



CITY COUNCIL AND  
CONTROLLER CANDIDATES



MEET YOUR LEHIGH  
COUNTY COMMISSIONER  
CANDIDATES



MEET YOUR LEHIGH  
COUNTY SHERIFF AND ROW  
OFFICE CANDIDATES

# Lehigh Republican

MEET THE CANDIDATES EDITION

## The Chairman's Corner

### *Spread the Word*

As the summer of 2007 races by, we are beginning to prepare for the important fall campaign season. I vividly recall my predecessor Dean Browning, speaking on numerous occasions about how the Republican Party offers the "best candidates". In this edition of the Newsletter, we are fortunate to provide you with nine articles which confirm Chairman Browning's acknowledgment. I encourage you to take extra time to focus on each of the articles inside this Newsletter and begin to promote the values and platforms of our 2007 Republican Candidates. Victory in 2007 is key to the success of this Party as we work toward 100% success in 2008. We cannot overlook two of our Republican candidates who were not interviewed for this edition but are running for Judge of the Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas. This year, the Republican Party is honored to have two esteemed candidates for Judge—one whom is currently sitting as a Judge on

the Court of Common Pleas and one whom is currently serving the United States of America as a Colonel in the United States Marine Corps. In the May Primary Election, the Honorable Maria Dantos received more votes than any candidate for Judge of the Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas. A few months later, Judge Dantos was nominated by Governor Rendell to fill a vacancy and after being confirmed by the Pennsylvania Senate, Judge Dantos was installed as Lehigh County's newest Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. Her decisions from the bench have already been applauded by the Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas. Prior to her installation as Judge, Judge Dantos was District Attorney James B. Martin's First Assistant District Attorney. In her career as a prosecutor, Judge Dantos never lost a homicide trial. (Continued on page 2)



## The Lehigh Republican

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— continued

Judge Dantos is an accomplished public servant who happens to be a fantastic mother of two wonderful children and I believe that Judge Dantos is the first sitting Judge to run for election (not for retention) to the Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas.

Jim Anthony, Esquire is also seeking a 10-year term on the Court of Common Pleas (there are three terms to be filled in the 2007 General Election). Colonel Anthony is currently on active duty with the United States Marine Corps. where he has devoted the last 26 years of his life on active and reserve service. A recipient of the Bronze Star Medal in 2005, Colonel Anthony served in Iraq in 2004-2005 and 2006-2007. He also served in Okinawa in 1984-1985. Professionally, Attorney Anthony has practiced as a lawyer for almost 25 years— in both the public and private sectors. The early part of his legal career was spent on Active Duty as a Judge Advocate in the United States Marine Corps. (1984-1987). He also served the citizens of Lehigh County as an Assistant District Attorney while maintaining a private, business law practice representing individuals, businesses and non-profits. Jim Anthony has established himself as an experienced, talented attorney with a virtually unmatched range of civil and criminal litigation experience.

Again, please take the time to read this important edition of the *Lehigh Republican*. My express thanks to Justin Engel for taking the time this summer to conduct the interviews and author the articles published in this Newsletter. Justin spent the last few months as an intern with the LCRC and as you can see, his work is quite impressive.

Please enjoy the rest of your summer and remember to spread the word about our Republican Candidates

## Vice-Chair's Corner

Fellow Volunteers,

Like many of you, I have observed and have at times, become mired in the numerous and ongoing debates that are a necessary and vital part of our political process. Those debates, which range from federal, state and local policies to the methods in which we communicate with one another, should - and will continue, to occur. As individuals with differing views, all of us leaders within the Lehigh County Republican Party, we however must focus on the task at hand as November approaches.

The "Party", I believe is representative of our County organization, charged with recruiting and electing qualified Republican candidates. THE "PARTY", I believe is the basic principles and tenets to which we, together with the many millions of our colleagues, subscribe. Bear in mind however, that there are in Lehigh County nearly 80,000 Republican registrants alone, and with that comes variations from one end of the spectrum to the other, of nearly 80,000 opinions and subjective conclusions.

I remain confident that this is why the need for an organization such as the LCRC exists; to focus on the recruitment and the election of Republican candidates. It is why the LCRC relies on individuals such as you to lead those efforts in your individual wards and districts. To become distracted from the County Party's purpose leaves us fractured and therefore vulnerable to the inevitable success of our counterparts.

