

# COUNTY COMMITTEE COURIER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE RICHMOND COUNTY REPUBLICAN COMMITTEE

Spring 2012

## SRO CROWD FOR LINCOLN DINNER! 800 PACK HILTON BALLROOM FOR PARTY EVENT

**A**s Phil Rizzuto used to say *"You couldn't get another person in with a shoe horn."* That was the case on Monday April 23<sup>rd</sup> when the Lincoln Dinner was held at the Hilton Garden Inn.

800 people were jammed into the overflowing Ballroom and, as one observer put it, *"I've been going to these things for 30 years and I never saw anything like this."* Clearly, Republicanism is thriving on Staten Island.

The event co-chairperson Lisa Giovinazzo took the podium to welcome the throng. Co-chair Dr. Ann Marie Stilwell presided over the preliminary program that included the singing of the National Anthem by Arlette Roxburgh and the invocation by Father Michael Martine. Giovinazzo then introduced Chairman Robert Scamardella who carried the program for the rest of the night.

After introductions, the Chairman spoke about a fictional conversation between Barak Obama and Abraham Lincoln. It ended with Obama boasting about his guaranteed re-election with Lincoln responding *"You can fool some of the people all of the time, all of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time."*

A novel video presentation followed entitled *"The Year in Review."* The crowd then settled in to a filet mignon dinner followed by the key note speech delivered by Florida Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen who chairs the House Foreign Affairs Committee. She was introduced by Congressman Grimm. Mat Mirones, introduced by David Carr, the President of the Young Republicans Club, received the John Marchi Memorial Public Servant Award. Jereen Maltese, introduced by Lisa Giovinazzo, received the John D'Amato Public Service Award.

Finally, Joseph Carroll and Peter Lanza were presented with the Alini Awards in memory of the late Dominick Alini, a dedicated long-time party volunteer. Jeannie Collini and Leticia Remauro made the presentations.

Every Island elected official was in attendance as was former Congressman Guy Molinari and former Congresswoman Susan Molinari and two U.S. Senate candidates.

## GRIMM RE-NOMINATED IN LANDSLIDE

### STARTS RE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN

**H**aving been the victim of unsubstantiated allegations of campaign fund raising improprieties, Congressman Michael Grimm received overwhelming support from the County Committee at its Convention in March.

In fact, the endorsement of the Congressman for a second term was just short of unanimous, as 310 of the 312 County Committee persons in attendance voted for the

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Congressman's endorsement. Two voters abstained.

Grimm was nominated by party Vice-Chair Frank Aversa and Committeeman Bill D'Ambrosio made the seconding speech. Grimm accepted the nomination in a rousing "fighting" speech that garnered repeated applause.

The County Committee turned out in droves to secure the necessary petition signatures for the Congressman to get on the ballot. A total of 4,725 signatures were procured. Only 952 were needed to qualify.

## REPUBLICAN TEAM TAKING SHAPE

The local Republican team of candidates is beginning to take shape. In addition to the re-nomination of Congressman Grimm, a bevy of officials have received the recommendation of the Party's Executive Committee and are expected to receive full Committee endorsement at a May convention.

State Senator Andrew Lanza received the solid backing of the Executive Committee and figures to mount a formidable campaign against his Democratic challenger. Meanwhile, the Executive Committee has backed Sam Pirozzolo and Paul Saryian to run against well-entrenched Democratic incumbents. Pirozzolo will be taking on Michael Cusick in the 63<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District and Saryian will be up against Matthew Titone in the 61st Assembly District.

Also recommended by the Executive Committee was Joseph Borelli who is running for the 62<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District seat being vacated by the retiring Lou Tobacco.

All of these gentlemen will be coming before the entire County Committee and more about them after their full nominations at the upcoming party convention.

The Executive Committee has some work remaining. They are expected to shortly interview Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis, who is seeking re-election in the 64<sup>th</sup> Assembly District. Also, they will be interviewing Lisa Alfano Grey, who announced that she will be seeking the Party's nomination in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Senate District, currently held by Democrat Diane Savino. Ms. Grey, a former prosecutor, has received the backing of Party Chair Robert Scamardella.

## ROMNEY CLINCHES IT

After a long internal fight, Republicans have seemingly settled on a nominee. By sweeping the New York primary and four contests on April 24<sup>th</sup>, Mitt Romney, by all accounts, has become the party's presidential nominee. All that remains is for Ron Paul to withdraw from the race and Romney to receive the official nomination at the August Convention.

