact with that strange alien phenomena known as IEs.

Quote of the year

Runner-up

He has to explain to his people. He spent $1 million against me. I'm glad he did. He has to explain to his 16 (GOP senators) why he didn't win. When you have a phenomenon like Chris Christie winning by a near record total? All I know is Tom Kean said he had five (seats that the GOP could win). There were a lot of 'predictions' about the Senate."

Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3)

Cage Matches

BOB YUDIN VERSUS KATHE DONOVAN

New Jersey native (you ever realize that most of the people who contributed something to American civilization have that title before their name) Jerry Lewis made a movie out of this scenario once called "At War with the Army," and it brilliantly presages the Bergen GOP, who insist on turning every general election into friendly-fire combat, starting with that ongoing battle between the chairman of the party and County Executive Donovan.

MARK DUFFY VERSUS TOM HESTER, JR.

Political differences aside, the executive director of the Republican Office of the General Assembly and the Associate Executive Director for Communications for Assembly Democrats decided to have it all out this past year to determine who, when it was all said and done, could rightly be called the most exciting guy in Trenton.

MIKE CAPELLI VERSUS RAY POCINO

There is nothing like a running board war between labor factions as these two alpha males from the Carpenters and Laborers unions went toe-to-toe for dominance: the former opting to heavily invest in legislative races while the latter put his chits on Christie.

Frank Pallone.

FRANK PALLONE VERSUS RUSH HOLT

It was painful, watching these two men of substance actually merge into each other just like photoshopped virtual images suitable for Tweeting. At the end of the Democratic Primary for U.S. Senate, Cory Booker was heard to remark, "What a genuinely nice human being – and so well informed!"

BARBARA MORGAN VERSUS OLIVIA NUZZI

Barbara Morgan.

You cannot beat Jersey girls, unless you're talking about Jersey girls going after each other in a political campaign, preferably a campaign belonging to New York Mayoral candidate Anthony Weiner. When Weiner acolyte turned human hand grenade Nuzzi went Daily-New-expose on Weiner, Weiner spokeswoman Morgan got miked up with a vengeance in one of the all-time moronically profane meltdowns.

RICK SHAFTAN VERSUS BARBARA MORGAN

Not to be outdone by the Weiner Campaign, Lonegan political strategist Shaftan got himself booted from the closing days of the general election campaign when he got profanely homophobic on the phone with Talking Points Memo.

BILL PASCRELL VERSUS STEVE FULOP

If you put the old school Congressman from the 9th District in a roomful of people he'll take an hour to get to the microphone in-between all the high fives, bear hugs and close-quarters meaningful looks burned into searching faces, while the Jersey City mayor does his campaigning by BlackBerry and in the same room might be seen with his head down frantically communicating with some barely alert remnant of humanity somewhere in cyberspace.

CARLOS AGUASVIVAS VERSUS JOSEPH SANGIOVANNI

Democratic candidate for mayor in Bergenfield Aguasvivas had the coolest name of the season and went belly-up on Election Day owing to a personal finance issue, just like Republican mayoral candidate in Brick Sangiovanni.

NELSON ALBANO VERSUS PAUL MORIARTY

Two traffic stops. Two cops. Two different outcomes. Albano loses. Moriarty wins.

TAI COOPER VERSUS LUPE TODD

The campaign spokeswomen for Ras Baraka and Shavar Jeffries respectively in the developing Newark mayor's race; in a word: brutal.

AMODEO V. MAZZEO VERSUS EUSTACE VERSUS SCARPA

When they tallied the final numbers in LD 2 and LD 38, Democratic winners Vincent Mazzeo and Tim Eustace led their Republican rivals John Amodeo and Joe Scarpa by fewer than 40 votes in each contest.

PolickerNJ.com Awards

Just a short disclaimer before everybody gets upset: please remember that most of what follows are holiday humor pieces and not meant to be taken seriously.

Having said that, we know we'll still be getting that frantic phone call from someone wanting to know where they can catch Chris Christie and Joe DiVincenzo in a community theater production of West Side Story.

Jose Munoz.

NEW JERSEY'S VERSION OF THE OSCARS

BEST ACTOR

That **JERRY HEALY** lookalike in the Youtube video who runs into a room and swan-dives onto a wooden bed, breaking it to pieces.

BEST ACTRESS IN A LEADING ROLE

MARIA PASQUALE

The West New York Facebook personality was so good, she didn't exist.

1964 PULITZER PRIZE, PHOTOGRAPHY, ROBERT JACKSON, DALLAS TIMES HERALD

Jack Ruby shoots Lee Harvey Oswald.

BEST DIRECTOR

JOSE MUNOZ

For his meticulous behind-the-scenes work in developing the considerable talents of leading lady Maria Pasquale.

BEST ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE

TIE: NIKKI TRUNK AND SUSAN ADELEZZI-SCHMIDT

When they realized Gov. Chris Christie had no intention of campaigning with them against Jeff Van Drew and Steve Sweeney respectively they still sparkled eye-of-the-tiger intentions.

BEST PICTURE

"HUDSON"

Steve Fulop's first ad of the campaign season had Hudson County Democratic Party operatives high-fiving one another with glee, but the biography-driven spot dared to do something rare in NJ politics: inspire.

