



## HOUSE OF THE WEEK

Page B1



## ASHVILLE SHINES ON COUNTRY NIGHT

Page B6



## Democrats make their case for Senate, Assembly

By ERIC AVEDISSIAN  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE – Incumbent First Legislative District Democrats discussed past bipartisan work with Republican Gov. Chris Christie.

Senator Jeff Van Drew, Assemblymen Nelson Albano and Assemblyman Bob Andrzejczak are running for re-election Nov. 5. Van Drew squares off against Republican challenger Susan Adelizzi-Schmidt, while Albano and Andrzejczak face Cumberland County Freeholder Sam Fiocchi and Cape

May County Freeholder Kristine Gabor. The Democrats touted their records of reaching across the aisle and working with Republicans as their greatest strength. They pointed to the recalcitrant theatrics in Washington as political dysfunction, and said their bipartisan efforts helped the district.

Over water and club sodas, the candidates met with the Ocean City Sentinel, Upper Township Sentinel and Cape May Star and Wave at the Bellevue Tavern and outlined their positions on jobs, the economy and what they deem is a brutal campaign.

### Jeff Van Drew, Dem. for Senate: Does not see partisan labels

Incumbent Democratic Senator Jeff Van Drew faces Republican challenger Susan Adelizzi-Schmidt in the Senate race.

Van Drew, 60, of Dennis Township, served as Cape May County freeholder from 1995 to 1997, and the New Jersey Assembly from 2002 to 2008. He has served as First Legislative District senator since 2008.

A dentist by profession, Van Drew graduated with a bachelors of science degree from Rutgers University and received a doctor of dental surgery degree from Fairleigh Dickinson University.

He is chairman of the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee, vice chairman of the Military and Veteran's Affairs Committee, and member of the Budget and Appropriations Committee.

Van Drew labeled himself as a "conservative Democrat" who remains



Jeff Van Drew

popular with conservatives in a Republican-leaning Cape May County.

"I say what I believe is right. I do what I feel is right. I'm a conservative and I'm proud to be conservative. There used to be conservative Democrats and hopefully there still are some," Van Drew said.

He blamed "hyper-partisanship" for blemishing the political process and causing

gridlock in Washington.

Van Drew said bipartisan efforts between the Democrats and Republican Governor Chris Christie, hard work and advocacy will bring employment to the district.

"You've got to fight hard for this area, you've got to really work hard at it, not just talk about it, and you've got to do it in a bipartisan way because if you don't you're not going to get it done," Van Drew said.

When federal laws allowed factory fishing vessels into local waters, the Cape May County commercial fishing industry met with Van Drew. The senator, through a bipartisan effort, said he was able to produce a bill creating a menhaden fishing license, and establishing new fishing boundaries.

Van Drew also advocated a free registration system for anglers and a moratorium of fines for those fishermen who don't register with the state. He said a saltwater fishing

Please see D-Sen., page A2

## Republicans for Senate and Assembly have a plan

By ERIC AVEDISSIAN  
Cape May Star and Wave

OCEAN CITY – For the Republican First Legislative District candidates, it's "make or break."

Senate candidate Susan Adelizzi-Schmidt and Assembly candidates Sam Fiocchi and Kristine Gabor believe without their leadership, the district will continue to see more widespread unemployment and economic

stagnation.

They blame the incumbents, Democratic Senator Jeff Van Drew and Assemblymen Nelson Albano and Bob Andrzejczak for sluggishness, and vow to reverse the downward trend if elected on Nov. 5.

The three Republican candidates discussed their ideas and visions for the district at their Ocean City campaign office on Oct. 10 with the Ocean City Sentinel, Upper Township Sentinel and Cape May Star and Wave.

### Susan Adelizzi-Schmidt, Rep. for Senate: Would create high tech corridor

Upper Township resident Susan Adelizzi-Schmidt is challenging incumbent Democrat Jeff Van Drew for the district's Senate seat.

Adelizzi-Schmidt, 46, lived in district for last 30 years. Her grandparents built a motel in Wildwood in 1953, and Adelizzi-Schmidt spent her younger years working in the family's business.

She holds dual B.A. degrees in communications and English from Acadia University and an M.B.A. from the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, where she currently teaches as an adjunct professor.

Adelizzi-Schmidt worked as a news reporter and anchor for WMGM TV-40, and as the Showboat Casino Hotel's public relation's manager in Atlantic City.

She is the owner and president of Suation Communications Group, LLC, a marketing and communica-



Susan Adelizzi-Schmidt

tions agency in Somers Point. Adelizzi-Schmidt described herself as "a regular working mom who's running a household, running a business, raising my kids, paying my taxes."