With recent polls showing Mr. Romney in a dead heat with the President and Republicans coalescing around the Romney candidacy, it appears that a truly dynamic presidential campaign lies ahead.

For Republicans, largely outnumbered by Democrats from a registration standpoint, the challenge is great. Locally, despite early divisions over the Republican primary candidates, it appears that Staten Island is unifying behind Romney. By any measure, it seems clear that the local party is prepared to do its part on behalf of the Romney campaign. For sure, the Obama campaign will be formidable. It boasts a billion dollar war chest (ironically funded in large part by "*millionaires and billionaires*"). Anyway, let the battle begin!

## THREE-WAY PRIMARY RACE FOR SENATE SEAT

### CHAIRMAN BACKS WENDY LONG

Democratic incumbent Kirsten Gillibrand, ranked by Daily Politics as the most Liberal Senator, is up for election in November. Three Republicans will face off in a June 26<sup>th</sup> primary for the Republican nomination to challenge her.

Wendy Long, who garnered 47% of the delegate vote at the State Convention, is up against George Maragos (27%) and Congressman Bob Turner (25%).

Long is a Dartmouth undergrad and has a law degree from Harvard. She was law clerk to Supreme Court Judge Clarence Thomas and chief counsel to the Judicial Confirmation Network as well as legal counsel to the Romney Campaign.

Congressman Turner was the President of Multi-Media Entertainment dealing with the talk show segment of the television industry. After his retirement he got involved in politics and defeated David Weprin in a special congressional election to fill the seat vacated by the resignation of Anthony Weiner.

Maragos is the Comptroller of Nassau County. He is a businessman who has received an MBA from Pace University and has served as a Vice President of Chase Manhattan Bank and Citibank.

Chairman Robert Scamardella has publically endorsed Ms. Long noting, *“Wendy is smart, articulate, personable and hard working. She has an impressive resume and can raise the needed funds. She is the perfect candidate to face Ms. Gillibrand. I heartily endorse her.”*

## LOU TOBACCO TO END ASSEMBLY CAREER

**H**aving served more than five years in the State Assembly, Lou Tobacco is calling it quits. The long-time party member (his work on behalf of local Republicans began in his teenage years) has decided to return to the private sector. He is taking a Vice-Presidential position with Staten Island University Hospital when his term expires on December 31<sup>st</sup>.

Tobacco’s announcement came as a shock to most. He cited personal reasons for the decision. Having recently suffered a major medical issue followed by his leaving a position with Pfizer, coupled with the time he spends in Albany away from his wife and four children, Assemblyman Tobacco felt it was time for a change.

On behalf of the County Committee we thank him for his service to this State and our Party and we wish Mr. Tobacco nothing but success and good health.

## MC FEELING GOOD!

### KING OF PETITIONS DOES IT AGAIN

**E**ven though a candidate receives the endorsement of the County Committee, he or she still must procure a certain number of signatures on a *“designating petition”* from registered Republican voters in their district.

It is the job of the County Committee to get these signatures and get their endorsed candidates on the ballot.

Recently, the Committee did this for Congressman Grimm. He needed 952 signatures to qualify. Almost 200 Committee persons *“walked”* procuring signatures for the Congressman. These hearty souls picked up their petitions at headquarters, walked their districts and returned them to headquarters. Said the Chairman, *“These folks did a magnificent job. On Staten Island we gathered over 4000 signatures and, with the Brooklyn GOP chiming in, (Brooklyn is part of the Congressman’s district) a total of over 4,725 signatures were gathered.”*

As in most things, some people do a bit more than others. To no one’s surprise, Bob McFeeley was the petition gathering king as he procured 231 signatures. Bob is the *“walking master”* and, in fact, was disappointed at his number. Some family commitments and a bad cold kept his production down. In second place was Annette Batista. She is a signature gathering legend. Rumor has it she procured more than 1,000 signatures per campaign in her hey day!!! At 77 years of age, Annette has slowed down but she is still out there. Said the Chairman, *“Bob and Annette were wonderful as was everyone who took time out to do this. In years past, the party relied on people like Bob and Annette to carry more than their fair share by gathering hundreds and hundreds of signatures. We have been very successful at cultivating a bigger army thereby evening out the workload. I’m working on a way to acknowledge the top 10 walkers when we go out for our State candidates in June.”*

