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Attorneys for Tina Renna

**IN RE JANUARY 11, 2013 SUBPOENA BY
GRAND JURY OF UNION COUNTY, N.J.**

SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY

CRIMINAL DIVISION: UNION COUNTY
PROSECUTOR'S CASE NO. 13-0001

DOCKET NO:

**CERTIFICATION OF
TINA RENNA**

TINA RENNA, of full age, hereby certifies:

1. I write this Certification in support of my Motion to Quash a Grand Jury Subpoena for testimony on the basis of the N.J. Newspersons' Shield, N.J.S.A. 2A: 84A-21 et seq.

2. I am the President of the Union County Watchdog Association ("UCWA") a 501(c)3 organization with a purpose to monitor Union County government and advocate for change to eliminate waste, mismanagement and corruption. I am also one of several writers of a web blog entitled "County Watchers" featured at the www.countywatchers.com, or through a link on the UCWA site. County Watchers, like the UCWA, is in the business of disseminating news to the general public regarding Union County government and politics. The thrust of my reporting is to present to the public facts that are often overlooked, omitted or erroneously printed in other

publications, or through official releases. Screenshots of the home pages of the UCWA and County Watchers' websites are attached hereto as Exhibit A.

3. I have been publishing County Watchers on a regular basis -- usually at least one article per week, since 2005. The frequency of these news reports depends on the available news to report, and the time I have to report, but on average I work 10-20 hours or more weekly as a reporter and editor. I have personally covered and reported on all facets of Union County government and politics since I began this on-line blog about seven years ago, through which my colleagues and myself have published at least 1,000 news posts. A sample of recent news stories are attached here to as Exhibit B, which includes various news reports concerning potential corruption in Union County government, the prosecutor's office and other agencies.

4. On or about December 12, 2012, the County Watchers blog published a post headlined "Generatorgate -- An exciting opportunity to shine a light on our corrupted system of law and order," the subject was the Union County Prosecutor's office investigation into allegations that county employees took home generators during the Hurricane Sandy emergency. This News blog is attached as Exhibit C.

5. On or about December 17, 2012 I received a letter from Det. Russo which was delivered via First Class mail in which it referenced the "Generatorgate" blog posting. His letter states:

In your blog entry of December 12, 2012 you indicated that, "As many as 16 names have been revealed to me by different sources", regarding the use of county owned generators during the Hurricane Sandy emergency. Please contact the undersigned at (908) 527-4619, so we can arrange for you to come to this Office to speak to the undersigned concerning this matter.

Subsequently, I received another letter dated December 27, 2012 asking me to

contact Det. Russo. Both letters are attached hereto as Exhibit D.

6. On or about January 4, 2013, I received a Subpoena to appear before a Union County Grand Jury on January 11, 2013 at 9 am to "Provide testimony Re: In re the Investigation into the Improper Use of County Generators." It appears from the letter and the Subpoena that the Grand Jury Subpoena is designed to obtain information I have gathered in the course of my professional activities, as well as the sources of my information. See Subpoena attached hereto as Exhibit E.

7. The "County Watchers" blog is a news and information website, with all the attributes of traditional news media except because it is a non-profit entity; as part of the UCWA, it seeks donations rather than sell advertising. My purpose in operating, and publishing, the website and writing on the County Watchers is, and has always been, to gather and compile and disseminate to members of the public information about Union County government. I obtain the information I publish in the course of my duties as the person who writes, operates and publishes the County Watchers blog.

8. The information sought by the subpoena involves confidential information gathered as part of the news process and is subject to the Newspersons' Privilege as set forth in N.J.S.A. 2A: 84A-21 et seq., and N.J. R. Evid. 508, which privilege I do hereby invoke and which information I thus respectfully refuse to produce or disclose as a witness.

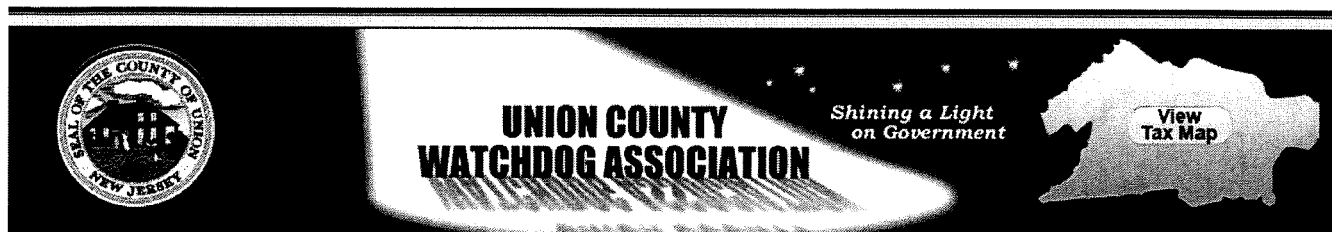
I certify that the foregoing information is true to the best of my knowledge. I am aware that if the above information is knowingly false, I am subject to punishment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tina Renna', written over a horizontal line.

Tina Renna

Dated: January 9, 2013

EXHIBIT A

Search by Keyword [HOME](#)[PUBLIC RECORDS](#)[TOOLS](#)[GOVERNMENT](#)

How do I...

President
Tina Renna

Annual Review



Join Our Networks
Click on icons to View

Hot Topics

County Watchers Blog

- [Prosecutor responds to request for explanation of 2010 Musicfest Investigation](#)

2013-01-08, 10:41 pm

On November 5, 2012 I wrote the Union County Prose

- [Letter to the County Watchers](#)

2013-01-07, 08:42 am

All elected officials, taxpayers and residents in

- [Summit Mayor speaks out against county in State of the City Address](#)

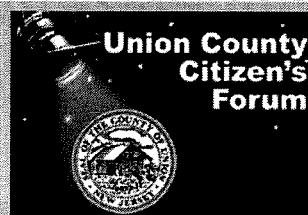
2013-01-05, 02:25

pm

&

The County Watchers

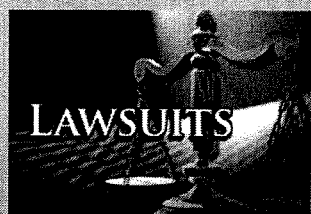
BLOG



**Report Government
Crime, Waste and
Mismanagement**



Video Viewing Room



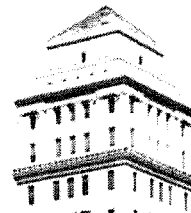
Union County
Watchdog

Emergency Notification
of Waste and Corruption
and so much more!

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The County Watchers

The citizen watchdogs of government in Union County, NJ



- [Home](#)
- [The Watchers](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Submit/Contact](#)
- [Union County Watchdog Association](#)
- [Join Us](#)

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Prosecutor responds to request for explanation of 2010 Musicfest Investigation

By Tina Renna | January 8, 2013

On November 5, 2012 [I wrote](#) the Union County Prosecutor, Theodore Romankow, asking him to explain some of the details of his 2010 Musicfest investigation.

On January 4, 2013 [he responded](#).

Tagged: [MusicFest](#), [Theodore Romankow](#)

Feedback: [4 Comments](#)

Letter to the County Watchers

By Bruce Paterson | January 7, 2013

All elected officials, taxpayers and residents in Union County should watch the video that is up on the Berkeley Heights official website- www.berkeleyheightstwp.com. It's called "Cup of Joe" and has an interview with BH mayor Joe Bruno and Councilman Woodruff. They are discussing the reasons and procedure for their town's 2013 non-binding referendum for succession from our Union County.

At the 20 minute mark the mayor brings up 2 paramount issues regarding Union County govt that motivates their referendum in BH: Is govt spending wisely? And, is govt doing what it's supposed to do? The BH council has been deliberating this the last few months and found the county govt has failed in this charge, thus the referendum.

As residents and taxpayers, we should all approach our town councils and request they also deliberate on these charges. Our elected officials must be responsible for revenues and expenditures not only on the local level but also where our taxes go up the ladder to the county with their expenditures and services. Roughly one quarter of our tax dollar goes to the county.

This is not a Democrat or Republican political issue, but an issue of the people wanting good government. All towns would find that Union County govt has not performed in their best interests. Presently the county budget is nearing \$500,000,000, yet each town would find minimal return on this money. A watchdog group called "countywatchers.com" on their website has exposed much waste, abuse and possible corruption within our Union County govt over the years. I personally attend the weekly freeholder meetings as a resident and am amazed at the lack of accountability for their actions. When pointed out, they simply will not change. This all should be motivation enough to put heat to your town's elected officials to do something. A fact in each general election, 12-14 towns out of 21 county towns normally vote against the incumbent freeholders, implicitly rejecting the county system in place. This should send a message to all our elected officials that the county is not servicing our towns properly.

With conclusions at hand, then town discussions of succession, districting, even dissolution of Union County govt, resolutions of condemnation or fairness, or a town's self-imposed cut of taxes being sent to the county should be considered as the next step in truly serving the public's interest and bringing good government to our county.

Tagged:

Feedback: [Comments](#)

Summit Mayor speaks out against county in State of the City Address

By Tina Renna | January 5, 2013



Elen Dickson, Summit Mayor

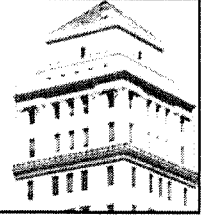
Excerpt from State of the City Address, 1/3/13:

Financially, Summit is rated AAA. You should know the combined budget for schools and city services increased less than 1% in 2012. The pressure on the budget came from our Union County tax bill. We now pay \$33 million a year to the County and rising. That is over 25% of our property taxes. Our increase last year was 11% with a double-digit increase expected this year as well. Obviously the 2% spending cap does not work with the County. This is frustrating since the value provided by these taxes is not apparent and they give us much less financial flexibility and make it much harder to afford new programs. I ran for Freeholder and while many of us have attended the Union County Freeholder meetings we know our voices seemed to have been ignored. In an era when the needs of our citizens are hard enough to meet and real median incomes are much lower than five years ago, we have a county government that builds \$10 million golf club houses, approved the construction of a multimillion dollar ice skating rink, and runs a hospital that is losing millions of dollars a year. County government at the very minimum needs to become more accountable, responsive to all of its constituents, transparent and affordable. Perhaps, it should be eliminated. That step was taken in Massachusetts and Connecticut and those states are more affordable.


EXHIBIT B

The County Watchers

The citizen watchdogs of government in Union County, NJ



- [Home](#)
- [The Watchers](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Submit/Contact](#)
- [Union County Watchdog Association](#)
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Directors have a duty to be informed about the Union County Alliance

By Tina Renna | November 24, 2012

The Union County Alliance won't reveal their Board of Directors, as they are required to do, and a complaint has been filed with the IRS.

In the meantime, since the freeholders continue to ignore requests for accountability, my state representative, Senator Tom Kean Jr., was listed with some sort of leadership role in the Alliance at one point, so I thought I'd try asking him for some accountability. The Freeholders solely fund the Alliance with public funds, but whoever is listed as a Board member of the Alliance is legally responsible for our tax dollars. "The Duty of Care" generally describes the level of attention required of a director in all matters related to the Corporation. The duty of care has been more accurately described in court proceedings as a "duty to be informed."

Senator Tom Kean Jr.
425 North Ave. East
Westfield, NJ 07090

Re: Your Fiduciary Responsibility and Duty of Care to the Union County Alliance

Dear Senator Kean:

I am writing to you today in your capacity as my state representative and because of your affiliation as an Honorary Co-Chairman of the Union County Alliance ("UCA"). I am not sure if you are still affiliated with the Alliance, because the Alliance does not meet IRS reporting requirements; the Alliance does not list their current officers, directors and trustees on IRS 990 filings, and I have not been able to obtain even this limited information from them.