BEST ORIGINAL BOOK BASED ON EYEWITNESS REPORTING OF AN HISTORIC EVENT

"ACCIDENTAL ASSASSIN: JACK RUBY AND FOUR MINUTES IN DALLAS," BY MAURICE CARROLL

In time for the 50th anniversary of JFK's assassination this year, the Quinnipiac University Polling Director and former reporter self-published this book of first-hand reporting and reminiscences, including reflections and analysis of the Warren Commission Report.

THE RYAN O'NEILL "TOUGH GUYS DON'T DANCE" BAD ACTING AWARD

LARRY WALLACE

Running for the Assembly in LD3, the veteran Gloucester County GOP Freeholder radiated real politick when PolitickerNJ.com asked him about the dynamics of LD3. "Oh God, oh man," said Wallace. "Oh God, oh man, oh God, oh man, Oh God, oh man..."

MOST LITERATE LEGISLATOR AWARD

JOHN WISNIEWSKI

"I just finally figured out what I don't like about Wiz," a bill-burdened legislator told PolitickerNJ.com. "What's that?" "He actually reads this s**t," the lawmaker groaned.

MOST DIFFICULT NAME TO SPELL

"ANDRZEJCZAK," AS IN ASSEMBLYMAN ROBERT ANDRZEJCAK (D-1).

The unconventional jam-up of vowels and consonants can prompt lazy short cuts to getting a name printed, as we discovered when we went back

Awards continued...

to the PolitickerNJ.com archives and dredged one story that read as follows:

Senator Jeff Van Drew (D-1) happily unveiled his slate of running mates, which now included Sgt. Bob Andrzejcak. A veteran of the Iraq War and disabled in combat, Andre the Giant said he was proud to serve his county and proud now to serve the district. "It's guys like my new running mate Rob Andrews that make us all proud to serve," concurred Assemblyman Nelson Albano. The ordinarily implacable Van Drew was likewise visibly moved. "I am honored to work with Kojak," Van Drew said. "I am sure Robert will provide the entire district with a true Rorschach test of patriotism and sacrifice."

CONGRATULATIONS, TOM!

It was a proud moment for all of New Jersey this year when Time Magazine honored veteran Essex County Democratic Party political operative Tom Barrett (at left) with its annual Man of the Year Award. Barrett, who at the time he learned of the honor was rooming in the Bowery section of New York City after having just landed in a tramp steamer, was humbled and gratified for the recognition. "Well deserved," said Assemblyman Tom Giblin (D-34), a sentiment echoed by Assemblyman Joe Cryan (D-20), Assemblyman Ralph Caputo (D-28), East Ward Democratic leader Joe Parlavecchio, former Democratic State Party Chairman Ray Durkin and Morristown Mayor Tim Dougherty. Cracked the sardonic Barrett, "It's great to finally be on Time."

THE STEPHEN CRANE RED BADGE OF COURAGE AWARD

BARBARA BUONO

The state senator from LD18 was the only Democrat who had the guts to go up against Gov. Chris Christie. Editor's Note to YouTube and Twitter enthusiasts: A New Jersey native and one of our most distinguished sons, Crane was what they used to call a writer, someone who organizes his experiences and perspectives and puts them down in print.

DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE YEAR

GERALDO RIVERA

The TV news personality hovered at the edge of a U.S. Senate run, teased the press with a few come hither interviews, then unceremoniously pulled the plug. How much of a let-down was this? It was almost as bad as when some guy in the 1980s tantalized his TV audience with the contents of Al Capone's safe.

SEPARATED AT BIRTH

CORY BOOKER

In a very public dissing of the New Jersey Nets when they split from Newark, U.S. Senator Cory Booker (below) donned a Golden State Warriors uniform, flew to California and said, "You wanna get nuts? Let's get nuts."

Word of the year:
OBSTRUCTIONIST

"He's an obstructionist and has not been willing to be bipartisan in any way. And anything he says to the contrary is just opportunist."

Gov. Chris Christie on state Sen. Bob Gordon (D-38), Fair Lawn

"She's an obstructionist."

Gov. Chris Christie on state Sen. Linda Greenstein (D-14), Plainsboro

"Obstructionist."

Gov. Christie on Assemblyman Peter Barnes (D-18), state Senate candidate

Awards continued...

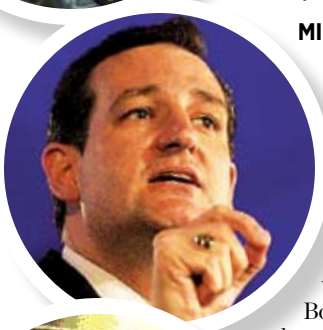
SEPARATED AT BIRTH

MIKE DOHERTY

"How about a game of pick-up basketball next time?" State Sen. Mike Doherty (R-23) (left) gave his rival all he could handle but was contrite in defeat after a charity football game with Eli Manning. A fuming Doherty had challenged Manning after learning of the Giants' quarterback's participation in a fundraiser for Hoboken Mayor Dawn Zimmer. Doherty said the NFL star was unwittingly furthering the current schools funding formula, which the senator argues unfairly benefits Hoboken.

MICHAEL ARON

On the much-discussed new and improved NJTV set, Michael Aron – sporting a goatee and Juan Peron fashion attire (above) – prepared for another episode of On the Record, this time an interview with U.S. Senator Cory Booker, who later described the experience as "a Star Trek fan's worst nightmare."