It's this folksy, pragmatic image she hopes will resonate with voters.

"The reason I'm compelled to be this district's next senator is we need people like

me who are coming from the private sector who have fresh ideas, who have innovative strategies to solve problems. More government isn't necessarily the way to solve problems," Adelizzi-Schmidt said.

In September, Adelizzi-Schmidt, Fiocchi and Gabor unveiled their 8-Point Jobs and Economic Development Plan, which proposes ways to enhance the region's economic engine while drawing businesses and employment opportunities to the district.

The plan was the result of several meetings between the candidates and business owners throughout the district.

One of the plan's proposals would create a "high-tech corridor" in the tri-county region to attract young workers with year-round, high-skill jobs in emerging industries like agriculture, tourism, aquaculture, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals and telecommunications.

She said areas ripe for economic development include

Please see R-Sen., page A2



Nelson Albano

### Nelson Albano, Dem. for Assembly: Works better and closer with Christie

Assemblyman Nelson Albano, 59, has served in the General Assembly since 2006.

He attended Cumberland County Technical School and works as a shop steward for Village Supermarkets and is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union.

He is the chairman of the Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, and a member of the Labor Committee

and Law and Public Safety Committee.

In 2001, Albano's son Michael was killed by a drunk driver, prompting him to lobby his state representative, Jeff Van Drew, to create legislation that cracks down on repeat drunk drivers. Albano's efforts resulted in Michael's Law, which puts mandates 180 days in jail for third-time DWI offenders.

Albano is running for reelection under allegations he acted inappropriately when he tried persuading a state trooper not to issue him a speeding ticket.

A state trooper clocked Albano driving at 71 mph in a 55 mph zone outside of Trenton on Feb. 21, 2012. Albano asked the officer to cut him a break on the ticket, but the officer refused.

On Feb. 27, 2012, Albano sent a letter on his official legislative stationery to New Jersey State Police Superintendent Colonel Rick Fuentes addressing the incident. In the letter, Albano claims the officer treated him disrespectfully, and requested an internal investigation into the incident.

In April, Albano withdrew the complaint and paid his traffic ticket.



Bob Andrzejczak

The Newark Star-Ledger obtained a copy of the trooper's dashboard camera video of the traffic stop. In the video, the trooper does not repeatedly ask for Albano's registration.

An internal police investigation concluded the trooper did not act improperly when he issued Albano a ticket.

Republicans are making an issue of the incident, accusing Albano of acting arrogantly when he called for an investigation.

"I regret what I did, asking

Please see D-Assem., page A11



Sam Fiocchi

### Sam Fiocchi, Rep. for Assembly: Private sector can solve unemployment

Sam Fiocchi, 61, of Vineland, has deep roots in Cumberland County, his family having lived in Vineland for almost 100 years.

"We're entrenched in here. We've invested here... I love New Jersey," Fiocchi said.

He's worked in his family's irrigation business, Lee Rain, Inc. since 1973, retiring as president in 2009. Fiocchi is a licensed real estate agent with Weichert Realtors in Ocean City.

He said after leaving his family's business, he was con-

fronted with a choice: remain and try to change the status quo of higher property taxes and business taxes, or pull up stakes and leave the state.

In 2010, Fiocchi was elected to the Cumberland County Freeholder Board, a position he currently holds. He made an unsuccessful run for First Legislative District Assembly in 2011, running with Cape May County resident Norris Clark.

"The legislators we have in this district aren't doing the job for the district," Fiocchi said.

He said his running mates, Susan Adelizzi-Schmidt and Kristine Gabor, are "business-oriented" and "independent thinkers."

"We think we can take this district and help the state grow in a better direction," Fiocchi said. "The district deserves better."

According to Fiocchi, the private sector can solve the unemployment problem by creating jobs. He said Trenton interferes with businesses through excessive regulations, thus miring job growth.

"We need to create private sector jobs. I was a job-creator for almost 40 years. I'm very proud of that. I know what it is to put the key in the door and make a payroll every week. New Jersey used



Kristine Gabor

to be very business friendly. Before the governor took over, we were dead last in the country," Fiocchi said.

Fiocchi welcomed efforts by Gov. Christie and Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno to make it easier for businesses to cut the red tape and cumbersome regulations.

With bipartisan support, the Legislature passed and Christie signed the New Jersey Economic Opportunity Act, which streamlines programs designed to retain and create jobs, spurs business incentives and attracts companies by awarding tax cred

Please see D-Assem., page A11

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