Since its creation the UCA has received most of its funding from the County of Union. UCA is a publicly funded 501(c)4 organization, yet the public apparently has no way of holding UCA accountable for the tax dollars that it receives. For example, the UCA submits bills routinely to the Union County Board of Freeholders for "comprehensive research and communication," yet all requests to Union County for an explanation as to what exactly the taxpayers received for this service have gone unanswered to date.

I realize that the Alliance isn't responsible for the actions of the Union County Freeholder Board or for any other county employee responsible for the expenditure of public funds; however, I write to you today to remind you of your fiduciary responsibility as a board member of the Alliance. While it is true that the Union County government is issuing these funds, UCA is receiving them, and therefore you are also responsible to the public for an accounting of how the funds are used.

I have studied the history of the Alliance extensively, and I submit to you that UCA had honorable beginnings with many well-intentioned and respected members of the community coming together to carry out important tasks. This is in stark contrast to what UCA has become in recent years. As a member of the Board of Directors you have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that all Alliance business is done within the law. You are also responsible for the care of the organization. "The duty of care" generally describes the level of attention required of a director in all matters related to the Corporation. The duty of care has been more

accurately described in court proceedings as a “duty to be informed.” I would also submit that you have a moral obligation to the UCA founders to honor their good works and to maintain the reputation of their organization.

The Union County Watchdog Association (“UCWA”) has filed a lawsuit asking the court to find that UCA is a public agency subject to the Open Public Records Act (“OPRA”). At this time I do not know what the outcome of this dispute will be. My purpose in writing to you is to ensure that you are fully aware of how the UCA’s response to this suit.

UCA’s counsel, Craig Dowd of Webber Dowd Law LLC, has been very careful to hide the nature of the relationship between UCA’s former Executive Director, Michael Murray, and the UCA. Similarly, the nature of relationships of former employees, Dr. Henry J. Ross and Ann Marie Kay and the state’s Kean University to the UCA are hidden. UCA’s counsel is currently trying to suppress this information from the Appellate Court.

I’ve enclosed ([attachment 1](#)) UCA’s latest reply brief in this matter, and I particularly wish to draw your attention to the following:

UCA Brief: The Alliance was not created by any act of the County of Union, nor by any Union County employee.

Fact: The alliance was founded in 1994 as a bipartisan organization to promote local economic development. According to a county press release ([attachment 2](#)), former Union County Manager, Ann Baran, founded it in her capacity as County Manager. According to Union County Freeholder meeting minutes dated 4/14/94 ([attachment 3](#)) Freeholder Chairman Lahr explained that “Ordinance 390-994 – creating the office of Policy and Planning – was designed to implement the actions of the Union County Alliance. Also, it allowed the county to open as a gateway to world trade.”

UCA Brief: The County of Union and the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders have no right to control nor do they actually exercise any control over, or have any authority with respect to, any facet, fiscal or otherwise of the Alliance operations...There is no reliable information to suggest that the County of Union neither controls the timing nor means and methods by which any of the monies provided by it to the Alliance under contract must be used.

UCA counsel has argued that the Alliance’s Board of Directors are solely responsible for the Alliance. But does UCA’s board, know what is actually being done? Does UCA Board of Directors do any of the following: meet; review financial reports; approve expenditures; or authorize an annual audit? As you well know, misuse of public funds can result in criminal charges.

Fact: The UCA derives most of its funds from public entities, and it is responsible to Union County ([attachment 4](#)). Union County resolutions clearly state the purpose of the funds. Rider No. 2 of the UCA Incorporation papers state: The Alliance is currently being funded by a grant from Union County.

Office space, secretarial assistance and other similar administrative services are being provided by Kean University. The Alliance anticipated defraying some of its operating expenses from the dues of its members. No dues have been set, however.

UCA Brief: The Alliance operates out of its privately leased office space located at 1275 Westfield Avenue in Rahway, NJ, which the Alliance has leased for that purpose continuously since 2007.

Fact: The Alliance was initially and until 2007 located within state-run Kean University utilizing its office space, equipment and staff. The UCA incorporation papers (Rider No. 1). The President, who was also president of Kean College, was assisted in his duties by a small administrative staff on loan to the Alliance on a part-time basis from Kean College; these staff members were state employees paid by the state and enrolled in the state’s pension system. The Alliance, being a voluntary organization, did not anticipate any material number of employees or the need to provide office space or to incur the expenses associated with a large staff. Until a few years ago the Alliance office was located within Kean College – a state school – the address was c/o Kean College, Morris Ave., P.O. Box 411 Union NJ.

UCA Brief: The Alliance employed an Executive Director, Michael Murray. Mr. Murray was not employed by the County of Union during such time....

The Alliance’s only other recent employee.....

Fact: Michael Murray was on the Union County Payroll during some of the time of his employment with the Alliance, along with former Alliance employee, Ann Marie Kay, who was also employed by Kean University. The Alliance’s first president was simultaneously the president of Kean College.

UCA Brief: The Alliance does not, nor do its employees, utilize any Union County facilities or equipment, any county or state vehicles...

Fact: The Alliance utilized Kean University facilities and equipment and the president had access to a county issued take home vehicle for several years ([attachment 5](#)).

UCA Brief: The Alliance never enrolled or attempted to enroll its employees in any public employment retirement system

Fact: Alliance employees were enrolled in the public employee retirement system as they were simultaneously employed by other public entities.

UCA Brief: The Alliance utilizes its revenues, including, but not limited to those obtained through its contracts with Union County, to implement programs necessary to meet the goals of the Alliance's Long Range Strategic Plan.

Fact: It is unknown to the public when the "Long Range Strategic Plan" became property of the Alliance. Documentation shows it was Union County's Long Range Strategic Plan ([attachment 6](#)).

UCA Brief: In previous years the Alliance has received revenues via contract with Union County totaling as little as \$2,000, but the Alliance continued its operations.

Fact: UCA brief does not mention the years; we believe it may have been only one (1) year.

UCA Brief: The Alliance obtained its 2011 revenues from the following contracts with Union County: advertising within its publication "Directions"; billable graphic design; marketing; website services; and similar work

Fact: The Alliance shared a postal account with Union County government ([attachment 7](#)), and it utilized the Postal Patron status which is only afforded to government entities. Also, for years this publication, "Directions" was produced within the county administration building utilizing county staff.

UCA Brief: The Alliance's initial officers were private individuals including but not limited to its Chairman Kenneth L. Estabrook, Esq., Ed Zarnock, Robert Kenney, Ann Baran, and Dr. Henry J. Ross. No reference to any governmental capacity of these individuals was made. At the time of the Alliance's founding in 1994, the Alliance's president affirmed that the Alliance never intended or planned to be connected with any other organization. Additionally, it was not under the supervisory jurisdiction or control of any public regulatory body or agency.

Fact: Ann Baron was county manager, and press releases and meeting minutes show that the Alliance was very much a part of her duties as county manager.

Henry J. Ross was simultaneously the president of Kean College.

According to its website, UCA serves several important public functions, including: (1) designing websites for public agencies; (2) conducting public health assessments; (3) publishing newsletters that are placed on Union County's website; (3) preparing environmental studies and assessments; (4) preparing marketing initiatives for the Union County Improvement Authority; and (5) preparing an emergency preparedness guide for a division of Union County. Also, while it is unknown exactly how much funding the UCA receives from Union County, Union County has paid or authorized payment to the UCA in 2011 in the amount of \$352,085, and paid or authorized payment in the same amount in 2010 for unspecified communications and research services.

This seems a far cry from the initial purpose of the Alliance, which according to UCA incorporation papers states, "The Alliance was organized as is to revitalize and strengthen the economy and quality of life in Union County New Jersey."

When was the last time UCA's subcommittees met and reported to the Executive Committee? At the time of UCA's incorporation it reported having subcommittees in transportation and infrastructure, environmental, economic competitiveness, education and work force training, social services, cultural affairs and others. At the time of incorporation the Alliance was involved in a project to clear the way for much-needed dredging of the busy Port of Elizabeth Harbor.

UCA's incorporation papers state, "The Alliance carries out its activities through active subcommittees operating within their respective subject matter areas. The chairman of the subcommittees, in turn, report to the Executive Committee, which functions as the Board of Trustees of the Alliance, and is composed of community leaders from the public and private sector in the Union County area. The Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee advises the Executive Committee on all matters of critical importance to the Alliance."

When was the last time the UCA Board reviewed an expense report such as travel and conferences or a tax return?

When was the last time UCA's executive director reported to the Executive Committee regarding his interaction with other entities? UCA's initial incorporation papers state, "In carrying out its mission, the Alliance intends to work closely with federal, state and local elected officials and heads of administrative agencies, as well as with persons in the business community, such as the heads of corporations doing business in union County and the heads of trade groups such as the Union County Chamber of Commerce and the Linden Industrial Association."

I've enclosed newspapers reports published in recent years ([attachment 8](#)). They contain scathing reports on the dubious nature of the Alliance; there are no positive articles to include because none have been written.

One article states that for several years the Alliance was not easily found via phone or the internet, and that money was being funneled into "travel" and "conferences" and some nebulous category called "other". According to the Local Source: A copy of the UCA's 2009 tax return showed expenditures totaling \$492,416. Among the expenditures included on this tax form was \$103,315 for "conferences, conventions and meetings." An excerpt from the article reads:

"That's my fault. That's something I should have picked up on. I signed the tax return without looking at it," the UCA president (Michael Murray) said." After being questioned by the press UCA's former president amended the 2009 tax return and filed it with the IRS.

How involved is UCA's board with the Alliance's operations? When was the last time the board held an annual meeting and held your executive director accountable for the work he is charged with performing?

Do UCA's Executive Director and support staff have job descriptions and delineated work hours? Is the Executive Director required to work 40 hours per week for UCA, and does anyone supervise the day to day operations?

Despite the significant burden of trying to prove negligence by a nonprofit director, and despite the protections of the business judgment rule, nonprofit directors can be held responsible when an organization's finances are poorly managed.

In closing I'd like to leave you with these final thoughts: Has UCA's board stayed true to its initial purpose, and is the board properly and effectively overseeing current projects and appropriately supervising its employees? As a board member are you sufficiently informed and aware of the UCA's activities? If the answer to any of these questions is, "No," then the problem is self-evident.

As a constituent I respectfully request that you help bring accountability to UCA. If accountability is not restored, then rather than lend your name to a questionable organization, I would suggest that you resign as a UCA board member and do so publicly.

Sincerely,

Tina Renna

« [Congratulations on your most hollow victory](#)
[15-20 Union County employees are thought to have borrowed generators in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy](#) »

Tagged:

8 Responses to "Directors have a duty to be informed about the Union County Alliance"

1. Jeff Arnold says:

[November 24th, 2012 at 4:17 pm](#)

Keep up the good work. I will contact Tom Kean's office seconding your request.

2. Ron Nicol says:

[November 24th, 2012 at 4:27 pm](#)

I think you are doing a fantastic job!!!

3. [John Bury](#) says:

[November 25th, 2012 at 10:05 am](#)

I think so too!!!!