NICK SCUTARI

It's Katy Bar the Door as state Sen. Nicholas Scutari (D-22), (pictured above) commands the state legislative chamber with a scathing indictment of the federal Tea Party's budget filibuster.

SHARPE JAMES

The former mayor of Newark infuriated other members of the African American elders' community when he improbably donned a cowboy hat and went off the reservation in the mayor's race.

THE GIVE THAT WOMAN A RECORDING CONTRACT RIGHT NOW AWARD

NICOLE VANESSA ORTIZ

By the time Ortiz was done belting out her original song at the swearing-in of then-Council President Luis Quintana in Newark City Hall, there was an instantaneous collective reaffirmation of the unconquerable spirit of the human condition. That wore off a moment later when a politician took the microphone.

OUR HOLIDAY GIFT TO LOU STELLATO

First crack at playing the role of Billy Batz in a community theater production of "Goodfellas." Just grow in the moustache, Mr. Chairman, and you've got a real shot, kid.

THE AWARD FOR MOST QUALIFIED AND DIGNIFIED CANDIDATE

ALIETA ECK

When the GOP medical doctor first showed up at the state Division of Elections speaking in complete sentences, reflecting equal parts sincerity, urbanity, education, intellect, refinement, good taste, good manners, fine breeding, and an emphasis on substance not self-promotion, it could only mean one thing: this New Jersey campaign was going nowhere fast.

The James Caan Rollerball Award

Maria Rodriguez-Gregg

Republicans statewide celebrated the election of New Jersey's first roller derby star, Rodriguez-Gregg in LD8, but Burlington County GOP Chairman Bill Layton had to give the assemblywoman-elect a severe talking-to about Statehouse decorum after she attended a freshman orientation in full derby gear and clothes-lined Assembly Majority Leader Lou Greenwald (D-6) in the Annex basement.

THE MARRIAGE EQUALITY COUNTER-BLOCKADE AWARD

MIKE DOHERTY

Upon hearing of a judge's decision in the gay marriage case and of rival state Senator Ray Lesniak's living room wedding ceremony for two women, Doherty quickly convened a counter ceremony outside his home on the banks of the Delaware River, personally presiding over the marriage of two retired aircraft carriers that after years of battle fatigue were said to have nursed a mutual attraction.

WEST NEW YORK SIDE STORY

THE CHRISTIECRAT SONG

(Song to the tune of The Jet Song by Leonard Bernstein and with apologies to the great Stephen Sondheim)

Starring Chris Christie as Riff, Joe DiVincenzo as Ice, Brian P. Stack as Action, Phil Alagia as A-Rab, Mark Albeiz as Snowboy, Kevin O'Toole as Diesel, Cory Booker as Baby John, Felix Roque as Bernardo; with M. Teresa Ruiz as Graziella and Dana Redd as Velma; and U.S. Sen. Bob Menendez as Lieutenant Schrank.

SETTING: A GRIM URBAN SCHOOL YARD PLAYGROUND
THE CHRISTIECRATS:

When you're a Christiecrat, you're a Christiecrat all the way, from snowing your first unhip cat to your last dying day;

When you're a Christiecrat there's an envelope of cash waiting for the loudmouth small-time mayor who talks too much trash;

When you're a Christiecrat, don't need to pray that a gnat on the wall has been bugged, your career will go splat and your COS can't take the fall;

When you're a Christiecrat you know you gonna gets paid, but if you don't

Awards continued...

drink the Kool-Aid there ain't gonna be no state transitional aid;

When you're a Christiecrat you know the traffic won't get backed, all the trains set on a collision course and the flight plans totally whacked;

To hell with show tunes. Just crank some of The Boss! Let Trenton go to ruins, 'cause goodies for Essex and North Hudson means some loser's other loss!

When you're a Christiecrat, you know to duck down on all fours when Barbara Buono comes around and starts knocking on your doors;

When you're a Christiecrat you'd better set your GPS to Planet GN3, Joe D and LD33's BPS; When you're a Christiecrat you gotta stay clear of Charlie Wowkanech, Hetty Equality, Nancy Pelosi and all that manic BS;

And always be sure that where you is, is where you're at, because when you're a Christiecrat you... stay... a... Christiecrat!!!

NOT COMING SOON TO A RED BOX NEAR YOU: BRUBAKER, THE REMAKE

Interviewed about his forthcoming project, ageless star Robert Redford said he was excited to be re-filming his 1980 classic about a prison warden attempting to reform the system, this time substituting New Jersey's political culture for the grizzly Arkansas corrections setting in the original film. "Actually, I don't think anyone will frankly notice a difference," Redford said on reflection. When subsequently asked why then he would remake the movie, Redford scrapped the project and let his original work stand. Asked for comment, Menendez State Director Paul Brubaker said, "I don't see playing politics with the truth," which coincidentally is a quote from Brubaker.

THE SHERMANESQUE STATEMENT OF THE YEAR

STEVE FULOP'S STAND ON THE GOVERNOR'S RACE

At first he wasn't sure. Why should anyone in the state care about the opinion of a lil' ol' mayor from Jersey City? Then he was noncommittal. Then he hedged. Then he said he planned to back the Democratic ticket, never actually calling Barbara Buono by name.