Friends, be assured that I understand there will be some who disagree with my interpretation of our organization's mission; I am after all only one soul, with one opinion to share, and there are respectfully others to be heard. But I ask you to consider this; if we're all just listening to one another's opinions and fail instead to gather as a fellowship-based organization with a shared, collective County-wide goal of electing our Republican candidates in November, won't it be the Democratic candidates who win?

Don't just Vote Republican in November,  
Work to earn those votes for our quality candidates.

Heather Browne  
Vice Chair, LCRC Cellular 610-704-5154

### **The Lehigh County Republican Committee**

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# City Council Candidate— Robert Smith, Jr.

**R**obert Smith is a City Council candidate whose passionate commitment to the city of Allentown is apparent from the moment he shakes your hand. Energetic and knowledgeable about issues in the city, Smith is a conservative with an impressive record of public service. From November 1998 to December 2000, Robert served as a member of the Allentown City Council and from 2003 to the present, he has served as a member of the Allentown School District School Board. In addition to holding these offices, Smith is a Eucharistic minister and lector in the Our Lady, Help of Christians Roman Catholic Church parish, vice president of the Abe Joseph Sertoma Club, and has been elected President of the North End Republican Club for two years in a row. Robert is currently employed as a Mentor at Mount Trexler Manor and lives on the east side of Allentown with his wife and three children. He holds a high school diploma and completed two years of study in law and theater at Middlesex County College.

The issue of crime takes center stage in Robert's mind as he makes his bid for Allentown City Council. He notes that the development of gangs in the city is a major factor contributing to Allentown's crime rate. Smith sees their influence in the city's public schools firsthand in his role as a school board member. He asserts, "We can't deny that gangs exist in the city, and we need to combat them." To do so, he looks to revive the practice of community policing, and hopes to make this a cornerstone of the city's plan for law enforcement. Smith says, "When officers know the neighborhood, they are more effective at fighting crime."

Providing oversight of city spending is another area of concern for Smith. Cognizant of the fact that it is the duty of City Council to investigate how the administration spends money, he says, "The current City Council has served as nothing but a rubber stamp for the Mayor." He sees fiscal waste throughout the administration's budget. An example lies in the Mayor's creation of what Robert calls an "unnecessary" executive directorship post, which costs the city \$80,000 per year—enough to cover the salaries of two new Allentown police officers. "This," he notes, "is just one of a number of political positions that can be consolidated and eliminated." By consolidating and eliminating such positions, Smith looks to save a significant amount of money in the city's budget.

When budgetary matters are discussed, the issue of taxation is never far behind. When addressing taxes, Robert asserts, "I never voted for a tax increase—not when I was on City Council and not while I've served on [the Allentown School District] School Board." Fiscal conservatism being a hallmark of Robert's career in public service, he identifies as his recent amendment to the Allentown School District budget as an example of his commitment to low taxes. His amendment, passed on June 28, 2007, created a school budget, which while greater than the entire budget of the City of Allentown, avoided a tax increase. Where the city's budget is concerned, he says, "As a City Councilman, I would never support a tax increase unless the city was in an extreme emergency. There are always places to cut and save."

Assuming that both he and the other Republican candidate,

***"One person really can make a difference. Even if you're in the minority, you have to stand up for what you believe in."***  
**—Robert Smith**

David Bausch, are elected to the City Council, they will constitute the only two Republicans on the seven member council. As a result, Smith knows that while promising to make dramatic changes, he will have to do so as a member of the minority. This is a challenge that he knows he will be able to overcome. He notes, "You can always say: I'm going to do this and that, but you can't do anything unless you have other people working with you. You need to reach out when you are in the minority in order to be effective. I am in the minority even on the School Board [there are only three Republicans on the board]. Yet, I was able to get my budget through with the support of Three Democratic Board Members. I am a person who can reach across the aisle and work with the Democrats."

While he admits, "I'm the biggest underdog in the race," Robert is confident about his campaign. In 2007's Primary, Smith was the number one vote getter on both the Republican and Democratic tickets when running for Allentown School Board. "I'm one of the few Republicans who have been elected in the city of Allentown," he says, "I can appeal to Democrats and I can get Democratic votes." This, a testament to his attractiveness as a candidate, Robert says he appeals to what he knows Allentown voters are looking for. "The people of Allentown want you to be an independent thinker. They want someone who will listen to *them*, not someone who only listens to campaign contributors and special interest groups." A down to earth approach to politics and a commitment to his conscience have been the foundation of his political career. In keeping with this trend, he says, "I've always been an independent thinker—I like to vote my conscience."

