

# Local



## Sussex County Teen Arts Festival preview Page A10

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# Tea Party organizer 'fiercely independent'

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**SANDYSTON** — RoseAnn Salanitri sees hopelessness and voicelessness in the American people, in a country where an "ideologue" inhabits the White House, and creeping government pushes its way into people's homes and wallets.

It's the bitter dregs of taxation without representation — and something needs to be done about it, she says.

"The original Boston Tea Party was launched over taxes — that's still true today," she said Tuesday.

But the 21st-century Tea Party is a new, "fifth branch" of the United States government that could re-enfranchise the masses — while the three traditional branches and the media consistently let the average American down. She and the group are now waging a legal battle to begin a 1.3-million-signature petition drive to recall U.S. Senator Robert Menendez because of his voting record on taxes.

"We have to keep everyone else accountable," she said Tuesday in an interview at her Sandyston home.

Salanitri, who spends hours per day organizing the "grassroots" group from her rural house in the far-northwest corner of the state, said the group is "fiercely independent" and bucks both major parties.

"We completely distrust all Democrats and Republicans," she said. "We've been lied to too many times."

### AT HOME IN SANDYSTON

Salanitri, a former court reporter and mother of two grown children (one of whom

is in the Air Force), always has a copy of the Constitution on hand, along with her Bible. (A former Bible teacher, she is also author of a book reconciling modern-day science to Christian principles, and is a committed Creationist). She grew up in Bergen County, and moved west in several steps over consecutive decades, now resides just miles from the Pennsylvania border. She and her husband, Ron, have lived in Sandyston for 10 years.

Salanitri is dismayed by the "the course our country's on," and knowledgeably speaks about the history of increasing government influence on the economy — from the opening of the Federal Reserve during Woodrow Wilson's presidency nearly 100 years ago, through the New Deal policies of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, all the way to the massive stimulus packages passed by Congress and signed by former President George W. Bush and President Barack Obama in the latest recession. It's all a "slippery slope," Salanitri says.

### BIG PLANS AT MONTHLY MEETING

The Sussex County Tea Party attempts to reach into the past as much as into the future. A throng of 50 convened at the monthly meeting at the Sparta Ambulance Squad headquarters last week. There was some argument over the grammar and wording of their still-incomplete bylaws, and the meeting ran later than planned, but some big plans were discussed nonetheless. The membership talked about descending upon Trenton on April 15 — Tax Day — to demand an across-the-board



RoseAnn Salanitri, left, leads a Tea Party meeting in the Sparta ambulance building. Also shown is Suzanne Kimble.

50 percent tax reduction, eliminating all programs not defensible within the original language and framework of the Constitution.

"Burn the papers — turn off Fox (News) — listen to each other," urged Adrienne Knobloch, of Byram. "Off your duffs; organize. We are going to start this beast," she concluded.

The speakers in the room evoked a pathos-driven parallel between the original American Revolution, and the coming "bona fide tax revolution" which would wrest the county back from the "ObamaNation Train."

"Get the tar and feathers ready — we're going to take this country back!" called Rich Masticiano, a member of the Tea Party's steering committee.

But Salanitri is the group's unquestionable leader. Her short recap of the recall against Menendez echoed

the Declaration of Independence in urging the other members to pledge their "lives, fortunes, and sacred honor" in their pursuit of wholesale change.

The recall effort against Menendez could effect nationwide politics, even potentially derailing the pending healthcare bill, Salanitri told the group.

"We're seeing history repeat itself," she said. "Whatever happens in Jersey will be like the shot heard 'round the world from Lexington... This could be the shot heard 'round the world."

### FANFARE AND WARFARE

Notoriety has followed the recall movement against Menendez — though the attention hasn't always been welcomed by Salanitri. While the court mulls over the argument allowing the committee to recall Menendez to simply begin its petition

drive, politics including racial accusations have swirled around the initiative. John Wisniewski, the chairman of the New Jersey Democratic Party, said last week that the recall committee is a group of "radical people who chose Menendez off of a list of Democrats because of the sound of his last name."

Salanitri calmly, but angrily, disagrees. Menendez was targeted because of his voting record on taxes — and because, unlike his octogenarian colleague Sen. Frank Lautenberg, he is likely to have a long legislative career representing Democratic-heavy New Jersey. The reason was tactical and not racial, she said.