POLLSTER OF THE YEAR

DAVID REDLAWSK

Following exhaustive scientific polling, Redlawsk of Rutgers-Eagleton said he could now confidently predict Republican Abe Lincoln's 1864 victory over Democratic challenger George McClellan.

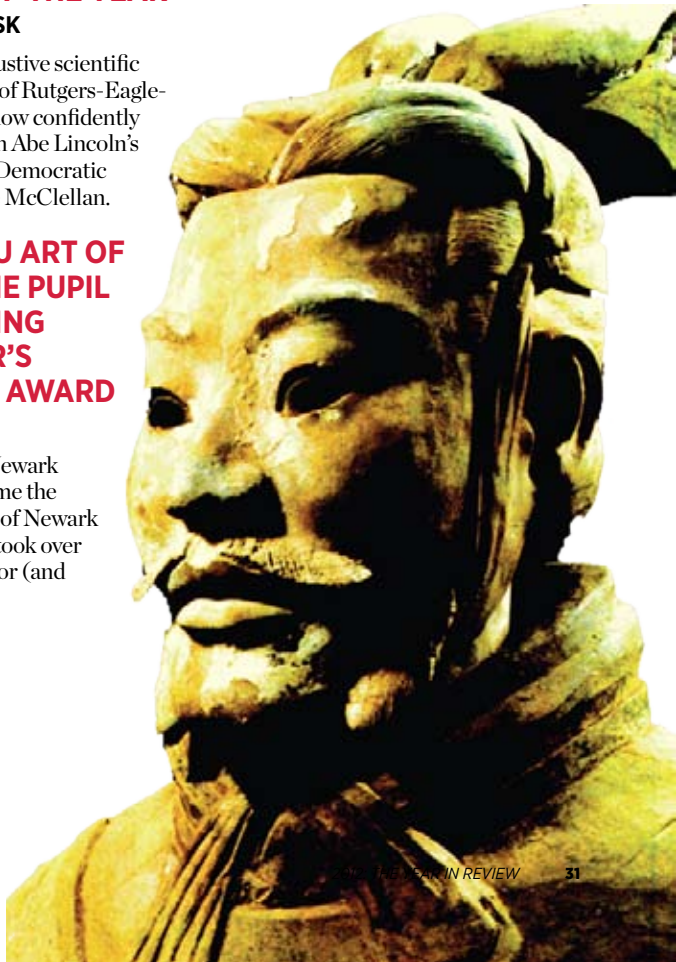
THE SUN TZU ART OF WAR (OR THE PUPIL IMPLEMENTING THE MASTER'S BLUEPRINT) AWARD

LUIS QUINTANA

The At-Large Newark Councilman became the first Latino mayor of Newark this year when he took over for departing Mayor (and now U.S. Senator) Cory Booker. Those who have studied Quintana's longstanding career and marveled at his ability to stay on his feet in Brick City smash-mouth politics, need look no further than Sun Tzu, the acting mayor's tactical inspiration.

Which war were you actually talking about, Mr. Leader?

In the days leading up to the general election, Assembly Minority Leader Jon Bramnick (R-21) likened Republicans' maneuvers to gain seats in the legislature to a "war." Those efforts resulted in zero GOP pickups, which prompted cloakroom comparisons of the GOP to the following armies: the French at Battle of Agincourt; the British at the Battle of Saratoga; General Armistead and the Confederates at the Battle of Gettysburg; Custer and his men at the Battle of Little Big Horn; the Americans at the Bay of Pigs.



Awards continued...

Ruben Ramos.

THE JACK KENNEDY ROLLING IN HIS GRAVE AWARD

CORY BOOKER

The U.S. Senate candidate scandalized New Jersey when BuzzFeed printed a story about him tweet flirting with a West Coast stripper named Lynsie Lee. In a direct message exchange, Booker said, "And the East Coast loves you and by the East Coast, I mean me." "Well now I'm blushing :)" stripper Lynsie Lee wrote. "It's only fair," Booker wrote back. To say the least, this was a very long way from "Happy Birthday, Mr. President."

GOING DOWN ON PRINCIPLE

RUBEN RAMOS

The likeable assemblyman from LD33 ran afoul of Stack and Christie and went down fighting, targeting the real source of his angst: incumbent Mayor Dawn Zimmer, who ran over him.

THE JACKIE KENNEDY VOICE-OVER AWARD

JENNIFER COLE

The Ras Baraka mayoral campaign PR person could supply the imitation Jackie voice if those thread-bare White House Tour reels ever lose the original sound.

THE BACKROOM AWARD FOR KNUCKLE BALL NEGOTIATIONS

GEORGE GILMORE

When Jon Runyan retired, Gilmore was insistent in backroom discussions on Al Leiter as a replacement. "Not gonna happen," said Burlington County GOP Chairman Bill Layton, who suggested Garry Cobb. Gilmore said he didn't know if the district would be able to take another football player. "What about David Cone?" said the Ocean County boss. "Doesn't live in the district," said Layton, who said he heard Harry Carson was interested in a run. "Won't do it," said Gilmore, "Besides, he's a Democrat. How about Bobby Ojeda?" Layton was skittish with the idea of giving Gilmore the upper-hand but could sense a pattern in the older man's choices and said, "What about Mariano Rivera, he's retiring," and Gilmore said "Done," at which point Bill Stepien called, nixed the idea in the strongest possible terms, and supplied the following names to replace Runyan, and these names only: Bobby Valentine, Jesse Orosco, Ron Darling, Mookie Wilson, Keith Hernandez and Al Leiter.