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# City Council Candidate—

## David Bausch

***“I feel that when I’m doing the best thing for the community, I’m doing the best thing for myself.”***  
—David Bausch

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**D**avid Bausch boasts an impressive record of experience in local government. Having served four terms as Lehigh County Executive, two terms as Allentown City Councilman, and a term as a Lehigh County Commissioner, he looks to add another stint of public service to his career with a re-election bid for Allentown City Councilman. As the only incumbent in the race for Allentown City Council, Bausch is keenly aware of the fickle nature of politics—his years in public office having taught him the need to strike a balance between the ever-important interests of the electorate with the ideals, beliefs, and principles of the elected official.

A native Allentownian, David received his primary and secondary education through the city’s public school system. Following his graduation from Allen High School, he went on to study at Muhlenberg College, where he earned a B.S. and B.A. in Accounting and Finance. Additionally, David completed graduate studies at the University of Pittsburgh.

According to Mr. Bausch, “Economic development of the City is crucial.” He sees an improvement in the economic makeup of the city as the key to addressing all other issues facing the city.

Through continued revitalization projects and encouraging young, successful professionals to move into the city of Allentown, David sees opportunities to transform the downtown area and reverse the erosion of the city’s tax base. He identifies such projects as Allentown Symphony Hall’s renovation and expansion, the opening of the Allentown Brew Works, and PPL’s continued investment in the city as steps in the right direction. As a City Councilman, Bausch hopes that he will be able to ensure that this trend continues.

In facilitating an upward trend in the city’s economic profile, he sees an opportunity to effect change in education. A graduate of Allentown’s public schools himself, David knows that public perception of the schools is often poor. However, Bausch notes that this is a false perception and that the actual quality of the education is quite

good. With this in mind, he hopes to bolster the curriculum that he feels is already exceptional by adding a number of higher-level courses to the schools’ offerings. By offering a greater selection of Advanced Placement classes, along with courses of equivalent academic rigor, David feels that Allentown schools will be able to separate the students who want to learn at an engaging level from those who learn at a slower rate. In this manner, he hopes to foster a more comprehensive learning experience for all ASD students, as they are able to learn at their intellectually appropriate levels.

Along with improving education, David hopes to tackle crime in Allentown. In what would be his third term if re-elected, he would look primarily toward restoring the police force to full staff complement. In doing so, he expects to dramatically augment the crime-fighting ability of the Allentown Police Department. Additionally, Bausch plans to use a seat on the City Council as a place from which to advocate for the effective enforcement of laws. Rather than using his post to address crime solely by passing new legislation, Bausch looks to utilize it as a place from which he might enable the APD to visibly and effectively enforce the city’s existing laws. He is confident that this is a strategy, which will produce a noticeable effect in the city, significantly reducing crime.

In order to improve the city’s school system and law-enforcement capabilities, David recognizes that Allentown will have to overcome what he sees as its most distressing problem: the erosion of its tax base. While he concedes, “there is no magic formula” to solving this budgetary dilemma, his aggressive plan to transform Allentown’s economic climate seems to be quite near to one. By making the city of Allentown a friendlier place for business, Bausch hopes to attract those successful professionals, who have fled to the suburbs, back into heart of the city. He sees the infusion of this demographic as the key to revitalizing the tax base.

A man who embraces the concept of the hard-working, enterprising individual, David Bausch is no stranger to individualism himself. Currently, he is the sole Republican serving Allentown City Council. As the only Republican, he is familiar with the necessity to work across party lines yet, he is not afraid to stand his ground and defend his beliefs as he says, “I always vote my conscience.” His minority status within Allentown City Council is reflected in the city of Allentown’s electorate as voters registered as Democrats greatly outnumber those registered as Republicans. While Bausch cites this as the most daunting obstacle facing his campaign, he is not discouraged in his effort to, once again, involve himself in public service. An individual who has repeatedly answered the call to serve his community, Bausch says, “I live here. I have lived in Allentown my whole life and I do not intend to live anywhere else so, why not get involved?”