4. Joe Renna says:

[November 25th, 2012 at 10:50 am](#)

The County of Union avoids going through the procurement process and getting bids by giving money to the Alliance and letting them pay for the printing of the Directions newsletter. When Linda Stender was a sitting Freeholder, her husband's "printing business" got the contract to print the newsletter. Even though his price was \$40,000 more than the next highest bid. The prosecutor never investigated.

I have to wonder if any other board member benefited from the tax dollars that went to the Alliance. There is legal responsibility of the Board of Directors to safeguard mis use of funds. There is no law enforcement for Union County officials and their cronies. The State AG has been no better.

The most recent list of directors That I can find is from 2002 printed in a Health assessment report.

The Union County Alliance

Board of Directors
(as of January, 2002)

Honorary Co-Chairs
Senate President Donald DiFrancesco Senator Raymond Lesniak

Edward Zarnock, Chair and Acting President

George J. Albanese

Ronald L. Applbaum

Ann Baran, Vice Chair

Oliver J. Bartlett

Michael P. Bonner, Vice Chair

Michael F. Brimmer

Thomas H. Brown

Rose M. Bussiculo

Brant Cali

Andrew Chapman

Mauro Checchio, Treasurer/President Emeritus

Joseph Coleman

Samuel Crane

George Devanney

Paul DeVenuto

Elizabeth Ealie

Kenneth L. Estabrook, Chair Emeritus

James K. Estabrook

Gordon Fuller

Robert Gal

Elizabeth Garcia

David Gibbons, Vice Chair

Elisse Glennon

John Griffith

Chester Holmes

Michael Karlovich, Vice Chair

Richard J. Kinney

Stephen J. Kukan

Michael J. Lapolla

Frank H. Lehr

Anna Lustenberg, Secretary

John R. Malcolm

Albert McWilliams

Julane W. Miller-Armbrister

Lewis Mingo, Jr.

Alexander Mirabella

Thomas Morrison III

Dell Raudelunas, Past Chair

Martin E. Robins

Luis F. Rodriguez

Henry J. Ross

Julio Sabater

Charles Sales

Thomas J. Sharkey, Jr.

Linda Stender

Daniel P. Sullivan

A. Wayne Tamarelli, Chair Emeritus

Glenn A. Tillou

Maureen Tinen

5. Mark Boehme says:
[November 26th, 2012 at 11:00 am](#)

Tina, thanks for pursuing this. I will join Mr. Arnold in contacting Senator Kean's office. We need the Alliance to increase it's transparency given that Union County taxpayers seem to be the major, if not the only, source of revenues for the Alliance.

6. Mary Ellen Taylor says:

[November 26th, 2012 at 12:39 pm](#)

Keep up the good work Tina

7. bpaterson says:

[November 26th, 2012 at 10:48 pm](#)

i thought senator kean declined to be involved with the UCA about 5 years ago and asked to remove his photo from the newsletter...but i could be wrong. We await his response to your request .

8. Adam Frank says:

[November 29th, 2012 at 8:14 pm](#)

If an entity accepts ONE PENNY of public funds, it is considered a public entity for purposes of the Freedom of Information Act,(in NJ OPRA). Their is a ton of case law that backs this up and you will win in court.

•

• **UC Need to Know**

[Tax Levy by City](#)

[Employee List \(2/24/11\)](#)

[Taxes by County](#)

[Appropriations by Department](#)

[Grants](#)

• **UC Fiascoes**

- [Courts Building](#)
- [Delaney Hall](#)
- [Dog Park for \\$600,000+](#)
- [Golf](#)
- [Lifetime Health Benefits](#)
- [Musicfest](#)
- [Open Space Tax](#)
- [Pension Padding](#)
- [Renewable Energy Boondoggle](#)
- [Trademarking County Seal](#)
- [UC Directions](#)
- [UCUA/Covanta Deal](#)
- [Vendors in the news](#)
- [Website for \\$130,000+](#)

• **UC Municipalities**

- [Municipal Meetings](#)

• **Archives**

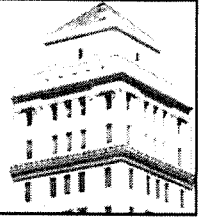
Select Month

• **Posts**


January 2013

The County Watchers

The citizen watchdogs of government in Union County, NJ



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- [Union County Watchdog Association](#)
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Union County Prosecutor's Office – I'm not an idiot

By Tina Renna | March 18, 2012

Today the Star-Ledger [published a story](#) on the county's new crime lab director. Reporter Ryan Hutchins was fair and balanced and I believe he did a great job as a journalist.

However, I am a government watchdog and we need to report things differently. I am posting this information because I believe the public has a right to know, a need to know, how their government is operating. I have major concerns about our county prosecutor's office. I believe politicians are controlling him and that jepordizes our public safety and our liberty. That is my strong opinion.

Unlike last year, the freeholders didn't pass a resolution this year to continue the 70 year-old plus Prosecutor's service under NJSA 43:15A-158(a) ("on an annual basis"), perhaps the state attorney general's office sent the required notice. The fact that they denied the freeholders involvement with reappointing him last year is suspect. The fact that they went about it differently this year is also telling. There has been no public announcement of it, what's the secret?

I've heard many stories of alleged abuse of power with Theodore Romankow's office. The Musicfest investigation comes to mind as well. I know from personal experience that something is very wrong when someone in authority can send two state agents to a private citizen's home on a simple administrative matter involving paperwork for non-profit status. The state admitted that these agents are usually used for more serious things, like investigating terrorists groups. Gee, is the county terrified of me?

If a crime lab can be the arm of the prosecutor who is the arm of a political machine, that is worrisome on many levels. In order for our justice system to work properly, a crime lab needs to be conducted with unbiased science.

The Ledger article today mentioned Matthew Gabriel's past in a San Francisco crime lab, I strongly recommend that you read up on this yourself. One San Francisco Weekly article excerpt quoting a whistle blower:

Under Gabriel's leadership, Barlow believed, the SFPD's DNA analysts had come to see themselves as an arm of the district attorney's office in criminal prosecutions, rather than as unbiased scientists. "They're so interested in doing a test and getting a result that they'd rather have poor data than no data," she says.

Now consider how we came to learn about the county's crime lab and its new leadership.

On Sunday, January 22, 2012, I posted the new position control changes and noted:

This needs more looking into: New Confidential Assistant's salary is higher than the department director he reports to. A new position has been created for a Matthew Gabriel who joins the county payroll as a confidential assistant to the public safety office of director with a salary of \$123,000. The public safety Director is Andrew Moran, his salary is \$113,793. A quick glance at the county payroll shows new hire Gabriel is making more than most department heads. At this writing I don't know who Gabriel is or where he came from.

After I posted the above on Sunday and asked for this guys resume in an OPRA the county puts out a press release on that Monday about how great he is. Turns out Matthew Gabriel was really running the forensics lab for the prosecutor.

Furthering my interest is that this guy's been on the payroll for months and now coinciding with my inquiry the county decided to put out a press release about him. They must think I'm an idiot. Besides, even idiots can use [Google](#).

Quote from their press release: "Matt brings a great wealth of experience, common sense, and a keen scientific mind to the forensic laboratory," said Prosecutor Romankow. "The laboratory is in capable hands and has a new reason for residents to be proud of this great resource."

This led me to [Google Matthew Gabriel](#).

« [Open and honest government – what needs to be done](#)
[Kane in Your Corner on Musicfest Cancellation](#) »

Tagged: [Crime Lab](#), [Gabriel](#), [Prosecutor](#)

12 Responses to "Union County Prosecutor's Office – I'm not an idiot"

1. Robert Reilly says:

[March 18th, 2012 at 10:50 am](#)

Union county again using it's keen political mind. A million dollars to solve a five dollar crime, Romankow is watching too much NCIS. Keep up the great work Tina.

2. Anthony Nardiello says:

[March 18th, 2012 at 12:44 pm](#)

Why is 70 year old Thadeus Romankowski still working? Doesn't he want to enjoy his Berkeley Heights palace? Give it up, Ted!!!

3. steve says:

[March 18th, 2012 at 1:17 pm](#)

The so called Union County government is getting more questionable day to day—maybe it is time to go past the idea of shared services (with the county) and return control over to the Towns and state- The town councils in union county should and continue to apply pressure, not only for their fair share of return on their tax dollars but to eliminate this useless level of redundant government, if they have the political guts and respect their oath of office- and T R you are far from being and idiot, the biggest mistake any-one can make is to " assume" that the average person is stupid.

4. G. Albritton says:

[March 18th, 2012 at 3:33 pm](#)

Nothing noted in article about the high costs involved, and maybe that is why no other northern county has such an expensive facility? Nevertheless, the County's residents should all be very proud, just as Union County is finally going to reveal next month a budget that will confirm its insolvency, resulting from embarking on extravagances just like this.

Are there alternatives? The State lab is mentioned. Also, look at the ABC KGO-TV report of June 23, after our Mr. Gabriel was unceremoniously forced out (http://abclocal.go.com/kgo/story?section=news/local/san_francisco&id=7515045):

"San Francisco Controller Ben Rosenfield has recommended permanently closing down the crime lab and outsourcing the testing conducted there. Rosenfield says the city would save \$15 million by outsourcing crime lab analysis."

Of course, saving money like this is not a strategy for this County, not for this Prosecutor.

5. Tacitus says:

[March 18th, 2012 at 4:22 pm](#)

Wow, from a "... a DNA technician" in 2009 to a Confidential Assistant to the Union County Forensics Lab?

Question #1: Why all of the convoluted secrecy behind this right off the bat?

6. tom says:

[March 18th, 2012 at 5:05 pm](#)

retire already.....must be a reason why he is still around?? Hang in there Tina...the scum are running scared.

7. Mary Ellen Taylor says:

[March 18th, 2012 at 7:17 pm](#)

We have a DNA lab to not test items for DNA when they chose not to test for DNA. Still waiting for them to test sneakers for DNA.

8. bpaterson says:

March 18th, 2012 at 8:04 pm

As most criminal enterprises go, you have to have something on the person in charge so as to be able to manipulate him. They picked gabriel with his baggage of the san francisco debacle and him having heat to leave. They gave this young turk a high paying directorship here in union county even though he does not have any deep experience So now they have something on him and own him.

As the quote in Godfather I goes: For this i grant you the favor you ask, but someday and that day may never come, i may call upon you to do a favor for me.

.....and so the union county criminal enterprise continues.....

9. Karen Golding says:

March 18th, 2012 at 9:10 pm

Ultimately, the truth shall prevail. Keep up the great work.

10. EyesThatSee says:

March 19th, 2012 at 6:45 am

RE: bpaterson says:
March 18th, 2012 at 8:04 pm

Exactly! and worse.....crime money is not paying the bills, we are!!! And what may be even worser (lol), the State of NJ has yet to file a single charge of corruption, under this or any Governor for decades that I now of, against any individual(s) retained by the County of Union government, with what looks like innumerable opportunities! What's really up with that?

11. Brian P Keane says:

March 19th, 2012 at 1:20 pm

or that othr crook guy who votes twice early.. he climbd mt everst with sharks Hes a Wascully wabbit and eats all that leftover corn at the mewsicfest,, u can see him at fweeholdr meetngs in the bak wit the poleroid camera stiking his tung out and drooling. =He is loud I don't like him,that Blatherskite. Is he the Bayonne Terribel TweetMeister i am think so

12. Brian P Keane says:

March 20th, 2012 at 8:56 am

I wonder what kind of substance abuse program they have down south and if the doppleganger ever attended a session. Chuck Jones is rolling in his grave over this one..