"If anyone's got a hang-up about race, it's (Wisniewski)," she said. "Fortunately, I'm secure in the person I am."

Masticiano said Salanitri is the ideal leader for the

Sussex County Tea Party, in both her speaking prowess and her guidance of a still-loosely-knit group. She's a "people person," but she also has a steadfastness that inspires other members.

"I'm very impressed with her — she's the right person for the job," he said.

Ron Salanitri says his wife has always been "proactive" and "energetic," and is occasionally spurred by her convictions to lead others, such as when she helped found a local Christian high school. She is guided by her principles, he said.

"Somebody said, 'Evil prevails when good men do nothing,'" he said. "That apparently holds true for women, too."

For now, Menendez, Salanitri and the Tea Party will wait for the court's ruling whether the group can proceed with its petitions for the full 25 percent of the Garden State's voting rolls, according to Daniel Silberstein, the lawyer for the recall committee. However, the battle could later become the latest variety on the age-old fight in the United States: that of the states' rights. New Jersey's constitution allows for recall of officials, while the federal constitution is arguably silent on the topic.

On the Web, lists of New Jersey Tea Party-affiliated groups numbers 30 — but multiplies almost daily. The "grassroots" groups of self-described "patriots" are apparently just getting off the ground, and coordinating over the Internet.

Salanitri says the Tea Party and its nationwide cooperation with Americans for Prosperity and commentator Glenn Beck's 9-12 Project will eventually mean hope — and a new voice.

### HAMBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT ST. BALDRICK'S FUND-RAISER



Photos by Amy Paterson/New Jersey Herald

**ABOVE:** Rick Vander Ploeg, center, and his sons, Patrick, 9, left, and R.J., 12, had their heads shaved in a fund-raiser for St. Baldrick's Foundation. Nicole Hand, left, Jill Space and Kim Smith provide the haircuts. **BELOW:** Kim Smith creates a Mohawk for Dan Vanderberg, of the Sussex Fire Department

### Shaving for a cause

The Hamburg Fire Department celebrated its third annual St. Baldrick's Day fund-raiser Saturday, where brave community members of both sexes agree to shave their heads as a way to raise money for childhood cancer.

Jacquelyne Shane, one of the organizers, said about 170 community members attended this year, including four women who shaved their heads completely, and six who cut at least 10 inches from their hair to donate to Locks of Love.

In previous years, the Hamburg event has raised about \$10,000 for cancer research, but this year Shane expects that number to be closer to \$20,000.



# Hospital fund-raiser features celebrity chefs Ray and Burke

### Herald Staff Report

Celebrity chefs Rachael Ray and David Burke will be featured guests at this year's An Evening of Wine and Roses, a fund-raising event to support Newton Memorial Hospital Foundation's 2010 Annual Giving Program.

Ray hosts a syndicated television show and is author of several popular cookbooks including "30-Minute Meals" and numerous variations of the 30-minute theme, and "Rachael Ray's Best Eats in Town on \$40 a Day."

She is also involved with several charitable efforts including Yum-O!, an initiative to help children eat healthier; and Rachael's Rescue, a charity for at-risk animals funded in part by Rachael Ray Nutrish, her line of pet foods.

Ray's appearance at the Wine and Roses event is the result of an invitation extended by RoNetco Supermarkets Inc., the grand event sponsor, according to a hospital spokesman.

Burke has also published cookbooks and operates restaurants throughout the country. He appeared on the second season of the American-television cooking show, Iron Chef America and will compete later this year against 14 other world-renowned chefs on Top Chef Masters, a reality show on Bravo.

In 2009, Burke was inducted into the "Who's Who of Food & Beverage in Amer-

ica" by the James Beard Foundation, won the distinctive Menu Masters award from nation's



**RAY**  
To attend Wine and Roses after party



**BURKE**  
Featured guest in VIP room

Restaurant News as one of the nation's most celebrated innovators and was presented the "Contribution to American Cuisine Award" at the 2009 Star Chefs Congress. Among his creations are Pastrami Salmon (now available at Perona Farms) and flavored oils. He also developed GourmetPops, ready-to-serve cocktail lollipops and Flavor-Transfer Spice Sheets and Flavorsprays, both designed to eliminate fat while keeping the flavor.