*Are you interested in finding out more information about how you can get involved in the Lehigh County Republican Committee?*

*There are many ways you can help?  
Call LCRC Headquarters  
today to learn more  
610-435-3322*

# Controller Candidate — Mike Schware

**M**ike Schware brings a sense of professionalism and responsibility to his candidacy for Allentown City Controller. Born and raised in Allentown, he is deeply concerned about the City's well-being and hopes to be able to affect positive change in the city through a successful campaign. A regular attendee of City Council meetings, Mike has experience working with the City as he served on the Allentown City Planning Commission between 1996 and 2002. Additionally, his resume includes four years of service in the U.S. Army including three years with the 5<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group, allowing him to bring key leadership experience to his bid for City Controller. He holds a B.S. in Accounting from Penn State University and has worked for over fifteen years as a Certified Public Accountant in Allentown where he lives with his wife and family.

When asked why he wants to run for Allentown City Controller, Mike responds, "That's easy—I've lived here all my life." As part of that commitment to his hometown, Mike hopes to reign in what he sees as continued out of control spending at City Hall in an effort to return fiscal responsibility to City government. He says that City spending has increased across the board while necessary cuts are not being made. "The Mayor has added to the bureaucracy created by the previous mayor and, as it stands, we are stuck paying more money for less city services," adds Schware.

Certainly concerned about the amount of city spending, Mike says, "I don't think the taxpayers of Allentown can afford another tax increase. The taxes are driving people out of the city." However, he notes that if spending continues at its current rate, another tax increase seems to be inevitable. As City Controller, he hopes to be able to cut funding for areas in city government not providing essential services to the people of Allentown. Notably, he sees a number of opportunities to cut what he calls "patronage positions"—positions created in the city by the Mayor to provide non-essential jobs to friends and supporters.

If elected, Mike plans to aggressively audit the spending practices of City government. While this is the primary responsibility of the City Controller, he says that his opponent, current City Controller William Hoffman has failed to do so effectively. One reason for this failure to effectively curb spending by City Administration may have to do with a lack of independence in the Controller's office. According to a June 15 article in the Morning Call, City Controller William Hoffman received campaign contributions from Allentown Mayor Ed Pawlowski which amounted to over half of his reported \$10,300 campaign finances. With the man whose administration he is supposed to be auditing paying for over half of Hoffman's re-election bid, it is easy to see how Mike attributes the Controller's poor auditing practices to a lack of independence from the Mayor's office. Mike sees such blatant cronyism as extremely reprehensible, saying, "My opponent's acceptance of significant campaign contributions from the same administration that he would be auditing violates these standards [of independence]. My opponent's failure to even understand this violation makes him unfit to hold the Office of Controller."

As a truly independent City Controller, Mike looks to have a hand in turning the tide of spending in city government. Ac-

**"Citizens need a watchdog in the Controller's office, not another rubberstamp in City Hall."**

**—Mike Schware**

According to Schware, the last six years have been the worst financial years

in the city's history. He says, "We've had property tax increases on our homeowners, an EMS tax on our workers, and a \$10 million loan—that our children will have to help to repay—to pay for City Hall's continued overspending." If elected, Mike hopes to develop a systematic method of auditing the administration in order to identify superfluous spending and eliminate it.

A Certified Public Accountant with over fifteen years of experience, Mike believes that he is well suited to oversee the City of Allentown's finances. He would bring true independence to the office as well as a conviction to limit the spending practices of the City's administration. He pledges to ask the right kinds of questions and to keep the best interests of the people of Allentown at heart as he tries to limit what he sees as a spendthrift City government. A resident of Allentown for his whole life, Mike is sincere when he says, "City Hall has to realize that they cannot look at residents as an endless supply of cash to feed their spending habit. As City Controller, I will do everything in my power to make sure that City Hall understands this."

## **Mark Your Calendars**

### **Tuesday; August 28<sup>th</sup> through September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007—**

The Lehigh County Republican Committee will once again have a booth at the Great Allentown Fair. LCRC can always use volunteers. Call Ellen to volunteer ASAP at 610-739-1519.

### **Monday; September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007 –**

LCRC Latino Committee is having their monthly meeting at Lehigh County Republican Headquarters at 7PM.

### **Thursday; September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007—**

Lehigh County Republican Committee's Chairman's Council Meeting will be held at the Brookside Country Club (Pub Room) at 7PM. RSVP of your attendance to Kim Beitler 610-435-3322.