•

• **UC Need to Know**

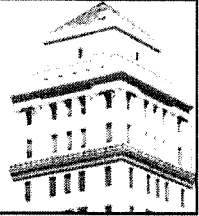
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• **UC Fiascoes**


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- [Delaney Hall](#)
- [Dog Park for \\$600,000+](#)
- [Golf](#)
- [Lifetime Health Benefits](#)
- [Musicfest](#)
- [Open Space Tax](#)
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OPRA request reveals freeholder's son is involved in county criminal investigation, the county won't release the records

By Tina Renna | April 13, 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact:

Walter M. Luers, Esq.
23 West Main Street
Clinton, New Jersey 08809
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UNION COUNTY- The Union County Watchdog Association (UCWA) has filed a law suit in Union County Superior Court seeking access to investigatory records involving a former Union County employee, Patrick Scanlon, Jr., who is the son of freeholder Deborah Scanlon.

On March 30, 2012 Tina Renna requested copies of all investigations, including Union County police, sheriff and prosecutor into the matter involving former county employee Patrick Scanlon, Jr. The request was made pursuant to the Open Public Records act and the common law right of access.

By law the county has up to 7 business days to respond to OPRA requests starting with the day after the request was made. The county responded on the 6th day allowable by law (11 days after Renna requested the documents).

On April 10, 2012, the county responded to the request, stating in part: Please be advised that these documents are on file with the County Police; however, they are criminal investigatory records that are not subject to disclosure under the OPRA.

It took Renna and her attorney Walter Luers only two days to file a lawsuit seeking access.

The complaint charges the investigation of Scanlon, Jr. concerned allegations that he allegedly sold County property for personal gain. We believe the County's investigation against Scanlon, Jr. has been closed without formal charges being filed.

The public has a strong interest in learning the details of the County's investigation to determine whether nepotism or favoritism played any role in the investigation of Scanlon, Jr. The public's interest in acquiring the documents outweigh any interest in continued secrecy that the County may have.

The UCWA is demanding the disclosure of the investigatory files maintained by the County Police on Patrick Scanlon, Jr., and award of costs of the lawsuit and reasonable attorneys' fees.

Background statement prepared by Tina Renna:

The Star-Ledger reported on March 1, 2012 that Freeholder Scanlon announced she would be stepping down at the end of the year to make more time for her family. According to public records, Mr. Scanlon was hired by Union County as a laborer (\$33521) in August 2011. Mr. Scanlon left the county payroll sometime in January 2012. Public records show that a Patrick Scanlon was

convicted of Theft by Unlawful Taking on January 25, 2010 and sentenced to 6 months in jail and 5 years probation by Union County Superior Court Judge Joseph P. Donohue.

Judge Donohue is the brother in law of Union County Undersheriff/ Assemblyman/Union Township Democratic Municipal Chairman/former State Democratic Chairman Joseph Cryan. Donohue began his judicial career in the Essex County Sheriff's office under then Sheriff John Cryan, Joseph's Cryan's father, and Undersheriff Patrick Scanlon, Mr. Scanlon's grandfather.

Joseph Cryan swore freeholder Deborah Scanlon in as freeholder commencing each of her terms in 2011, 2007, 2004 and 2000.

The public has a strong interest in learning the details of the County's investigation to determine whether nepotism or favoritism played any role in the investigation of Scanlon, Jr. This is on the heels of the Musicfest investigation which was undertaken by the Union County Prosecutgor only after citizens refused to let the obvious malfeasance of 2010 Musicfest be covered up.

The UCWA put countless hours into following the Musicfest dollars year after year, the county's numbers never added up. I was very vocal in my disapproval that the Union County Prosecutor was allowed to investigate the county and former manager, George Devanney who is Senator Raymond Lesniak's nephew. I do not believe government should be allowed to police itself and the public needs to be vigilant to ensure justice is meted out equally to all citizens.

County employees have been held accountable for much less over the years, Musicfest and the way this Scanlon investigation appears to be playing out is in sharp contrast to how the rank and file, un-connected employees have been treated by Union County government for alleged theft through the years.

The prosecutor's investigation into Musicfest subsequently found no evidence of criminal wrongdoing but discovered numerous shoddy accounting practices and handshake-style deal making with contractors, according to a letter made public by the Prosecutor in August 2011. Cash was unaccounted for, the county misplaced money and contractors were overpaid by tens of thousands of dollars.

In one example, the prosecutor's office found more than \$15,000 in cash revenues stored in a county safe months after Musicfest, apparently forgotten by employees including the county manager and the then finance director. The Prosecutor's report mentions that the county manager handled the cash collected from the "Beer Garden". "The LHS "Beer Garden" generated a significant amount of cash through the sale of alcoholic beverages. This money was collected by County employees. The money was then ultimately transported to the Union County Administration Building where it was placed in a safe at the Union County Finance Department. The total amount placed in the safe was \$37,507 (The prosecutor reported, although there were no receipts to back up this amount.) This money was then deposited in the Union County Chapter of LHS's bank account. These deposits were made incrementally by George Devanney. When questioned as to the reason behind this method of deposit, Devanney informed our investigator that he did this as a safety precaution because he was not comfortable carrying large amounts of cash at one time."

According to the Internal Revenue Service: \$10,000 is the sum that triggers federal reporting requirements. Making multiple deposits less than \$10,000 is a practice that is known as "structuring" and it is illegal. This practice is typically used to evade taxes or to hide money used for illicit purposes.

The Prosecutor's report does not mention that the County Manager, along with family members, county vendors and friends, have been given exotic trips through the LHSF for raising these funds.

This Is It!, the main contractor responsible for organizing the event, was over budget by more than \$77,000, so then county manager George Devanney allowed the company to retain profits, the prosecutor wrote. But investigators found This Is It! was overpaid more than \$24,000.

Romankow wrote: "The use of public monies demands much more than it received." However no county employee was held accountable. George Devanney and the Director of Finance Lawrence Caroselli resigned/retired under other pretenses with laudatory congratulations from all freeholders including Scanlon. Prosecutor Romankow and his first assistant attended George Devanney's retirement party.

The Musicfest investigation, along with the Scanlon investigation, are in sharp contrast to how un-connected county employees have been treated over alleged thefts and wrongdoing through the years. In these cases freeholders were outspoken about the alleged wrongdoing and press releases were issued by the county. Employees were held accountable to fullest extent of the law.

A few examples:

July 2007 the Star Ledger reported an employee of the Union County Clerk's office is scheduled to be in court today to answer charges she stole \$3,500 while on the job.

May 2009 the Star Ledger reported that two employees of the Union County parks department were charged with theft, in what authorities say were unrelated incidents.

The Union County Watchdog Association has also written Governor Christopher Christie and the State Attorney General alerting them to these alarming occurrences.

« [Treasury Department thanks the UCWA for helping them improve their procedures, whatever they were Westfield/Summit On Top](#) »

Tagged:

21 Responses to “OPRA request reveals freeholder’s son is involved in county criminal investigation, the county won’t release the records”

1. Jim Buettner says:

[April 13th, 2012 at 5:59 am](#)

I don;t recall reading anything about this in the Star Ledger. Color me surprised.

2. Bob Bolmer says:

[April 13th, 2012 at 11:03 am](#)

Our politicians should be careful not to criticize other countries about how they treat their citizens and abuse laws. Our politicians seem to be very adept at eluding justice and bending others to their will. The United States with its PACs and lack of transparency needs to clean up its own act before pointing the finger at others. Maybe the voters, all of us, will learn and not put these pieces of crap in office. Maybe. I won't hold my breath.

3. Javagold says:

[April 13th, 2012 at 12:11 pm](#)

Why do the many put up with Nepotism and Cronyism of the few...i will never understand how they get away with it !

4. bpaterson says:

[April 13th, 2012 at 12:56 pm](#)

2 years ago Garwood had the police officer mirabella incident. This police officer is the brother of freeholder Mirabella. The officer was accused of 2 counts: criminal mischief and criminal trespass. The union county prosecutors office investigated and decided to pass on doing anything about it.

Was it because of union county freeholder chairman Mirabellas reationship? No one knows, but a deal was made. The UCWA figured into this expose also. Royalty has a different set of rules to live by, but we the unwashed are kept under the boot of corruption. TREE Blog peice on mirabella:

(lenghty:) <http://treeeditor.blogspot.com/2010/02/post-15-21510-subrogation-of-justice.html>

the wrap up: <http://treeeditor.blogspot.com/2010/02/post-15a-amended-plot-thickens-22409.html>

5. More politics says:

[April 14th, 2012 at 5:51 am](#)

No surprise here....remember Judge Pizzi sentenced to 8 years out in less than 6 months thanks to Romankow could it because Pizzi allowed condos to be built and one road is Daria Way did Romankow profit from building them Daria is a family members name

6. G. Albritton says:

[April 14th, 2012 at 7:21 am](#)

If this is the same Scanlon who was sentenced to 6 months in jail and 5 years probation on January 25, 2010, then it is no wonder that this matter was so quietly quashed in the bud, and is now kept under wraps under a pretext of an ongoing “investigation”. Anything connecting this guy with any further criminal activity, even in the way of just an arrest, would most probably violate the conditions of his probation, forcing his no-doubt hand-picked probation officer to report the violation and the Court to pack him off to jail. Much less than a conviction may be required for a revocation of probation.

If there was a cover up here, how many County police officers, administrators, Freeholders, prosecutors and others have been complicit? Must have been quite a team. Presuming that the probation officer and the sentencing judge have any integrity at all, someone should flip a copy of this UCWA entry to them, as they each have an interest and a duty to see that the probation conditions have not been violated and to be informed about any possible violation despite the apparent official efforts to prevent this, and they may decide that they do not want to play on that team.

7. D. Hill Rose says:

[April 14th, 2012 at 12:38 pm](#)

I call on the state attorney general to prosecute the Union County Democratic machine for RICO violations. It's not just a single item. It's pervasive. It's as if the Union County machine is a criminal syndicate. There's only a thin veneer of their helping constituents.

RICO allows for the leaders of a criminal syndicate to be tried for the crimes which they ordered others to do or assisted them. Use that to get to the bosses operating behind the scene.

What I'm saying is not really a stretch. Just because what is effectively thievery is institutionalized does not absolve the criminality. Further, making the thievery less obvious (such as having contractors fund PACS who then fund the politician) does not mean it isn't still thievery.

8. Hockeynut says:

[April 14th, 2012 at 4:39 pm](#)

Can U say "disappearing" Chainsaws!!!!

9. Joe Nelville says:

[April 14th, 2012 at 8:05 pm](#)

Tina:

Why are you sitting on the OPRA information since March of this year (2012) about the potential fraud and corruption inside the Cranford Municipal Building? IS it because it will potentially look worse for Republicans than Democrats?

A true watchdog reports on corruption as it occurs, not piecemeal based on political party.

10. Tina Renna says:

[April 15th, 2012 at 8:56 am](#)

Bruce, Not only was Freeholder Mirabella's brother not prosecuted, when the UCWA placed an OPRA for recods on this matter with the Prosecutor's office, they responded "no documents to provide". Two letters signed by the Prosecutor's office later turned up in a Garwood records request.

The Union County Prosecutor's office tried to keep records about the Mirabella deal from the public. There could be reasons why he wasn't prosecuted, it is without a shadow of a doubt that the prosecutor was involved with trying to keep the incident from reaching the public.