This is the fourth consecutive year that a celebrity chef will attend An Evening of Wine & Roses. The event will be held Thursday, March 25 at Morris County Crossroads Corporate Center in Mount Olive.

Burke will be the featured guest at Wine and Roses exclusive VIP room. Ray will attend this year's event in the equally exclusive Wine and Roses after party.

"We've been so fortunate to welcome so many high-caliber celebrity chefs to this

important event," said Megan Sandow, Newton Memorial Hospital vice president of development.

"This year is no different."

Foundation board chairman Mark Avondoglio said, "An Evening of Wine and Roses continues to grow and develop each year as demonstrated by the increased number of vendors and attendees, the venue changes and the caliber of our celebrity appearances, which is always strong."

The event includes opportunities to win a variety of prizes, including a trip for two to San Francisco and a \$1,000-per-ticket contest to win a Mercedes E350C, one of the event's most entertaining aspects.

Tickets cost \$125 per person; VIP-room tickets are \$200 per person or \$350 per couple. Call the Newton Memorial Hospital Foundation office at (973) 579-8309 for more information.

Proceeds raised from the event supports capital equipment, technology, programs and services at Newton Memorial Hospital.

# Getting a change of venue not easy to do

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The furor about whether to try Khalid Sheik Mohammad — the self-professed mastermind of the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001 — in a Manhattan courtroom reached a feverish pitch in recent weeks, but battles over venue are consistently fought in courtrooms closer to home.

It's not uncommon for defendants in the criminal courts of Sussex County to ask for a trial in another county, citing undue publicity in the local papers or a perceived bias based on demographics.

The success rate of these requests is limited. In fact, the most publicized Sussex County defendants in recent

memory — a pair of teenagers found guilty of murdering two pizza delivery men in Franklin in 1997 — were tried in Sussex County.

However, the second penalty phase for one of them, Thomas Koskovich, was moved to Morris County in 2001 to expedite jury selection after the state Supreme Court remanded the case based on judicial errors in the first penalty phase.

Notable cases that attracted nationwide attention have been shipped out to other venues, for instance Timothy McVeigh was tried in the U.S. District Court in Denver for the Oklahoma City bombing, and the trial of Los Angeles police officers involved in the Rodney King beating was held in a neighboring county.



A bi-weekly roundup of news and tidbits from the Sussex County legal community.

But most cases are not as high-profile, and publicity related issues can be addressed in the series of questioning, or *voir dire*, of potential jurors by the trial judge.

"Although there may be some pre-trial publicity, that doesn't mean you can't find an adequate number of jurors who haven't heard about it or can put what

they've heard aside and serve fairly," Sussex County Prosecutor David Weaver said.

Defendants are usually tried in the jurisdiction where alleged offenses occurred in the interest of judicial economy and convenience — litigants and witnesses don't have to travel as far, etc. — and the intangible desire to administer justice on the home front.

"You could say the local community has an interest in vindicating its rights," said John Williams, an attorney in Hamburg for Gruber, Collabella, Liuzza and Williams.

Although the standard is too high for many requests, a change of venue may be granted through a motion

called "forum non conveniens," in which another venue may be more suitable even though the current venue is proper.

Williams noted another, "unstated" reason some litigants ask for a change of scene.

"People are judge-shopping," he said. "You will see that."

In January, the New Jersey Supreme Court issued an opinion that will ostensibly prompt changes of venue among the state's 528 municipal courts.

In *State of New Jersey vs. McCabe*, the court issued a bright-line rule ordering part-time municipal court judges to recuse themselves whenever the judge and a lawyer for a party are adver-

saries in another open, unresolved case.

Judges must "avoid not only actual conflicts but also the appearance of impropriety to promote the public's trust," the court said. Because most municipal courts rely on one judge, a recusal often prompts a change of venue.

The court said the rule should apply to prior, closed cases as well, if there was evidence of acrimony or bad blood between judge-as-lawyer and the attorney.

Williams said the issue does not come up often in Sussex County, because its part-time municipal judges split their time among several courts; also, any private practice they have time for is restricted by court rules.