### **Tuesday; October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007 –**

Last day to register to be eligible to vote at the ensuing November Election.



years in the U.S. Air Force, and twenty-four years as a Pennsylvania State Police Officer. Though his professional career as a State Police Officer prevented him from holding public office, Roger is not without experience in this regard. From 2001 to 2004, he served as a Lehigh County Commissioner at Large and in 2003 served as the Chairman of the Lehigh County Board of Commissioners. He holds a Master's degree in Public Administration from Kutztown University, a Bachelor's degree in Science in the Administration of Justice from Pennsylvania State University, and an Associate's degree in Community Services from Pennsylvania State University.

"I think the thing that differentiates me from the other candidates is that I'm retired and have the time to truly dedicate myself to the obligations of a Commissioner's post," says Roger. This being the case, he notes that during his time as Chairman of the Lehigh County Board of Commissioners, he devoted nearly thirty hours per week to his position. As a candidate, he hopes to be able to bring his availability of time and level of dedication to bear on a number of issues facing the County. He cites the construction of the new county courthouse and the construction of the new Class-AAA baseball stadium among his top concerns. Both of these projects represent major investments for the County in the way that it fulfills its obligations to its citizens and in its ability to contribute to the quality of life in the Lehigh Valley. Reis looks to ensure that these projects move along as efficiently and economically as possible.

In citing the County's construction projects as priorities, Reis does not lose sight of what he says is the main function of the Lehigh County Board of Commissioners: oversight of the budget. This, he says, is his number one concern. He plans to be able to conduct a budget that limits spending and taxation while remaining cognizant of the fact that it exists to benefit the people of Lehigh County. To this end, he hopes to conduct the first reassessment of properties

for taxation in twenty years and to pass legislation geared toward fiscal restraint.

Looking to enact fiscally responsible legislation, Reis is keenly interested in ensuring the passage of the so-called Place of Confinement Bill which he worked on during his Chairmanship of the Board of Commissioners. This bill addresses the manner in which prisoners in Lehigh County are assigned to prisons according to the crimes they have committed. It seeks to send prisoners currently serving their sentences in Lehigh County prisons for their state-level offences to state prisons. This would open up space in the County's overcrowded prisons, reducing strain on the system and, above all, substantially cut the cost of running the county's prisons. According to Reis who, as a former State Police officer is well aware of the costs involved in the criminal justice system, this will be pivotal in reducing spending as the prison system accounts for over forty percent of the County's budget.

Where his campaign is concerned, Roger says, "I think the biggest challenge for me is the fact that I was in office during the last tax hike." It is important to note that Roger voted against this tax hike which passed without his support yet, he will still need to overcome any concern over that hike if he hopes to succeed in his bid for office.

A candidate who embodies a certain affinity for public service Reis says, "My Chairmanship [of the Lehigh County Board of Commissioners] has been one of the best jobs I've ever had." Such a genuine enjoyment of service seems to be the driving force behind Reis's campaign. His experience as a former County Commissioner and his long career as a public servant give him a unique perspective on local government as he offers this bit of wisdom saying, "it's all about commitment and doing something you believe in."

## Lehigh County Commissioner Candidate— Andy Roman

**T**he only Republican incumbent on the ticket for Lehigh County Commissioner, Andy Roman is confident in his ability to represent the interests of conservatives throughout the County. Born in Whitehall, Andy is a lifelong resident of Lehigh County. After graduating from Whitehall High School in 1974, he spent four years in the U.S. Air Force as a Special Operations aerial gunner before returning to the township for good in order to raise a family. Currently self-employed as a financial planner, Roman holds a Bachelor's degree in Organizational Management from Eastern University as well as an investment license.

As he makes his bid for a post on the Lehigh County Board of Commissioners, Andy hopes that his experience will make him stand out in the minds of GOP voters. Finishing his fourth year as a Lehigh County Commissioner this year, Roman is the only incumbent on the Republican ticket. While on the Board, he has served as Chairman of both the Administrative Committee and the Economic Development Committee, and is currently the Vice Chairman of the Economic Development Committee. Among his many accomplishments as a Lehigh County Commissioner, Andy cites his instrumental role in the consolidation of the offices of as one of his greatest. Through the consolidation of these three individual posts into a single "Clerk of Judicial Records" office, Andy

***"I am a rock solid conservative—not just because I say so but, because my record shows that."  
-Andy Roman***

says taxpayers will save \$100,000 per year—a minimum of \$1,000,000 over ten years. His effort to spearhead this

referendum was not lost on Lehigh County voters who approved it with a sixty-three percent vote.