11. Tina Renna says:

[April 15th, 2012 at 9:05 am](#)

Joe Nelville, with an email address using the name "John" pay close attention: UCWA stands for UNION COUNTY Watchdog Association – our time and resources and mission are focused on UNION COUNTY government which lays claim to approximately 1/4 of your property tax bill. And we work our butts off and sacrifice our precious spare time doing this volunteer service.

There are 21 towns within Union County and we can't do the heavy lifting for every citizen that wants to throw tomatoes at their government anonymously from the safety and peace of their couches. Get out there and start a Cranford Watchdog Association. If you know of wrong doing than it is your duty as a citizen to expose it.

p.s. posting anonymously on message boards doesn't frekin count as being an engaged citizen. If fact it makes you a jerk. And because I had to spend my precious spare time on this beautiful Sunday morning dealing with you and your cowardly, lazy accusations I need to tell you to go shit in a hat. Don't come round here no more looking for someone to do your work, or a place to vent so you can feel like you DID something about IT.

12. bpaterson says:

[April 15th, 2012 at 9:49 am](#)

we hope the city of union keeps thier chainsaws locked up, because the new hire may harbor the same inklings....just sayin.

13. Sincewhen says:

[April 15th, 2012 at 9:53 am](#)

Well, this is not the first time both parties use their power to sweep stuff under the carpet. Remember Judge Richard Pizzi from Berkeley Heights he was sentenced to 8 years and got out in less than 6 months him and Romankow went way

backto Mun. Judge Pizzi allowing condos to be built in Berkeley Heights and a Daria Way is the name of one of the streets was Romankow part of the Development team who profited from that he could not let his friend stay in jail and how about BH Chief Michael Mathis with official misconduct filing a false dyfs report and Michael Ward at the FBI, Fishman at the Federal Prosecutor's office looking the other way all buddies together and lets get to Sloan Kettering and

Dr. Igor Gavrilovic and Dr. Lisa DeAngelis committing healthcare fraud pushing Chemo when it was not needed on Matthew Taylor – I guess Merck/Schering Plough being domiciled in Union County helped Judge Malone and Donald Vanarelli (who once worked for Schering Plough) commit Fraud upon the courtSloan Ketterings attorney Peter Korn used to be a Union County prosecutor like Judge Lisa Chrystal so the case was shut downFunny Mr. Taylor just was cleared again that his tumor is stableSloan Kettering put in court papers to put him under an illegal guardianship that without treatment he would be dead Fishman, the Attorney General's office are asleep at the wheel.....

14. Sincewhen says:

April 17th, 2012 at 8:16 am

Just so the Dems do not think they are being picked on Christie's friends are in on the cover up of the Matthew Taylor illegal guardianship Anthony P. Kearns III on his transition team and then made the Hunterdon County prosecutor even though the guy should be up on major Ethics charges in the illegal guardianship case of Matthew Taylor also Peter Korn part of McElroy, Deutche, Mulvanney and Carpenter both sides are covering I guess that is why the Attorney General and the Feds look the other way

15. Alison Magruber says:

April 18th, 2012 at 10:05 am

This is very interesting. I have heard there is a Federal Investigation although this incident was not the catalyst for the investigation. I have been told it involves Attorney's, Prosecutor's, Judges, Mayors and several elected and appointed County officials. As one person stated "956 hours of Audio – that is a lot of 6 minute conversations and some of these conversations reveal blatant corruption and pay to play".

16. Alison Magruber says:

April 19th, 2012 at 12:59 pm

Wow ! Sincewhen ! It's almost like you know of the tapes as the Judges you reference are supposedly the ones on the audio along with UC Prosecutor, his son at U.S. Attorney Office (Fishman)in Newark.

But I have heard it was as a result of a Civil Rights (D.C. Deputy U.S. Attorney)issue and the other corruption was just caught by accident.

Sincewhen We want to hear more !

17. Sincewhen says:

April 19th, 2012 at 4:19 pm

Alison tell us more you seem to know alot

It would be great to see Mr. Taylor freed from an illegal guardianship and the judges and attorneys and police chief Michael Mathis held accountable for their actions

Sloan Kettering should have their records raided by the Federal government forcing people into experimental treatment without consent is against the law.....

Romankow lives in Berkeley Heights so Mathis would never be put up on charges by the Prosecutors office be interesting to hear if they have tapes of the ex mayor and ex chief of staff in Christie's cabinet

18. Michelle says:

April 26th, 2012 at 8:01 am

What you fail to report is that there are 42 other employees in the department and that all under investigation. Aside from the fact that the missing pieces have turned up, just because someone has a criminal record does not mean that they did it. While your detective work for precision and righteousness is commendable, it is not fair to single one person out on account of your obvious personal vendetta against deborah scanlon.

19. Tina Renna says:

April 26th, 2012 at 8:57 am

Michelle, I can't report on what I don't know. This is the first I'm hearing it involved more than Scanlon, and you're alleging that – not offering any proof. I believe he's the only one that left the county payroll for another public payroll in these tough economic times when public employees are being let go.

That is the point here. The public has a right to know what is going on with their government and its resources. The county is covering something up and it involved a freeholder's son. As far as I know Scanlon is the only elected official involved. I don't have a personal vendetta against her. I don't like her, true but personal? I don't know her. Don't want to. Elected officials are held to a higher standard in a democracy. You seem to know what's going on, now why is it that you know and the public can't? We are all created equal.

If this involved rank and file employees they would have issued a press release and beaten their chest about it in public. Because a freeholder's son is involved it changed the PR. This is still America and I, a lowly citizen, plan on holding my government accountable.

20. Michelle says:

[April 26th, 2012 at 11:00 am](#)

If you can't report on what you do not know... then you shouldn't be reporting!
fact: items missing. fact: there is more than ONE worker in the UC Parks and Rec dept.
why single one person JUST because they happen to be a relative to a freeholder?
And being that you are trying to make a "point" as stated in your reply.... what exactly IS your point? is it that the county supposedly covered up something, or is it that he left the county payroll for another position? Make up your mind because you're not really being concise about that.

21. Tina Renna says:

[April 26th, 2012 at 11:47 am](#)

Pay close attention to the point: Citizens are being forced to sue in order to know what is going on with their government.

Now I'm done arguing with stupid.

•

• UC Need to Know

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[Employee List \(2/24/11\)](#)

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• UC Fiascoes

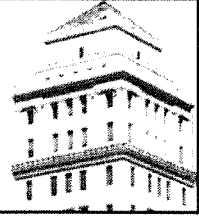
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• UC Municipalities

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The County Watchers

The citizen watchdogs of government in Union County, NJ



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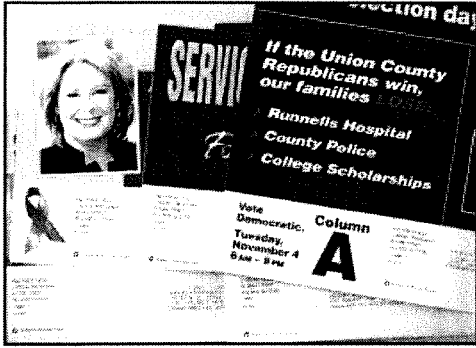
UC Dem Chair has had permission to work her county job from home since 2004

By Tina Renna | April 25, 2011



65 King St. Front Entrance sporting a Lesniak, Cryan, Quijano Campaign Lawn Sign

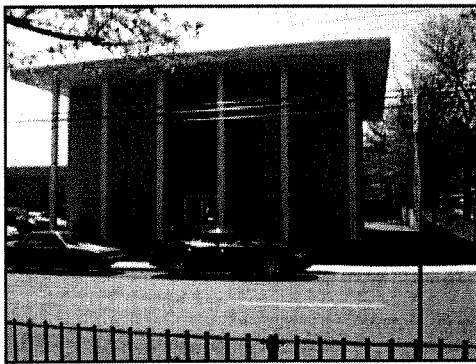
The UCWA recently acquired the employment contracts of Charlotte DeFilippo in her capacity as the Executive Director of the Union County Improvement Authority (UCIA). DeFilippo is also the Chairman of the Union County Democratic Committee. In 2004 the UCIA gave DeFilippo permission to work from home and has been providing liability insurance for her home at 65 King Street, Hillside, NJ 07205. These freeholder campaign mailers state that 65 King St. is the address of the UC Democratic Committee.



The contracts are issued by the UCIA board, not the freeholder board even though she is on the county payroll and the freeholders set her salary.

The UCIA board is unpaid but they are certainly compensated as seven of the ten members are county employees (one is retired), one works for the Plainfield Municipal Utilities Authority and they have a combined annual salary of \$541,966. Two members have 24-hour use of county vehicles. The other 2 members are retired public employees, one is a former freeholder.

In December 2000, Worrall newspapers reported "The Union County Improvement Authority has a new executive director: Charlotte DeFilippo, chairwoman of the Union County Democratic Committee." DeFilippo replaced Doug Placa, who was then Angie Devanney's husband. (Angie is now married to the county manager.) Placa was the UCIA's first executive director, appointed in February 1999 at an annual part-time salary of \$40,000. The position was turned full-time when DeFilippo was appointed and the salary was set at \$104,000. DeFilippo's current salary is \$147,712. up over \$100,000 since she took over.



10 cherry Street, Elizabeth was purchased by bond ordinance for \$1,275,000

In 2007 the Union County freeholders gave their unanimous permission to have the UCIA purchase the building where the authority was allegedly doing business from, 10 Cherry St. in Elizabeth for 1,275,000. The UCIA had been paying \$2,500 per month for rent. At the time the county didn't specify what the need was to purchase the building. The county recently announced that this building will now be renovated/torn down to make more space for court rooms. The Sheriff's Department SLAP garage located next to 10 Cherry St. will be torn down as well, the new underground gas tanks will be ripped out.

The County Watchers reported in 2007 that 10 Cherry St. was purchased from "Albert G. Mauti, Jr. and Joseph Mauti, his cousin as in M & M Construction Company. Between '99 and '04 alone the all Democratic Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders awarded various no bid contracts to M & M Construction Co. to the tune of over \$20 Million.

From '99 thru '04 M & M made contributions to the Union County Democratic Committee, of which Ms DeFilippo is the Chair of at least \$30,000. Numerous members of the Mauti family residing outside the county contributed over \$22,000 to Assemblyman Cryan's election coffers between '03 and '05."

The Westfield Leader reported on April 5, 2007 "Union County passed three ordinances that gave way for the county to purchase a building in Elizabeth that houses the Union County Improvement Authority. One ordinance gave the board's consent for the improvement authority to issue tax-exempt bonds for the \$1.3-million purchase of the three-story building at 10 Cherry Street in Elizabeth. Another provided the county's guarantee of the bond; the third executed the agreement.

When asked by Elizabeth resident Jerry Goldman what the building would be used for, the county manager, George Devanney, replied, "It was actually the recommendation of the improvement authority" to purchase the building. He said the building has been home to the improvement authority for more than five years."

I personally witnessed that there were no working computers at 10 Cherry Street where the Improvement Authority was supposed to be doing business. After I brought this up during public comment at a freeholder meeting I noticed a change on the Improvement Authorities bills list the following month – they started paying for internet service.

Excerpt from contract:

4. Professional Assistance and Office Location – EMPLOYER shall provide EMPLOYEE with such clerical, technical, and professional services and assistance as may be reasonably necessary to the performance of employee's duties....The Employer shall provide and maintain suitable offices for the use of the Employee and her staff in order that the day to day activities of the employer can be efficiently undertaken and completed. The employee, in her discretion and at her sole expense may maintain an additional or home office in her place of residence and may telecommute and/or carry out the activities of the Executive Director from such location. Employer shall provide and maintain appropriate liability insurance on and for Employee's home office at all times throughout the term of this agreement.



