

Sebastian Delia

From: Sebastian Delia
Sent: Thursday, July 29, 2010 6:01 PM
To: Cherron Rountree
Subject: FW: bj's column

From: Tina Casey
Sent: Thursday, July 29, 2010 6:01 PM
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Bette Jane had just a couple of tweak so this is the final:

Standing Up for Union County Communities

As a member of the Freeholder Board I have spent many hours visiting all parts of Union County, and it is always a pleasure to experience the common threads that bind our twenty-one diverse municipalities together. We share a willingness to set goals and work toward them, an enthusiasm for the arts and recreation, an eagerness to look out for people in need, a thriving spirit of volunteerism, and above all an awareness that in our crowded little corner of the Earth, every individual can make a difference.

The murder in Summit last month is a reminder that, for all of the good things that we have in common, any community can be vulnerable to the worst capabilities in human nature. Whether it happens rarely or all too often, it is a wound that cuts deeply.

In our efforts to deal with violence, we Union County residents call upon our strengths, such as good police work, active community engagement, and value for the richness of our diversity. The many public events and celebrations in Union County are a testimony to our drive for reaching out and getting to know our neighbors from all walks of life.

But Union County does not exist in a vacuum. Our efforts are influenced by the signals we receive from the nation at large. Right now, the strongest of these messages is one that is, to say the least, not helpful.

Too much of our national discourse has become dominated by a seemingly endless - and unjustified - stream of hate, fear and violence directed at immigrants and cultural differences. This is expressed not only by ordinary citizens who happen to be caught in the news. It comes from certain elected officials and leaders of certain political groups, media commentators, and major figures in the talk show and entertainment industry.

Certain public figures have deliberately sought out positions of leadership, responsibility, and public visibility, and yet instead of using their influence to help guide our communities and support our efforts, they are actively working to destroy what we have accomplished.

Despite the challenges, we have achieved a vibrant community that is proud to welcome new cultures and new energy. No matter how loudly the voices of ignorance and fear may shout, we will continue to work together in the cause of dignity and respect for all who live, work, and visit in Union County.

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