Seeking re-election in 2007, Roman hopes to continue to conduct policy in Lehigh County with an eye toward fiscal conservatism. He plans to use the successful consolidation of the Clerk of Courts, Recorder of Deeds, and Recorder of Wills offices as a model by which to continue restructuring County government. He says, "I believe in streamlined government, which allows us to increase efficiency and save money." Looking at the current structure of the County's government, Roman sees a number of opportunities to cut costs. Focusing on structural and systemic reform, Andy would like to do away with the county's existing employee pay system, which he says harkens back to the McKinley Era. In its place, he hopes to implement (continued on page 8)

LEHIGH COUNTY

in which employees are work rather than years of service. In this manner, he looks to increase employee efficiency, eventually allowing the County to decrease the number of people that it employs—a major money saver.

Besides cutting costs through modernizing and streamlining government, Andy hopes to focus on public safety and emergency response in Lehigh County. According to Roman, the county's emergency-response system is quite dysfunctional. He says, "Right now, our [emergency response] system relies on a single 911 office which would be inadequate in the event of a major disaster." Additionally, he notes that the coordination system between emergency responders (firefighters, police officers, ambulance corps, etc...) contains serious communication gaps. With these concerns in mind, he looks to create a bi-county Health Department in conjunction with Northampton County. Such a department would fo-

## Lehigh County Commissioner Candidate— Brent Labenburg

Passionate and energetic seem to be the best words to describe Brent Labenburg. A candidate for Lehigh County Commissioner at Large, Labenburg says, "I may be the youngest candidate but, I have the most years of experience in politics." At forty-two years old, Brent can claim to have served for ten years on the Emmaus Borough Council, where he is Chairman of the Public Works Committee and sits on both the Parks and Recreation and the Health and Sanitation Committees. When not serving on the council of the largest borough in Lehigh County, Labenburg works as a Chef at the Phoebe Home in Allentown and owns his own disc jockey business in Emmaus where he lives with his wife and three children. He holds a high school diploma from Emmaus High School and is a veteran of the U.S. Navy.

Among his top concerns for Lehigh County, Labenburg identifies lowering property taxes in Lehigh County as a particularly pressing issue. Property tax reform has always been important to Brent who was able to lower property taxes four times while on Emmaus Borough Council. He says, "I feel that there are always non-essentials in government and I believe that when you eliminate some of those non-essentials, you should be able to lower property taxes." This being said, he concedes that if elected, "Finding other [Lehigh County] Commissioners willing to have the attitude and the willpower to lower property taxes and not go with the status quo will be a challenge." Yet, he is hopeful that he will be able to accomplish his goal. In an expression of camaraderie with fellow Republican candidate, Dean Browning, Labenburg says, "I know if Dean and I got on there, [the Lehigh County Board of Commissioners] we could really lower taxes."

In addition to lowering property taxes in Lehigh County, Brent hopes to control growth in spending. He says, "You can't go wrong when you keep the rate of spending below the rate of inflation." The key to doing this, according to Labenburg, is a prioritizing system in which those county services deemed most

focus on the implementation of a proactive emergency response system, alerting emergency and health officials to potential hazards rather than reacting to preventable disasters. It would also create a centralized office to facilitate coordination among emergency responders throughout the two counties.

If elected, Andy says that his biggest challenge will lie in making county government the most effective it can be. He says, "That includes [ensuring] public health and safety, creating room for economic growth, and creating limited government that does not intrude into the private sector, thereby keeping the tax burden at a minimum." He notes that past Boards of Commissioners have been too passive when it came to reform and were unwilling to make the changes necessary to allow for efficacy in county government. In contrast, he describes himself as a very goal-oriented person who has brought a sense of purpose to the Lehigh County Board of Commissioners for the past four years—his record bearing witness to his willingness to act. He says, "You can stand on principle during your campaign but, the real test is to see if you can to that once you're in office. I have stood on principle during my time in office and plan to be vigilant in doing so in the future."

**"Lowering taxes is an attitude!"**  
—Brent Labenburg

necessary are identified while those seen as

least necessary are done away with. By paying close attention to the way in which money is spent, Labenburg feels that he can insure a balanced budget year after year. Not only will this limit spending, he says, but it will also eliminate the need for additional taxes.