65 King St. Side entrance with DeFilippo's parked SUV - Plate UCD 1 - No handicap ramps were visible at either entrance to the home.

« [Cutting the Open Space Tax](#)
[Union County Citizens Forum 4-28-2011](#) »

Tagged:

8 Responses to “UC Dem Chair has had permission to work her county job from home since 2004”

1. bpaterson says:

[April 26th, 2011 at 12:13 am](#)

no handicap ramps? best guess is that she has a trap door into her basement. Thats where she goes. Fungus thrives better in a damp basement.

And so now we now the ground zero of the total county corruption. This is simply pathetic.

2. Javagold says:

[April 26th, 2011 at 7:39 am](#)

you all need to get the Feds involved and quickly !

3. Robert Reilly says:

[April 26th, 2011 at 8:19 am](#)

How suprising. Does the county cut her grass and shrubs too? I've replaced three tires in two month because of county roads, I bet her street gets special treatment also. Enough already. Berkeley Heights, Succession is in order.

4. NFS says:

[April 26th, 2011 at 9:21 am](#)

From Joe Ryan, S.L. reporter article published in March 2006 which focused on DeFilippo's role as the Union County Dem. chair:

"Nearly every campaign began at the big table inside the modest house with white clapboard siding and green shutters on King Street."

"She is at her dining room table by 7:30 each morning, her hands shuffling papers spread across a white tablecloth. She works mostly from home. By 8 a.m., the BlackBerry is buzzing, the cell phone is ringing and the spent cigarettes are piling in the ashtray."

Based on Ryan's article, along with The County Watcher's confirmation that DeFilippo works from home, there can be no dispute that DeFilippo runs both her taxpayer funded UCIA job and the Union County Democrat organization out of her home. It doesn't appear her contracts call for any specific work hours, other than "full time". Is DeFilippo co-mingling her duties?

I can't see the date on those campaign mailers, but if those mailers were sent after she received "permission" to work from home in 2004, clearly taxpayers are contributing to the expenses of a campaign headquarter by footing the bill for the liability insurance and surely this must be illegal, no?

5. Joseph Doherty says:

[April 26th, 2011 at 10:30 am](#)

Union County Government is a cesspool inhabited by greedy and corrupt denizens of the deep. They have succeeded in breaking through the slime and rising to the top of the political scene. They are an obscene lot. They are a stench in the nostrils of all decent, fair-minded people. Unfortunately, the scope of their greed and corruption has not resonated with the majority of Union County residents, many of whom are apathetic to what goes on in the political arena. This apathy has allowed party loyalists and their self-serving minions to gain and retain a stranglehold on the good people of Union County.

The time has come for all right-minded citizens to storm the steps of government with voting ballot in hand and cast out the corrupt politicians and brazen bureaucrats and banish them to a place befitting their anti-taxpayer conduct, like the gutter.

POWER TO THE PEOPLE!!

6. KR says:

[April 26th, 2011 at 5:18 pm](#)

Until 16 towns secede from the county dominance. Your S.O.L ... five towns who dictating how the rest of us live .Cities like Rahway, Plainfield, Elizabeth, Linden,and Roselle . Are not educated on whats going on.But these same five towns depend on welfare oops.. state aid from education, housing and what ever they can take too hold the Democratic majority will continue to rule, like it or not.. they been doing it too us for years without a kiss..Remember knowledge is power but ignorance is Expensive. I for welcome a petition to secede from the county of Union. kevin07036@yahoo.com

7. Robert Reilly says:

[April 27th, 2011 at 7:04 am](#)

Let's get it started. Time to get out of Union County.

8. Brian P Keane says:

[April 27th, 2011 at 7:11 am](#)

Yes, Charlotte Deflippio has gotten away with more slander and corruption than any other bag man of the UC Democratic Party in Union County NJ. I used to live downt he street at 124 Woodruff Place. Hillside taxes where decent back in the mid 80's. Charlotte and her cronies took advantage of the Hillside BOE and fleeced the township since..

• [Search]

• **UC Need to Know**

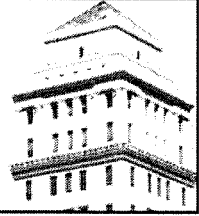
[Tax Levy by City](#)

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Another pension gets padded

By Tina Renna | March 10, 2011

Richard Childs was a part-time civil litigation investigator in the Union County Counsel's office when he was promoted to acting Public Safety Director on January 1, 2008. His new duties included overseeing the County Jail, County Police, Emergency Management, Health Department, Medical Examiner, Weights and Measures and Consumer Affairs. His salary jumped from \$25,485 to \$111,793.

Exactly 3 years and one month after his promotion, Richard Childs retired effective February 1, 2011. His monthly pension payment is \$3,402.87 which amounts to \$40,834.44 annually.

Despite his transformation from a part-time civil litigation investigator to a full-time director charged with overseeing the public's health and safety, Childs still found the time to do part-time investigative work for Essex County on the side.

In May 2009 a new position was created for Childs and he was named Chief of the Economic Crime/Inspection Bureau in the Sheriff's Department. A position control change obtained recently shows that this position is being eliminated and will be replaced with a title and salary change to Sheriff's Officer, salary \$34,778.

A county press release announcing Childs new position stated in part "given the current economic crisis, the bureau was created by the Sheriff's Office to investigate and refer economic matters such as credit card fraud, ponzi schemes, and identity theft to the Prosecutor's Office.... The office will also conduct public awareness programs on such matters to the public. The office will also conduct internal investigation, develop and monitor internal audit programs, train appropriate personnel in the discipline of internal auditing, monitor internal controls, conduct the performance of fiscal analysis and diligence on prospective vendors and the periodic review of the financial profile of existing vendors, assist County counsel in calculating economic damages in civil matters, and assist the County police internal affairs investigations as needed."

The Asbury Park Press did an extensive investigative report in 1986 on Seton Hall officials involved in a probe of a furniture company Richard Childs started and owned.

Some excerpts:

"He (Childs) got me. He cleaned me out," said Hall. "Everything I had. We were all greedy. I guess that was what our problem was. He told me priests were involved. That was his selling point."

Because Childs was the one many investors has personal dealings with many direct their anger at him.

"I worked 15 years, seven days a week," said John Carchio, who worked at the Forest Hill club where Childs was a member. "If I ever ran into him (Childs), I'd shoot him. I had so much faith in the guy."

"He blitzed a bunch of people," said Hall, Carchio's former co-worker at the club. "When they take all your money to the tune of \$8 million, I think there's a problem there."

Previously reported on Childs:

[Economic Crime/Inspection Bureau Chief is a former furniture salesman](#)

Other Infamous Union County Pension Deals:**Andrew Moran**

Andrew Moran, retired on 8/1/09 as the Berkeley Heights police captain. Moran worked for County Manager George Devanney's wife while she was the Business Administrator in Berkeley Heights. The following week, Moran was added to the county payroll on 8/8/09 at \$113,793 to produce a report on public safety, a non-public safety director position because on 9/1/09 Moran started collecting his annual pension of \$85,733 and it is against the PERS rules for him to hold a supervisory position until 6 months after retirement.

On 2/16/10, six months and 16 days after retiring, the county announced that Moran is the new Public Safety Director. County Police Chief Daniel Vaneska was holding two positions as Police Chief and Public Safety Director, while Moran compiled what amounted to a 7 page report. [Read more.](#)

Senator Richard Codey's Brother, Robert Codey

According to published reports, Robert Codey, a state prosecutor since 1988, reached an employment agreement with the county in September 2004. His state salary was set at \$93,268. Although they could have had him for free, Union County freeholders supplemented Codey's pay by \$46,731 – putting his total salary at \$140,000. This boosted his pension to about \$33,000 dollars more than what he would have been eligible for had he retired a year earlier. [Read more.](#)

Union County Prosecutor Theodore Romankow

Romankow received timely help when special legislation benefited his retirement. For 22 years as a Westfield lawyer he built up credits in the state retirement system from various part-time legal jobs. But the pension he qualified for was a little more than \$1,000 a year. With the help of then Gov. James E. McGreevey and Senator Joseph Suliga and Assemblyman Neil Cohen in May 2004 Romankow became eligible for an annual pension of \$91,500. It has since increased substantially. [Read more.](#)

Union County Sheriff Ralph Froehlich

Because he's a constitutional officer Froehlich receives a \$142,728 salary while collecting his \$84,489.60 pension. [Read more.](#)

Tina Renna is president of the Union County Watchdog Association. She can be reached at tinarenn@unioncountywatchdog.org or 908-418-5586.

« [Freeholder Ward's brother-in-law arrested in alleged kick-back scheme](#)
[\\$191,000 in raises for assistant prosecutors but no answers on Musicfest cash](#) »

Tagged:

9 Responses to “Another pension gets padded”1. [Brian P Keane](#) says:

[March 10th, 2011 at 9:33 am](#)

Tina: He vested his own money into the PERS Pension. I doubt that the union county Council 8 workers invest \$877.00 dollars a paycheck for their pensions. And remember what the six floor decides is what goes on record. The corruption leads to all points in Trenton just like a octupuss with its greedy tendiclas reaching out grasping for every single dollar bill..

2. [bpaterson](#) says:

[March 10th, 2011 at 10:58 am](#)

how can one stop the corrupted system when the major people overseeing the safety and security of the peoples interests are the ones who have corrupted it.

Union county government has truly perfected an efficient criminal enterprise...on the backs of the hardworking taxpayers of course.

I'm sure it makes union county freeholder chairwoman Scanlon proud of the system she oversees.

3. [Brian P Keane](#) says:

[March 10th, 2011 at 12:41 pm](#)

I intend to avoid St Patricks Day Parade in Union NJ. Its not the same parade as the NYC Belmar NJ South Amboy NJ Newark NJ parades. The Political posturing is so thick you can cut it with a knife..

4. [Bill Hart](#) says:

[March 10th, 2011 at 3:33 pm](#)

Mark your calendars! MusicFest 2011 is scheduled for Sept. 16th & 17th. I suspect it will be on holes 8 through 14 at Oak Ridge Golf Course again. While perusing the county web site I took notice of a General Appropriation entry on page 36 of the 2010 County budget for the county manager's office. It's titled "Special Studies and Initiatives". Amount? \$800,000! Five years ago the amount expended was \$404,000. In addition, the county manager's office is appropriated a second "Miscellaneous" appropriation for \$150,000. Money for MusicFest? Looks like there's plenty in the budget!

5. comment test says:

March 11th, 2011 at 9:20 am

Interesting how a "part-time civil litigation investigator" one day becomes a department head the next.

Could he have uncovered some way to the top?

6. Brian P Keane says:

March 11th, 2011 at 10:39 am

Its also interesting how a sign shop supervisor became the print shop manager?. He doesn't have any printing experience no printing education no degree's and no credentials. Did they hoodwink him a position like they did with Mrs. Devanney when she became Town Administrator!?! for Berkeley Heights between 2004-2007?

7. Pension Padding — Childs' Play « Burypensions Blog says:

March 11th, 2011 at 9:57 pm

[...] circumstances of his employment are explained very well by Tina Renna at countywatchers but I want to focus on the funding [...]