MACHIAVELLIAN MOVE OF THE YEAR, OR CHRISTIE'S BAY OF PIGS?

RAY LESNIAK

The veteran LD 20 senator claimed his pig crate bill had nothing to do with the 2016 Presidential Primary, but the

Jamestown Associates

WINNING TOUGH CAMPAIGNS. THE RECORD TO PROVE IT.

JAMESTOWN ASSOCIATES CONGRATULATES GOVERNOR CHRIS CHRISTIE ON HIS HISTORIC LANDSLIDE VICTORY

Jamestown Associates congratulates New Jersey Governor Chris Christie on his overwhelming re-election win on November 5. Jamestown is proud to be part of the team that helped elect Governor Christie this year, as well as in 2009.

Jamestown Associates also congratulates our other winning clients in this November's elections:

LEGISLATIVE RACES

State Senator Diane Allen – NJ LD 7
State Senator Christopher Bateman – NJ LD 16
State Senator Joe Kyrillos – NJ LD 13
Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli – NJ LD 16
Assemblyman-Elect Sam Fiocchi – NJ LD 1
Assemblywoman Amy Handlin – NJ LD 13
Assemblyman Declan O'Scanlon – NJ LD 13
Assemblywoman Donna Simon – NJ LD 16

OCEAN COUNTY, NJ

Michael Mastronardy – Sheriff
Jeffrey Moran – Surrogate
Jack Kelly – Freeholder
Jim Lacey – Freeholder

WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NY

Rob Astorino – County Executive

LOWER TOWNSHIP, NJ

Eric Simonsen – Council

MIDDLETOWN, NJ

Gerry Scharfenberger – Township Committee
Kevin Settembrino – Township Committee

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legislation nevertheless put Christie in the uncomfortable position of having to worry about offending Iowa farmers and knocked the governor back on his heels.

TOUGHEST LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

LORETTA WEINBERG

The respected 37th District Senate Majority leader moved aggressively and effectively to find out why the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey closed traffic lanes to the George Washington Bridge in her district, pursuing an investigation into political payback by allies of Gov. Chris Christie's that hurt Christie late in the year.

THE RED MEAT SLINGING AWARD (IN HONOR OF NJ NATIVE THE LATE ROY SCHEIDER)

LEONARD LANCE

The once mild-mannered moderate congressman from the 7th District transformed himself into a Steve Lonegan for U.S. Senate attack dog. Removing any doubts about the political firepower he had with Lance in his corner, Lonegan introduced the congressman at one event with his best, most devious Al Pacino/Tony Montana imitation. "Say hello," Lonegan hammed, "to my lil' friend."

THE DUTCH SCHULTZ NONSENSICAL STREAM-OF-CONSCIOUSNESS QUOTE AWARD

STEVE LONEGAN

Seeking votes on the eve of the general election, U.S. Senate candidate Lonegan onstage at the Morristown Green said, "We go to the shooting ranges on Saturday, church on Sunday – and work on Monday." Maybe in Wyoming, but aside from the state's Pineys and Mountain Men, it's hard to imagine most New Jerseyans giving up their mall rat prowling Saturdays to spend time legally with Smith and Wesson.

THE GREENSTEIN THROW-DOWN

Having destroyed three back-to-back male Republican opponents, the normally reserved Greenstein had to be restrained at the sight of Steve Lonegan nursing a beer in Tir Na Nog. "You want some of this, Steve?" said Greenstein, breaking a bottle on the bar. A visibly concerned Jim Hooker, Mike Muller and Mickey Quinn pulled the excitable senator away from the equally politically riled Lonegan, who could be heard to say tauntingly, "It's a good thing you don't live at the beach, Linda, otherwise I'd move to your district and run against you." Pushed toward the door away from her would-be foe, Greenstein went for a pool cue and said she would personally help Lonegan house-hunt if it meant he would move into the 14th District to run against her, in the senator's words, "for a real challenge."

THE THUCYCIDES AWARD FOR BEST ORATION

FORMER GOV. JIM MCGREEVY

At the Brendan Byrne statue unveiling, in his three-minutes speech the former governor managed to quote Socrates, Aristotle, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Friedrich Hegel and Ludwig Wittgenstein at which point Gov. Chris Christie, his head spinning, went to the microphone and trashed Snooki.

THE TONY IMPERIALE MEMORIAL AWARD

Closed to the press, the post Christie for Governor victory celebration was a huge hit and everything was going great until Mike DuHaime, still cracking up after another Bill Palatucci anecdote, said, "You know, Bill, you really are a funny guy." Palatucci broke the silence with an insistent, "What do you mean funny? How am I funny?" DuHaime was a little discomfited but answered, "The way you tell the story, you know." "No," Palatucci said, "I don't know." It devolved from there, sources say, but when Palatucci left a nervous DuHaime off the hook, Christie, incredulously rising from the poker table, reportedly said, "What's the world coming to?"

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Awards continued...

Steve Fulop and former President Clinton.