While the main focus of his platform lies on Lehigh County's fiscal operations, Brent is also looking to make changes in the way the county conducts its everyday business. In an effort to increase government transparency and accountability to the taxpayers, Brent hopes to be instrumental in developing and implementing a system to post videos of the County Board of Commissioners' meetings over the Internet. He sees this as a great way to provide Lehigh County taxpayers with the tools to ensure that their money is being spent responsibly and effectively. He has estimated that such a system will cost the county about \$2,000—a nominal price for what he sees as a valuable asset.

With a demonstrated commitment to fiscal conservatism and an impressive record of lowering taxes while on Emmaus Borough Council, Brent should have little problem appealing to voters concerned about their tax dollars. However, Brent does see the need to overcome a few obstacles if he hopes to run a winning campaign. Humbly, he concedes that the toughest challenge he faces is fundraising. He says, "I'm just not used to asking for money." While this could prove to be the Achilles Heel of his campaign, Brent is confident that this is an anxiety which he will be able to surmount as he becomes more comfortable with campaigning at the county level.

His record notwithstanding, Brent is an easily likable candidate. Charismatic and amicable, his appeal lies in his personality and his commitment to his community. While his campaign's pocket-book may lack the depth of some of his opponents', this may prove to be a minor issue if he can ensure that he remains visible to county voters. A candidate who prides himself on his good character, Brent Labenburg says, "When elected commissioner, I will debate with honesty and integrity, have knowledge of the issues, and I will always vote with Lehigh County's best interest at heart."

## Lehigh County Sheriff Candidate— Joseph Vargo

**J**oe Vargo was certainly looking to make a splash when he entered the race for Lehigh County Sheriff. An Allentown Police Officer with sixteen years experience, Vargo was moved to announce his candidacy by what he sees as the laissez-faire approach taken by current Lehigh County Sheriff, Ronald W. Rossi, toward the responsibilities demanded of his office. In a campaign most accurately characterized by the word action, Joe has moved aggressively to make his presence known as a serious contender. Quickly garnering endorsements from all three police unions in Lehigh County, Vargo says, "I feel I am the first viable candidate [for LC Sheriff] in a long time." Born in Bethlehem, Joe is a lifelong resident of the Lehigh Valley. He graduated from Bethlehem Catholic High School in 1980 and worked as a Branch Manager at the armored car company, Brinks Inc., before joining the Allentown Police Force in 1991. While serving as an Allentown Police Officer, Vargo participated in the creation of community policing in the city, stopped a rape in progress, disarmed and arrested a man who was firing shots into a crowded Allentown street, and took part in over thirty homicide cases as part of the APD Crime Scene Unit. Currently, he is a Sergeant and is assigned to the south side of Allentown. He is married and lives with his wife and two daughters in Neffs. While he may be new to political candidacy, Joe is, by no means, unaware of issues that the County Sheriff will have to address. As a man who has spent eleven of his sixteen years as a police officer on the streets in center city Allentown, Vargo is keenly aware of the issues needing to be addressed. He cites County Courthouse security as the number one issue facing the Lehigh County Sheriff. He says that the guards are inadequately trained and equipped and are required to do the bare minimum of what is necessary to maintain what he sees as an insufficient level of security at the complex. As Sheriff, he would remedy this situation by ensuring that courthouse guards are properly trained and equipped, supplying them with such things as body armor and updated side arms. Noting that the courthouse is in a highly dense area containing a number of important county and federal buildings, Vargo would like to purchase bomb-sniffing dogs for additional security at the complex. He says that these dogs could prove to be valuable assets for inspecting cars that are parked around the courthouse as well as those in the parking garage beneath it. While funding for the training and purchase of these dogs could be a point of contention for those with their eyes on the county budget, Vargo insists that the purchase of the dogs would cost the county little. In

***"I want to shake things up"  
— Joe Vargo***

order to ensure that the dogs will cause little impact on the budget, he anticipates running a public fundraising campaign for their purchase as well as seeking Federal Homeland Security grants. If elected Lehigh County Sheriff, Joe knows that his responsibilities will extend beyond the doors of County build-