8. Bob says:

March 12th, 2011 at 10:05 am

On commenter mentioned the large amount this crook put into a pension plan. Most of use can't afford to put in that much, since our weekly take home pay is less. If it wasn't for the county and state making rip-offs like this possible, the state would have enough money to meet its obligations.

9. Anthony Nardiello says:

March 13th, 2011 at 3:19 pm

This state and county are just plain hopeless!!

•

• UC Need to Know

Tax Levy by City

Employee List (2/24/11)

Taxes by County

Appropriations by Department

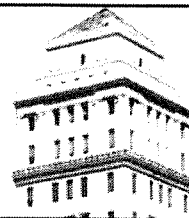
Grants

• UC Fiascoes


- Courts Building
- Delaney Hall
- Dog Park for \$600,000+
- Golf
- Lifetime Health Benefits
- Musicfest
- Open Space Tax
- Pension Padding
- Renewable Energy Boondoggle
- Trademarking County Seal
- UC Directions

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Hush Benies

By Tina Renna | February 20, 2011

At the last freeholder meeting an ordinance was approved that will enable non-unionized county employees to receive lifetime health benefits upon retirement. I would hope that the State and Federal Attorney General's offices would compare the list of county employees that were served subpoenas in recent years to the list who are now getting lifetime benefits with an eye towards possible witness tampering. Quid pro quo Jersey government style.

There are 647 employees on the list I have on hand. To mention a few: There are 3 Scutari's (as in Senator Nicholas Scutari) and 6 Sullivan's (as in Freeholder Daniel Sullivan). Also included is Union County Democratic Chairman Charlotte DeFilippo, Assemblyman & Undersheriff Joseph Cryan; the county manager's mother-in-law, Glenna Bowman; Union County Counsel under George Devanney Robert Barry who is the former Hudson County Counsel under Robert Janiszewski; Assistant county counsel and Cranford Democratic Chairman Norman Albert; Sebastian D'Elia – head of public information department and looks like most if not all of his underlings; Salena Carroll, Senator Raymond Lesniak's girlfriend; Freeholder Angel Estrada's son-in-law Christopher Duryee; former county clerk and aid to Senator Raymond Lesniak Shadra Bahdri; former county manager Michael LaPolla's brother Rick; Head of elections Dennis Kobitz and his brother Arthur; most if not all of George Devanney's Berkeley Heights posse, Richard Childs who appears to have retired just recently.... a watchdog's work is never done.

Who asked for these benefits? When and where? What was the rush to get it done? The answer must be within the list of employees being affected. Not one person could be singled out, so 600 – 700 employees hit benefit dirt.

It wasn't discussed during any public meeting. The ordinance just appeared on an agenda and try as I might to pay attention this one slipped by me at its first reading on January 27, 2011 which just mentioned "retiree health benefits" along with a change in golf fees. The public isn't allowed to ask questions about ordinances at their first reading, just at their final adoption. It's important to note that the Ordinance wasn't posted on the county website until I placed an OPRA for it after it was passed.

Perhaps there were more details in the freeholder packets which aren't made available to the public, or perhaps they discussed it in closed session. Or more likely George Devanney or Charlotte DeFilippo – who will benefit from this perk, just put it on the agenda and nobody dared discuss it. In other words, freeholder business as usual.

At the January 27, 2011 meeting when the Ordinance was passed Finance Director Larry Caroselli – who will benefit from this perk, didn't know exactly how many employees would be affected, he estimated between 600 and 700 workers. He said "The program's costs are still being evaluated in an actuarial study." What actuarial can guess what health benefits are going to cost in 20 years?

If that wasn't enough of a kick in the butt for county taxpayers the county manager stated "Some have gone 3.5 years without a raise and we thought it was fair to bring them in line with the unions". Some of George's friends on the list have been hired within the past 3.5 years, others have been rewarded handsomely in this time frame such as freeholder you can't talk about nepotism Sullivan's niece, who was promoted and then given a raise a short time later. Others are clerical workers making salaries unheard of in the private sector. The average pay for the employees affected is \$65,000.

When the corrections officers lobbied for life-time health benefits they complained of their high risk of chronic illnesses associated with being in close contact with prisoners. Diseases such as AIDS and TB were bandied about. The only people these employees have to fear being in contact with at work is each other.

At the time of this writing I still have some research to do. I just happened to have placed an OPRA for a list of all non-contractual and/or exclusionary employees in January. I didn't have this ordinance in mind. Included in the list on hand are employees who already have life time health benefits though other acts of arrogance, such as the freeholders and county manager. I'll ask for another list, but it will take up to 8 business days to get it. I'll update the information as soon as the county gives it to me. Note that they could have included the employee names within their ordinance but why lesson the tedium for citizens who want to know how their county tax dollars are being spent? Their Finance Director didn't know how many employees this affected or what the cost would be, why should we need to?

[The not quite accurate list.](#)

[The Ordinance](#)

Tina Renna is president of the Union County Watchdog Association. She can be reached at tinarenn@unioncountywatchdog.org.

« [Anatomy of a Government Employee Giveaway](#)
[Union County Citizens Forum 2-24-11 \(UCUA edition\)](#) »

Tagged:

4 Responses to “Hush Benies”

1. Bob Bolmer says:

[February 21st, 2011 at 10:18 am](#)

Once again our Free loaders give us the shaft. County government should be outlawed in this state where most greed and was of money comes from out county governments.

2. Gene Albritton says:

[February 21st, 2011 at 4:58 pm](#)

Just last month, in her “right priorities” address following her installation, the new Chairperson of the Board of Freeholders bragged about the ways in which the County’s belt had been tightened:

“We took a number of steps that have saved us approximately \$7.7 million in the past few years. These savings will continue this year as well. We began by freezing wages. All elected officials and many non-contractual employees have had their wages frozen for more than two years— saving approximately \$2.3 million during that period.”

In December 2009, the last two Chairmen of the Freeholder Board similarly claimed credit for these wage freezes and the saving of the same \$2.3 million.

With the echo of Chairperson Scanlon’s boast of such savings having barely died away, those non-contractual employee wage freezes were effectively and retroactively unfrozen when they were used this month by the County Manager as a excuse to commit the County to pay out all of those sums claimed to be saved and most likely many millions more in medical benefits to these employees over time. The claimed savings should begin to disappear immediately, as the Finance Director for the County explained that “we will set aside an appropriate amount of money in each of the respective budgets in order to offset this cost” for the lifetime medical benefits granted. Please note that the Chairperson joined her fellow Freeholders in voting in favor of these extended medical benefits.

What a difference a few weeks can make, and we should look forward to the Chairperson’s amendment and correction of her prior remarks about these now abandoned “savings”.

3. Rich Fortunato says:

[February 21st, 2011 at 7:18 pm](#)

This is another example of why every citizen in the County should petition their State legislator (Assemblyperson and Senator) to do one of two things: (i) introduce a law requiring every County to have at least a majority of the governing body elected by district and not by at-large voting, and/or (ii) introduce a law providing for the division of Union County into two parts, an eastern and a western part, provided that a majority of the municipalities in the County, by popular vote, agree. Counties have been divided in New Jersey many times in the past. Only an Act of the Legislature is required. In November, if we manage to get the Republicans in charge of the Legislature, we have a chance to end the regime in Elizabeth.

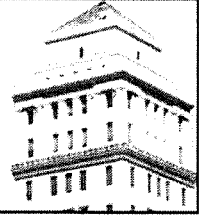
4. [The County Watchers » Blog Archive » Why pay union dues when you can get the benies for free?](#) says:

[February 27th, 2011 at 6:59 pm](#)

[...] reported: Hush Benies Anatomy of a Government Employee [...]

The County Watchers

The citizen watchdogs of government in Union County, NJ



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New Navigation systems will help employees find their way to work from Europe

By Tina Renna | July 12, 2009

The county purchased new vehicles for four employees recently. The new vehicles are 2009 Ford Escape Hybrid Limiteds (base price \$26,231), featuring the Limited Package (\$2,230) and side steps (\$625.00) and a top of the line voice activated navigation system (\$2,131.55).

These prices include an 11% discount that I can only presume comes from the buying power of the state – of NJ of course. What other state in the Union would pimp their public servant's rides with voice activated navigation systems, six-disc in-dash CD changer with four speakers, MP3 and SIRIUS® satellite radio capability and a DVD player?

I can understand needing the side step bars for older employees that can't jump in and out of an SUV, although I can't see why they need an SUV in the first place.

However, having just donated a family vehicle that wasn't even worth the price of the Sirius Satellite radio feature installed in these vehicles, I took exception to the \$2,131.55 optional voice-activated Navigation System which would have cost a taxpayer, who ironically doesn't have the buying power of the State of NJ, \$2,395.

According to their website, this provides many features, including detailed freeway exit, turn and ramp transition lane guidance; street name announcement; and "Where am I?" current location display. It's packed with millions of destinations and maps for the contiguous U.S. or regional sections of Europe.

I needed to make sure I wasn't rushing to judgment, without being able to ask any Union County official about my tax dollars, actually that's not true. I can ask, I just won't get an answer and will most likely be harassed for asking, the next best thing was to google a list of dealers to call.

I chose a dealer in New York City. Conjuring up my native New Yorker accent I asked about the features. I specifically asked about the basic Hybrid model as it compares to the Limited and honed in on the \$2,395.00 navigation system. After the salesman rattled all the features, including just having to ask out loud for the weather forecast; skiing conditions, movie listings, just to name a few, he sounded a little guilty and said conspiratorially "You can just purchase a TomTom for \$300-bucks".

It was my turn to feel guilty, so I confessed that I wasn't a buyer but a government watchdog over in NJ trying to track down why our public servants needed a \$2,395 feature on a vehicle they weren't, in my strong NY opinion, even entitled to be driving. He totally broke down and said "It's crazy, If you're driving and you're hungry all you have to do is say out loud "I'm hungry" and the system will tell you what restaurants are in the area."

The fact that these employees are even driving taxpayer-funded vehicles with free gas and insurance 24/7 is crazy. Throw in a \$2,131 tax-payer funded navigational system and now we're talkin' "insane".

The employees that can now with ease, plan their ski trips, order lunch from the road and find their way to the county administration building from anywhere in the contiguous U.S. or regional sections of Europe while listening to commercial free music and/or watching their favorite movies on DVD are:

Elizabeth Geneviech, deputy county manager, was upgraded from driving a 2006 Escape with 12,808 miles on it.

Joanne Rajoppi, County Clerk, was upgraded from driving a 2001 Crown Victoria with 63,334 miles on it.

Frank Guzzo, Dept. Head – Human Services, was upgraded from driving a 2002 Ford Explorer with 84,155 miles on it.

Alfred Faella, Dept. Head – Parks & Community Renewal, was upgraded from driving a 2005 Durango which had 42,302 miles on it.