If you’re wondering where you stand in the hierarchy of gatherers, we’ve published the top 20 recent walkers and what it might take to crack the top 10 in June.

| Rank | NAME                   | No. |
|------|------------------------|-----|
| 1    | McFeeley, Robert J.    | 231 |
| 2    | Battista, Annette      | 137 |
| 3    | Antoniello, John       | 124 |
| 4    | Kain, Elizabeth J.     | 90  |
| 5    | Lagazzo, Lillian L.    | 68  |
| 6    | Carr, David M.         | 61  |
| 7    | Tirado, Ada E.         | 60  |
| 8    | Raimondi, Carmine T.   | 56  |
| 9    | Russo, Joseph D.       | 56  |
| 10   | Scamardella, John      | 53  |
| 11   | Bierig, Jason          | 52  |
| 12   | Scamardella, Robert S. | 52  |
| 13   | Towles, Jennifer       | 50  |
| 14   | Marrone, Jr., Paul     | 49  |
| 15   | Ceder, David           | 45  |
| 16   | Grey, Lisa             | 45  |
| 17   | Bonamo, Michael        | 44  |
| 18   | Reinhart, Anthony      | 44  |
| 19   | Paolercio, Roseann     | 43  |
| 20   | Mirizzi, Angela        | 41  |

## DOUBLE DUTY SECOND CONVENTION ON TAP

**H**aving just spent 2 months interviewing, nominating and qualifying our Congressman we have to do it all over again for our State elected officials. If you find it grueling, welcome to the club. However, recent law required a separate federal process. In years past, there was one primary date, one nominating convention and one signature gathering process. This year it is double duty. Although we may be inclined to let up, we can't let that happen and must remember the same rules apply to the Democrats. They will be out in droves getting signatures for their candidates. We **MUST** meet the challenge.

We will shortly be completing our candidate interviews and you will soon be receiving notice of our nominating convention for state officials. We will call upon you, again, to help in the signature gathering process.

Your attendance at the convention and help with signatures is essential. Then we can enjoy the summer and get ready for what will be a defining election in November. Unlike 2008, this time Republicans cannot be asleep and we must do whatever has to be done for victory on November 7<sup>th</sup>. Double the work will mean double the exhilaration on election night.

### Chairman's Message

## IT AIN'T EASY

**S**ometime it isn't easy. This Chairman business sure has its share of surprises. In fact, they never seem to subside.

It's been a whirlwind since my election at the September Convention. Right away, I dove head first into the Donovan campaign. After Dan's resounding victory, we went right to work on the Cheney event which was a huge fundraising success for the Party. As the New Year dawned, we finalized work on a quarterly newsletter, launched a top notch website, rented and restored a new party headquarters. I exhaled and thought I'd get a little break from party activity. Then it hit.

First came the outrageous politically motivated allegations against Congressman Grimm. We worked overtime to organize a successful grand opening of our headquarters and, in the process, show support for our Congressman. The next week, a judge accelerated the federal primary date. I had to attend a rushed State Convention in Rochester. Simultaneously, we organized an Executive Committee interview session and our own County Convention. Somewhere in the middle of this, Assemblyman Tobacco announced his retirement. We also began the arduous work planning the Lincoln Dinner.

Without a breather, we then put together the petition gathering operation for the Congressman. We just had a successful finish to that while putting together much of the Party's 2012 slate involving a marathon Executive Committee interview session. At this writing, we have just concluded the Lincoln Dinner, a huge undertaking, and we must quickly convene another Executive Committee interview session followed by another nominating convention for state elections. Then we face another marathon petition gathering drive for our state officials.

It's a lot of work and, frankly, I sometimes wonder if I wouldn't be better off on a golf course. Then two things remind me that it is all worth it.

First, I just cannot sit by and let liberal Democrats take full ownership of our borough and our country the way they fully control our city and our state.

Second, I look around and see all the magnificent people in the trenches with me. Having wonderful people rowing the boat with you makes one forget about the blisters on the fingers and helps focus on the camaraderie and self-satisfaction in the heart.

I thank all of you for the extraordinary volunteer work you do. We can and will make a difference.