THE JAMES JOYCE STAFF DIVERSITY AWARD

STEVE SWEENEY

Alert to lingering criticisms around Jim McGreevey and the so-called Irish Mafia effect, proud Irish American Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3) smartly enlisted a political staff truly representative of a New Jersey ethnic cross-section: the names Kennedy, Donnelly, McGrath, Drennan and Hagan go to the heart of reflecting the state's much celebrated diversity. Asked over Guinness at Tir Na Nog about their efforts, which include bipartisan bridge-building with Republican state Sen. Kevin O'Toole, Kennedy quoted from WB Yeats' "Easter 1916; and Hagan referred to Kennedy, while Donnelly confirmed the team's commitment, in the words of Michael Connelly, he said, to freedom for all of Ireland...er, Jersey.

THE MAXIMUS/ PROXIMO AWARD

(This was a very tough category this year, with many contenders for a much coveted award and Prieto/ Sacco a close runner-up. We apologize in advance for those disappointed competitors.)

STEVE SWEENEY/ CHRIS CHRISTIE

After goring a man wearing the head of a bull in the senate chamber later identified as Senate Minority Leader Tom Kean, Jr. and yelling up at the gallery "Are you not entertained?," Sweeney in stripped-down battle wear went to the front office on a request by 2016 Presidential contender Chris Christie. When Sweeney asked Christie what it felt like to be the state's chief executive, Christie, nearly overwhelmed by emotion, said, "It rises. Like a... like a storm." Sweeney nodded in recognition. "You were a governor?" at which point Christie, appearing to pull himself back from the abyss, said, "Yes, I was!"

THE GETTING AHEAD OF ONESELF AWARD

STEVE FULOP

In the parking lot of Liberty House, Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop (left) asked former President Bill Clinton if he could count on Clinton's support for President in 2016. "Well, Steve," a discomfited Clinton reportedly said, "Uhh... I was kinda' thinkin' I'd back Hillary for prez, and I'm here today supporting you in your local endeavors with the idea that YOU would support Hillary." An unflinching Fulop said in response, "I'll make you secretary of state." "Uhhh," said Clinton. "All right, how about ambassador to the court of Saint James," Fulop said.

THE POWER HORN AWARD

THE GOP COUNTY PARTY CHAIRMEN

Following Chris Christie's historic victory in the 2013 governor's contest and the governor's national-sized chest-thumping appearance in Union City, Ocean County Republican Chairman George Gilmore and other party chairs apparently went up to the governor and Bill Palatuccci and warned, "Keep your powder dry on Prez politics."

THE HACKING TRIAL PRE-JURY DECISION WIN-WIN AWARD

FELIX ROQUE

If he won, the mayor of West New York knew he would go back to his hometown and name a school after U.S. Senator Bob Menendez. If he lost, he would do his time, then go back to Cuba and lead a guerilla army against Fidel Castro.

THE TOM FITZSIMMONS IWO JIMA AWARD FOR 11TH HOUR WWII METAPHORS

BOB GORDON

This award rose out of the bloody 2007 state senate contest between Ellen Karcher and Jen Beck. "It's not the Battle of the Bulge," Beck Campaign Manager Tom Fitzsimmons told PolitickerNJ.com. "It's Iwo Jima. We're fighting an enemy who's entrenched, who seemingly has every advantage - except one: which is the tenacity of the United States Marine Corps, and tonight, we will plant the flag."

This year the award goes to state Sen. Bob Gordon (D-38), who told PNJ's Mark Bonamo, "We've got a massive GOTV operation underway, rivaling the Normandy invasion. We've knocked on 60,000 doors. We've been ready for battle since April - I was knocking on doors in the summer of 2012 in my new towns [following the 2011 legislative redistricting]."

PEOPLE TO WATCH IN 2014

WINNER: REX RYAN, HEAD COACH, NEW YORK JETS

As Christie prepares to make his move on the presidency in 2016, look for dark horse Ryan – tanking in the Meadowlands – to make a break from sports to statewide politics, armed with the argument that New Jerseyans will be starved for another obnoxious tell-it-like-is tough guy and reporters craving someone else eager to dismiss them as idiots.

THE BLUE OYSTER CULT FROM HELL AWARD

Angela Garretson's Hillside victory party went swimmingly, but there were some tense moments when state Sen. Ray Lesniak (D-2) showed up, went over to the DJ and insisted, "More cowbell." It was an odd interjection. People appeared to really be grooving to the music, including the mayor-elect, but Lesniak repeatedly objected, offering his own impassioned input to the DJ and forcefully telling him, "What you need is more cowbell."

THE BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN BANDANA FOR THE HARDEST WORKING GUY IN SHOW BIZ

TIM LARSEN

The Hamilton Twp. shutterbug assigned to the governor's office appears to be every event, approaches each photographic task like a Mekong Delta mission – and takes great pictures.

THE ROD STEIGER BACK SEAT OF THE CAB AWARD

JOE DIVINCENZO

In the back of a cab on River Street in Newark, Joe Divincenzo was overheard telling Anibal Ramos that his mayoral campaign had been a good thought, "but that skunk we got you for a manager brought you along too fast." Ramos, visibly wounded, said, "Not my night? I coulda taken Ras Baraka apart that night. It was you, Joe." DiVincenzo sank back in the seat of the cab and on his way to see Chris Christie and Bill Palatucci said, "All right, I'll tell them... I couldn't find you."