[Photo gallery](#)

[Vouchers and Invoice for new vehicles.](#)

[Current take home employee vehicle list \(excluding law enforcement, which the public isn't entitled to access.\)](#)

Previously posted:

[Devanney is a god, he can go anywhere he wants on the taxpayers dime](#)

[OMG! Who's hooking him up?](#)

Tina Renna is the president of the [Union County Watchdog Association](#). She can be reached at TinaRenna@UnionCountyWatchdog.org or 908-418-5586

« [Old news & a note about county propaganda](#)

[What it takes to follow the tax dollars in Union County](#) »

Tagged: [car](#), [employee perk](#), [Vehicle](#)

•

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- [UC Directions](#)
- [UCUA/Covanta Deal](#)
- [Vendors in the news](#)
- [Website for \\$130,000+](#)

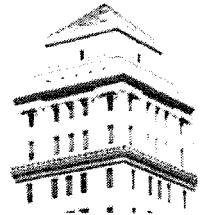
• UC Municipalities

- [Municipal Meetings](#)


EXHIBIT C

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The citizen watchdogs of government in Union County, NJ

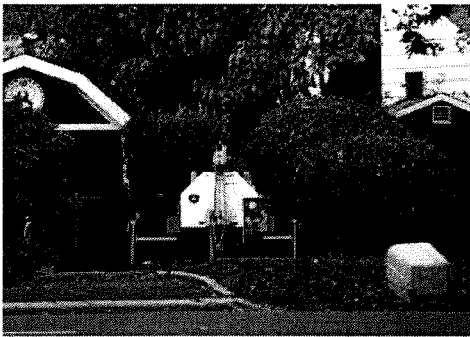


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Generatorgate: Blatant Lies and the Lying Public Officials Who Tell Them

By Tina Renna | December 16, 2012



According to articles that appeared in the Star-Ledger and the Local Source, “unnamed” county officials are sticking to their story that only 3 or 4 low-level county employees were involved with using county owned generators to power their homes after Super Storm Sandy.

There is no “unnamed” reporting on this blog and I’ve reported that as many as 16 employees are involved. Their combined salaries total \$1,483,409 and I have witnesses willing to back that up. Yesterday I received photos in the mail from a concerned citizen along with this letter.

To whom it may concern:

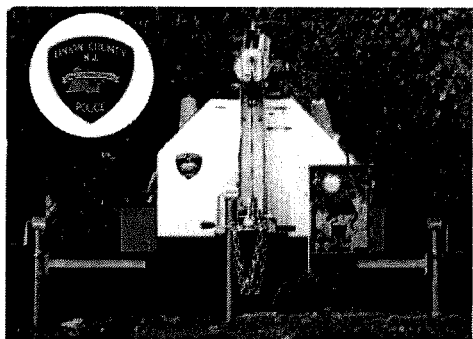
I have never written a letter like this but I feel that I must. Hurricane Sandy was very hard on everyone with trees down and loss of power everywhere.

While walking my dog the day after the storm, I noticed a very LARGE generator between two properties on the Boulevard. One of the homes belongs to Councilman Joho and the other to his relative who is a Union County police officer. This generator obviously belonged to either the county or the town (as you would need a truck to pull it in). I would like to know who authorized this. Almost every traffic light was out on the Boulevard, there was not a pharmacy open and yet these 2 homes were lit up. It seems to me this piece of equipment could have been better used for the safety of the town’s people.

As you can see from the two photos I have enclosed, it was quite blatant to put this unit right on the Boulevard! I hope that an example can be made so this does not happen again.

Sincerely,
A concerned citizen

The generator in this photo is county owned and a county police officer lives at the address.



Excerpts from the [Local Source](#):

Earlier the same day a high ranking law enforcement source with direct knowledge of the facts told LocalSource the information posted on Union County Watchdog beginning Nov. 14 was “ill informed and exaggerated.”

“The numbers she is quoting are much higher than the known truth,” said the law enforcement official, referring to Union County Watchdog President Tina Renna’s blog which ignited a firestorm of rumors among taxpayers and county officials alike.

Other sources from within county government said the information Renna posted was based on rumors, which were then exaggerated when passed along.

“I’m not going to say no one took home generators, but the information being put out there is all wrong and inflated. There was only a small number of employees who took home generators and their immediate supervisors knew about it,” said one county department head who preferred their name not be connected with the issue.

“This thing totally got blown out of proportion,” said another source, admitting he knew the employees involved in the department of public works and they were not high on the employee roster.

Excerpts from the [Star-Ledger](#):

No names were provided, but sources familiar with the investigation, who are not authorized to speak publicly, said three or four workers from the Department of Public Works appear to have asked supervisors if they could take the county generators home and were told that they could.

“The misuse of generators by public employees during a time when the public is suffering is offensive and unacceptable,” Chairman Al Mirabella said.

« [Generatorgate – An exciting opportunity to shine a light on our corrupted system of law and order](#)
UCCF – 12/20/12 »

Tagged: [Employee Theft](#), [Romankow](#), [Union County Police](#)

13 Responses to “Generatorgate: Blatant Lies and the Lying Public Officials Who Tell Them”

1. Javagold says:

[December 16th, 2012 at 3:05 pm](#)

wow look at that thingthey fear nothing !!! (that is until they do !)

2. Jeffcon says:

[December 16th, 2012 at 4:33 pm](#)

Can anyone anyone tell me when we can expect prosecution of these people? We NEED VIGILANTES, since the only way justice will be observed is through citizen enforcement.

3. Daniel Shays says:

[December 16th, 2012 at 4:56 pm](#)

Looks like the UC racketeers got caught lying again.

4. Victoria says:

[December 16th, 2012 at 5:40 pm](#)

Please put the names . Everyone in the states Know corrupt they r!!!!

5. George says:

[December 16th, 2012 at 8:20 pm](#)

Why is it that union county never gets investigated. They have gotten away with it for decades and nobody has ever been held accountable. Has the county ever been investigated by the state or FBI?

6. Jim Buettner says:

[December 17th, 2012 at 6:22 am](#)

Go to the freeholder meetings and hold them accountable.

7. Brian P Keane says:

[December 17th, 2012 at 8:22 am](#)

Funny how they tried to con seal it. Isn't that the slow down to a crawl county sign that they leave on the right shoulder to deter speeding drivers.?

8. Sharlotte says:

[December 17th, 2012 at 5:29 pm](#)

I wonder how these generators were powered? With county gas? While the rest of us stood in mile long lines. These employees who "borrowed" generators should be reprimanded. These generators could have been put to better use. They were paid for with taxpayers money.

9. Chuck says:

[December 18th, 2012 at 7:07 pm](#)

No doubt that is county equipment. But there is a good amount of doubt where the photos where taken.

Several web searches list Councilman Joho's address as 190 Boulevard.

Google map/camera/etc searches of that address show completely different images. They look nothing like the pictures above. The pictures in this post don't look like anywhere along the Boulevard.

Also, has Councilman Joho or the Kenilworth Mayor had any comment about this claim?

10. Chuck says:

[December 19th, 2012 at 6:58 pm](#)

What does Councilman Joho have to say about this claim?

11. Mary says:

[December 22nd, 2012 at 8:18 am](#)

This been going on for so long !!! Nothing will happen to them they cover up everything !!! If your connected !!! I already spoke on this before about theft in the county !!! But they contiue to cheat and lie the crooks continue to get paid a high salary and the tax payers and the low salary workers that actually do work get shitted on !!! Tina continue your work they are scared of the truth !!! The truth will crumble there lying cheating asses !!!

12. Mary says:

[December 22nd, 2012 at 11:26 am](#)

So that makes it okay cause they asked !!!!

13. Joe Renna says:

December 24th, 2012 at 2:15 pm

Check google again, Columbo.

• Search

• UC Need to Know

Tax Levy by City

Employee List (2/24/11)

Taxes by County

Appropriations by Department

Grants

• UC Fiascoes

- Courts Building
- Delaney Hall
- Dog Park for \$600,000+
- Golf
- Lifetime Health Benefits
- Musicfest
- Open Space Tax
- Pension Padding
- Renewable Energy Boondoggle
- Trademarking County Seal
- UC Directions
- UCUA/Covanta Deal
- Vendors in the news
- Website for \$130,000+

• UC Municipalities

- Municipal Meetings

• Archives

Select Month

• Posts

January 2013

M T W T F S S

1 2 3 4 5 6

7 8 9 10 11 12 13

14 15 16 17 18 19 20

21 22 23 24 25 26 27

28 29 30 31

« Dec

• Tools: Public Records

Open Public Records Act

Requesting public records

Freedom of Info. Act

EXHIBIT D



UNION COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

32 RAHWAY AVENUE
ELIZABETH, NEW JERSEY 07202-2155
(908) 527-4500
FAX: (908) 289-1267

THEODORE J. ROMANKOW
Prosecutor of Union County

ALBERT CERNADAS, JR.*
First Assistant Prosecutor

ANNE K. FRAWLEY*
Deputy First Assistant Prosecutor

* CERTIFIED CRIMINAL ATTORNEY

December 17, 2012

Ms. Tina Renna
202 Walnut Avenue
Cranford, New Jersey 07016-2931

Re: Blog entry December 12, 2012

Dear Ms. Renna:

In your blog entry of December 12, 2012 you indicated that, "As many as 16 names have been revealed to me by different sources", regarding the use of county owned generators during the Hurricane Sandy emergency. Please contact the undersigned at (908) 527-4619, so we can arrange for you to come to this Office to speak to the undersigned concerning this matter.

Very truly yours,

THEODORE J. ROMANKOW
Prosecutor of Union County

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James C. Russo".

By: LT, JAMES RUSSO
SPECIAL PROSECUTIONS UNIT



UNION COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

32 RAHWAY AVENUE
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First Assistant Prosecutor

ANNE K. FRAWLEY*
Deputy First Assistant Prosecutor

* CERTIFIED CRIMINAL ATTORNEY

December 27, 2012

Ms. Tina Renna
202 Walnut Avenue
Cranford, New Jersey 07016-2931

Re: Blog entry December 12, 2012

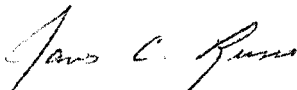
Dear Ms. Renna:

On December 17, 2012, I wrote to you requesting that you contact me regarding your recent blog alleging the unauthorized use of county-owned generators. To date, I have not heard from you.

I would once again request that you contact me immediately to discuss this issue. I may be reached at (908) 527-4619.

Very truly yours,

THEODORE J. ROMANKOW
Prosecutor of Union County


By: **LIEUTENANT JAMES RUSSO**
Special Prosecutions Unit.

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EXHIBIT E

PROSECUTOR'S CASE NO. 13-0001

SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY
UNION COUNTY LAW DIVISION
Union County Courthouse
Grand Jury Room, 6th Floor, Old Annex
2 Broad Street
Elizabeth, New Jersey 07207

THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

COUNTY OF UNION

TO: Mrs. Tina Renna
202 Walnut Avenue
Cranford, NJ 07016

Approved by A/P Robert Vanderstreet



RE: *In re the Investigation into the Improper Use of County Generators*



You are hereby commanded to appear in person before the Grand Jury of Union County at the Union County Courthouse, Grand Jury Room, 6th Floor, Old Annex, 2 Broad Street, Elizabeth, N.J., on the **11th day of January, 2013 at 9:00 a.m.** to testify concerning matters as shall then and there be inquired of you.

Your failure to appear will subject you to the penalty as prescribed by law.

Witness: HONORABLE KAREN M. CASSIDY
Assignment Judge of the Superior Court

This 4th day of January 2013



ELIZABETH DOMINGO
Court Administrator

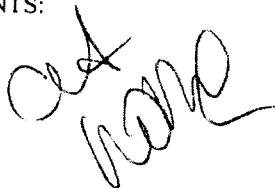
THEODORE J. ROMANKOW
*Prosecutor
Attorney for the State*

For Information Call Detective Lieutenant James C. Russo
(908) 527-4619

BRING THIS SUBPOENA WITH YOU

SHERIFF'S RETURN

OFFICER: Lt. Russo
PLACE OF SERVICE:
COMMENTS:



DATE & TIME:

1/4/13

MANNER SERVED:

in person