

THE SECOND FIFTY YEARS

The start of the second fifty years found the Independent Party in total control of village government in the Village of Depew. The 1945 and 1946 elections found no opposition to the entrenched Independent Party in the village elections.

As the Depew Village election approached in 1947, Mayor Walter Szyperski, now completing his second term in office, headed the Independent Party Ticket. Running with him were John Murawski, Cornelius Pfohl and Theodore Nelson up for re-election as Trustees.

Opposing them were the new Progressive Party candidates, with Joseph (Joe Lesky) Lewandowski the mayoral candidate. T. Allan Hutchinson, Paul Senko, Jr., and Joseph A. Paluszak, ex-servicemen were seeking their first political office. Joseph Lewandowski also known about the village, as “Joe Face” was a veteran of the political wars in the village.

Tuesday, April 15th, Election Day in the village returned Mayor Walter Szyperski to office for another term. He totaled 1,245 votes to his opponent’s 1,063 votes.

The Mayor, however, was the only one of the Independent Party candidates to be returned to office. His three running mates, Theodore Nelson, Cornelius Pfohl and John Murawski being defeated in the contest for Trustees by the Progressive Party candidates, T. Allan Hutchinson with 1,184 vote, Paul Senko, Jr., with 1,215 vote and Joseph A. Paluszak polling 1,233 vote. Nelson, Pfohl and Murawski drew 1,095, 1,090 and 1,054 votes respectively.

With the three ex-servicemen taking office, the Independent Party still maintained a 4 to 3 majority on the Village Board.

The 1948 village election seen the upstart Progressive Party elect two of its Trustee candidates giving the Progressives a 5 to 2 majority on the Village Board. Incumbent Trustee Michael Swierat was the only Independent candidate to be returned to office. He polled a high vote of 1,220 to defeat Raymond F. Langraf of the Progressive ticket who polled 1,166 votes.

Former Depew Fire Chief John Meister and Edwin Kamela polled 1,217 and 1,175 votes respectively narrowly defeating the incumbents Albert Lux and John F. Bauer who polled 1,171 and 1,170 votes. The extremely small margin in the latter contest left the results open to question until the official canvass of the vote was held.

In reporting on the Depew Village election, the Lancaster Enterprise wrote, “It is understood that there will be some changes made in Depew Village affairs, shortly after the new majority takes over”.

The March 25, 1948 edition of the Lancaster Enterprise carried a story softening their statement concerning possible changes in village government in the Village of Depew.

Last week in reporting the results of the Progressive Party victory in Depew, We said, “It is understood that there will be some changes in Depew Village affairs, shortly after the new majority takes office”.

The statement was made merely as a facetious observation not a prediction of things to come. We all know that changes in politics sometimes result in sweeping changes in employed personnel. We all know too, that the present Village of Depew officeholders have done a splendid job in the past decade. We refer specifically to Superintendent of

Streets William Gonglewski, Village Clerk Albert Simbritz and Deputy Clerk Anthony Kreiger.

These men have performed their duties with honesty and thoroughness and it would be unfortunate if the training, ability and experience they have acquired through the years of hard work were lost through some thoughtless political gesture.

The following week, the Lancaster Enterprise carried the story that at Monday April 5th re-organization meeting of the Depew Village Board that Town of Lancaster Attorney Robert J. Dobbins would be named as Village Attorney for Depew. Mr. Dobbins will replace Harold J. Kelley who had served in that position as Village Attorney for the past 15 years.

Lucian A. Ferbet will be given the post of Village Clerk. He is presently a student at Canisius College. During the war he served as a Naval Aviation Cadet. He will replace Albert Simbritz who held the post for 15 years.

It was also reported that the posts of the Collector and Incinerator Plant Caretaker, held by W. Pierce English and J. Albert Hahn would be abolished.

Successors for Public Works Superintendent William Gonglewski and Treasurer Arthur Prestine have not been determined. It has also been hinted that the post of Deputy Village Clerk, held by Anthony Kreiger, may also be abolished.

Immediately after the calling of the roll and the appointment of a Temporary Clerk at the April 5th re-organization meeting, Trustee Joseph Paluszak offered the following declaration of policies and moved that they be incorporated into the minutes of the meeting.