THE BUT FOR HURRICANE SANDY AWARD...

A beat up but unbowed state Senator Barbara Buono called state Senator Joe Kyrillos after the election to commiserate. Christie beat Buono in 2013 and Menendez beat Kyrillos in 2012 and while they disagree on policy, Buono and Kyrillos came to the mutual conclusion that they were both victims of Hurricane Sandy.

THE RAY LIOTTA ROLE OF A LIFETIME AWARD

Following the Senate GOP caucus' vote for Senator Tom Kean (R-21) as senate minority leader, state Sen. Kevin O'Toole (R-40) could be seen slamming the wall outside the caucus room and ranting at his fellow Republicans, "Why did you do that? I got to go out on the streets to come home to this? To THIS?"

NJ GOVERNORS' HOLIDAY BOOKSHELF

TOM KEAN, SR.

The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius

The History and Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire by Edward Gibbon

The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man by Marshal McLuhan

JAMES FLORIO

The Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant

Herodotus, the Histories

The Myth of the Machine Vol. II, the Pentagon of Power, by Lewis Mumford

JIM MCGREEVEY

The Complete Poems of Catullus (Latin version)

The Phenomenon of Man by Teilhard de Chardin

Back to Methuselah by George Bernard Shaw

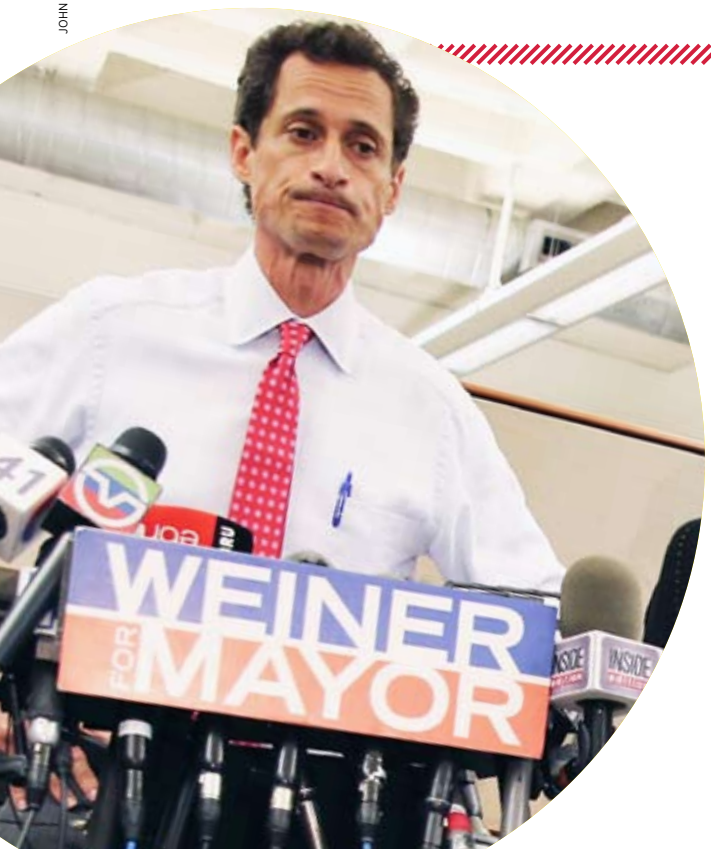
CHRIS CHRISTIE

Bruce Springsteen's Greatest Hits (Boxed Set)

Chris Christie, the Inside Story of his Rise to Power by Bob Ingle and Michael Symons

The Soprano State (Movie version)

Links to Yotube videos of assorted Christie Town Hall events



JOHN MOORE/GETTY IMAGES

A VERY SPECIAL POLITICKERNJ.COM "THANK YOU" TO FORMER CONGRESSMAN ANTHONY WEINER

You're an embarrassment, as we all know,
A walking indecent exposure of the human race.
The voters over there rightly gave you the heave-ho
And it might as well have been into outer space;
But we love you, Tony, and wish you'd hang around
For your unbearable antics signal recognition
That ridiculous public behavior may abound
On either side of the Hudson; Affliction is affliction
Anywhere, and abuse of power not just a Jersey condition.

Passages

Frank Lautenberg

The proud lawmaker from Paterson, the last WWII veteran in the U.S. Senate, died in office at the age of 89.

Mr. Lautenberg enlisted in the Army at 18 and served in Europe. He later graduated from Columbia University and joined with two childhood friends to found Automatic Data Processing (ADP), which today employees 57,000 people worldwide and 4,500 in New Jersey.

First elected in 1982, Mr. Lautenberg retired in 2001, but returned a year later in 2002.

A problem solver who tackled public interest issues, the Senator wrote the law banning smoking on airplanes.

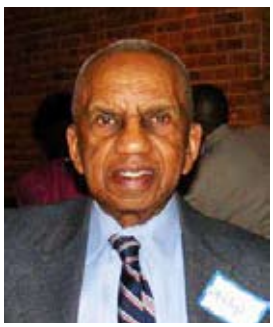
Phil Thigpen

The chairman of the Essex County Democratic Party died, age 87.

A veteran leader of the party who had the respect of different factions in an often divided Essex, and in all corners of an extremely diverse county, Mr. Thigpen started as a track star at Seton Hall University.