ings. In fact, he relishes the opportunity to address those issues not contained within the walls of a County courthouse. As a police officer, he knows that criminals do not heed city boundaries when they commit crimes; rather, they operate across city lines. This often happens with gang-related drug sales. While gangs primarily operate in the cities, Vargo knows that much of their income comes from drug sales in the surrounding suburban areas. With this in mind, Joe hopes to involve the County Sheriff's office in anti-gang initiatives such as Allentown's gang task force. Rather than leaving the problem to city departments alone, Vargo hopes to facilitate information sharing between city police departments and suburban police departments, enabling them to work together to address a problem that affects the whole county. Vargo hopes to expand the presence of the County Sheriff's office not only by supporting the efforts of various police departments, but also by augmenting its staff. One of the areas most in need of county deputies, he says, is the Sheriff's Warrant Squad. Joe would like to double the number of deputies on this squad from six to twelve. According to Vargo, "There are only six guys serving over 4,100 outstanding warrants in Lehigh County." With so few deputies and so many outstanding warrants, it seems natural to expand to Warrant Squad. However, Joe says that this is something County Sheriff Rossi failed to do. "In fact," says Joe, "over the past three years, the Sheriff has turned down numerous offers to increase the number of deputies in the county." While Joe's announcement as a candidate for County Sheriff certainly made waves throughout the county, he hopes that his election to the office will have an even more dramatic impact. Moved to enter the race by the inaction of Sheriff Rossi, Joe says, "I see the need for change and, unfortunately, it can't be done at Allentown City level. It has to be done at the county level." It is this spirit of progress and action that Vargo hopes to carry into the County Sheriff's office. Clinching the endorsements of the County's Police unions, Joe says, "Basically, all the police in the county want me to be Sheriff but, it's up to the people of Lehigh County to decide whether they want me as well."

## Lehigh County Row Offices Candidate— Marie Dean

**M**arie Dean, a seasoned public servant, looks to be the first person in Lehigh County to hold the newly created Clerk of Judicial Records post. An office, which was created by the Lehigh County Board of Commissioners, the Clerk of Judicial Records will be responsible to carry out the roles formerly distributed among the three independent county offices of Recorder of Deeds, Clerk of Courts, and Register of Wills.

***"I like to help people—if someone has a problem, I really like to be able to help them solve it." —Marie Dean***

While she may be running for the office of Clerk of Judicial Records for the first time, this is only because November 2007 will be the first time an election has (continued on last page)

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## Marie Dean—Continued

been held for the new office. Boasting a lengthy resume of service to the people of the Lehigh Valley, Dean is a seasoned veteran of public office. All together, she has spent nearly forty years in public office including fourteen years as a Zoning Officer/Planning Administrator for North Whitehall Township, six years as a recording clerk in the Lehigh County Recorder of Deeds office, and eleven years as Recorder of Deeds in Lehigh County—a post that she currently occupies. In addition to years of professional service to Lehigh County, Marie has contributed countless hours of volunteer work. She has served on the Board of the Allentown Art Museum, volunteered at the Schnecksville Fire Company, and has been President of Northern Valley EMS Corps's Ambulance Auxiliary for thirty-one years. Marie is a resident of North Whitehall township where she lives on the same 150-acre farm that she called home as a child.

Marie Dean has certainly spent a lot of time around county government and is quite familiar with the way it operates. However, despite this familiarity, her bid for the Clerk of Judicial Records office presents her with a whole new set of challenges to overcome. If elected, she will be the point person for the integration of the roles of three offices into one. Faced with such a mammoth undertaking, Marie says, that she has "the ability and the administrative skills" to get the job done. Planning to use her experience to her advantage, she is confident that she is up to the task at hand. As Lehigh County Recorder of Deeds, Dean has established a

record of responsible modernization, which she hopes to carry over into the office of Clerk of Judicial Records. According to her website, "Since my tenure as the Recorder of Deeds the office has been modernized by a move from the courthouse to the government center and by the installation of a new computer system." Additionally, she notes that her office has conducted an ongoing effort to scan and computerize all County property documents, including those dating back to the founding of Lehigh County in 1812. While she is a facilitator of modernization in County government, she pledges to do so without risking the security and confidentiality of the citizens of Lehigh County. She notes that as Recorder of Deeds, she has not posted County land records on the Internet, citing a desire to protect the people of Lehigh County from the possibility of identity theft.

A widow after 45 years of marriage, mother of two sons, and grandmother of three grandchildren, Marie says she has the "accountability, commitment, and dedication" to serve as the first Lehigh County Clerk of Judicial Records in history. With her long history of public service and strong work ethic, she is certainly an impressive candidate. Despite the challenges inherent in the consolidation and integration of three offices into one, Dean says, "I will always do my best to protect and help the citizens of Lehigh County" as she pledges to continue to keep their best interests in mind.