An African-American leader, Mr. Thigpen took a special joy in the 2008 victory of President Barack Obama, telling a roomful of Democrats just before the election that if Obama didn't win, he didn't think he would ever get the chance to see an African American serve as the President of the United States.

The highly regarded party chairman attended his first Democratic Convention in Atlantic City in 1964, where he helped elect President Lyndon Johnson, the Texan with a realpolitik streak matched by few government players in modern American history.



Obama lacked Johnson's backroom political skill, but he's better than he was when he first became president, Mr. Thigpen told PolitickerNJ.com in 2012.

John Gregorio

Former Linden Mayor and State Senator John T. Gregorio served in the General Assembly from 1976 to 1978 and as a state senator from 1978 to 1983, and later as mayor of his hometown until 2006.

Mr. Gregorio was the main political figure in Linden for many years and the political mentor of state Senators Ray Lesniak and Nick Scutari.

He became mayor of Linden during the second installment of his career, losing by a percentage point to independent candidate (and sitting Mayor) Richard Gerbounka.

Mr. Gregorio was 87 years old and he died of leukemia.

Alan Rosenthal

Rutgers Professor Alan Rosenthal, an expert on state government who two years ago served as the tie-breaking member of the legislative redistricting team, died at the age of 81.

A renowned expert on government, Mr. Rosenthal authored eight books on democracy and legislatures. In 1992 and 2001, he served as the tie-breaking member of the Congressional redistricting team and he held the same role for the legislative reapportionment commission in 2011.

An Army veteran who graduated from Harvard University and Princeton University, Mr. Rosenthal served a mentor to a generation of state politicos who came through the Eagleton Institute.

His first job upon receiving his Doctorate from Princeton in 1966 was with Rutgers, where he would remain until last spring.

Cary Booker

U.S. Sen. Cory Booker's father, Cary Booker, died less than a week before the state's special U.S. Senate election.

The 76-year-old Mr. Booker died in Las Vegas.

Cary A. Booker was born on December 10, 1936 and moved to New Jersey in 1969. He spent most of his professional career at IBM and was happily married to Carolyn Booker for 49 years.

Jack Sinagra

The former East Brunswick Mayor and New Jersey State Senator, Mr. Sinagra died of an undisclosed illness at the age of 63.

Mr. Sinagra served as mayor of East Brunswick from 1989 to 1991. He later served three terms as an LD18 state senator, and then as chairman of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

Maurice T. "Maury" Perilli

The former chairman and executive vice president of Roma Bank, Mr. Perilli served as mayor of Hamilton Township from 1961 to 1978.

He died this year at 95.

Born in Trenton on Oct. 29, 1918, to Italian immigrants. Mr. Perilli served as a chief petty officer in the U.S. Coast Guard during World War II.

He and his wife Josephine raised four sons.

Passages

Anna Roberts

The wife of former Hoboken Mayor David Roberts died this year at the age of 49 after losing her long battle with brain cancer.

Mrs. Roberts served on the library board for many years.

Harry D. Morey

The former Berkeley Township mayor and U.S. Navy veteran died in Bayville.

Mr. Morey served in the U.S. Navy for 26 years and worked for Ocean County College for 20 years.

From 1979 to 1983 he served as a Berkeley Township Committeeman, and was mayor of Berkeley Township in 1982.

Arthur Milton Falkin

A U.S. Army Staff Sergeant in WWII, Mr. Falkin served as the first Jewish mayor of Springfield, in 1963 and again in 1966.

He died in October after a brief illness.

John "Jack" Stanton Penn

A former Assemblyman and Somerset County GOP Chairman, Mr. Penn of Bedminster died at the age of 86.

Born in Brooklyn in 1926, Mr. Penn grew up in Westfield and attended Columbia University in New York City and served with the United States Marine Corps in the Pacific during World War II from 1943 to 1946.

Mr. Penn served as Somerset GOP Chairman and from 1984 to 1994 in the New Jersey State Assembly representing the 16th District.

Paul Cuprowski

The former Assemblyman and Jersey City Council President died on May 25, in Adairsville, Georgia, after a long illness.

Mr. Cuprowski was born in 1940 and raised in Jersey City, along with four sisters. He was elected Jersey City Councilman-at-Large in 1973, as part of the reform ticket headed by Dr. Paul T. Jordan. County Executive Tom DeGise said Cuprowski was part of "a new generation in politics at that time." Just 33 when elected, he was then the youngest member of the Council.

In 1983, with the backing of then-Mayor Gerald McCann, he ran for the State Assembly to represent District 32. Joan Quigley managed his campaign and after his victory was appointed his chief-of-staff.

In the Assembly Mr. Cuprowski served on the Health Committee and became vice chairman of the Transportation Committee. He authored several significant pieces of legislation, including the establishment of the Transportation Trust Fund, restructuring state tax codes to permit exemptions for income from Individual Retirement Accounts, and higher Earned Income Tax Credits.

In 1985 he was swept out of office, along with most of his Hudson County Democratic running mates, when Thomas Kean was re-elected Governor. Although he later ran for the 32d District Senate seat, he never again held office. However, in a turnabout, in 1993 he managed the Assembly campaign of Quigley and was her chief of staff for a decade.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS
& HAPPY NEW YEAR

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