“ We are entering into a new era in village government. The future progress of Depew has been placed into the hands of a new administration. The voters of Depew have expressed their choice. They weighed the issues, and by their vote have placed their village government into the hands of a new administration. This new administration is holding its organization meeting at this time. Consistent with their endorsement, by majority vote, of the policies of the new administration, we are going forward in the carrying out of these policies. We are going to carry out all of our pledges. We are going to exert every effort to carry out the responsibility of administering the affairs of this splendid community, in an efficient, planned and effective manner. We are going to use our various abilities to work and strive for the future. We shall strive to render proper and efficient service and apply more courtesy and less politics to village government. We are going to carry out the wishes of the people as expressed by their majority vote. We are going to abolish all jobs, which were pledged to be abolished. We are severing all connections with the former administration, because their kind of administration has been rejected by the people's vote. We are going to change many of their policies and must do so regardless of individuals, regardless of minority demands, regardless of their supposed irreplaceability or personalities. After careful consideration and deliberation, we are going to replace existing offices by men as qualified or more qualified for the various positions. Of course we recognize that perhaps under the former administration certain individuals appeared outstanding or unusually adept, but this was solely due to the fact that they were forced to do the work of others who perhaps were not so conscientious about fulfilling their duties. We feel no responsibility in the matter. Every officer who has ever served in a village capacity has possessed some unusual qualifications. Everyone has contributed something in the progress. But there has never been a time in the 53-year history of our

village, that qualified or better-qualified men did not replace those officers who were removed. We are going forward and in order to carry out our pledges to the people who elected us assure the progress of the village. In our best judgment we find it necessary to sever all connections with the former administration, its policies, officers, and influences. Personal feelings, personalities, good fellowship, must give way to community good, to make progress and must be consistent with the wishes of the expressed desires of the majority of the voters.”

At the re-organization meeting Robert J. Dobbins and Lucien Ferbet were appointed as predicted. Joseph Lewandowski who was defeated in the 1947 mayoral race was appointed as Village Treasurer. Alexander Utecht, former Village Justice and Village President, was named Superintendent of the Department of Public Works. Progressive Party faithful filled several other positions.

The positions of Deputy Village Clerk, Back-Tax Collector and Caretaker of the Incinerator were found to be unnecessary and a waste of public money and consistent with the prescribed policy of this administration were abolished.

A resolution was unanimously passed which ordered the Village Attorney to investigate the Civil Service status, if any, and the Veteran’s and Firemen’s rights, if any, of the appointees whose services are being terminated through abolishing of the various positions or any other reason and to present the findings to the Board at the next regular meeting. The resolution went on to resolve further, that, where any such employee possesses any of the aforementioned rights or privileges, that his service be transferred to the Streets Department where he shall fulfill the duties assigned him by the Superintendent of Public Works.

The villages of Western New York were watching with keen interest the re-organization meeting of the Village of Depew. It was thought that the changes that were expected to be made by the new majority would become a test case for the village employees Civil Service Act that was passed in 1943.

Under the existing act at that time certain employees including the Superintendent of Public Works, Caretaker of Disposal Plants, water meter readers, clerks, health nurses and labor foremen could not be indiscriminately tossed out of office except on proven charges of misconduct or incompetence. In that emergency, their offices could be filled only through competitive exams.

Non-competitive classes, including motor equipment operators, grader operators, and snow plow operators and other skilled workmen could not be let go unless charges of misconduct or incompetence were preferred against them.

During the war years, when war plants and allied industries were offering high cost-plus wages to unskilled workers, including women and teenagers, the only incentive to keep low waged village employees to remain at their low-waged jobs was the future assurance of Civil Service protection.

Thus, the eyes of the Western New York world of village employees were trained on the Depew Village Board re-organization meeting of April 5th, to see what the outcome of the expected job changes would be.

The 1949 election in the Village of Depew was a three-cornered race in that there were three tickets on the ballot. Incumbent Mayor Walter Szyperski headed the Independent Party ticket with his running mates Casimer Pawlicki, Edward Gangloff and

Cornelius Pfohl the Trustee Candidates. Casimer Dworzanowski was the candidate for Village Justice

The mayoral candidate heading the Progressive Party ticket was Clemens (Chief) Miller with his running mates Berne D. Wooley, Chester C. Flick and Orville L. Sharpe the Trustee candidates. Joseph A. Paluszak was the candidate for Village Justice.

The Laborite Party was the third party with the slate headed by Richard Quiram the candidate for Mayor. Other candidates for the Trustee position were Edward Dombrowski, Anthony DiStefano and Remigjus R. Read. Robert J. Dobbins rounded out the slate as the candidate for Village Justice.

Mayor Walter Szyperski polled 1,248 votes to 1,141 for Clemens Miller. It appeared that the 254 votes given to Laborite Party candidate Richard Quiram aided the re-election of Mayor Szyperski; in fact the three Laborite candidates aided the Independent Party to also elect its three Trustee candidates.

The three winning Independent Party candidates for Trustee assured that the Independent party would regain control of the Village Board and Casimer Dworzanowski would continue as Village Justice handily defeating his two opponents.

The winning party was said to have had 81 cars carrying voters to the polls.

Following the election the only major change was the appointment of Harold P. Kelly as Village Attorney. The Treasurer and Village Clerk would remain the same as when appointed in 1948 since the appointment was for a two-year term, however, Village Clerk Lucien Ferbet would resign effective December 31, 1949 and Anthony Kreiger was appointed to fill Mr. Ferbert's un-expired term.

There were three tickets entered in the field in the election in 1950 in the Village of Depew. Candidates of the three parties would contend for three Trustee seats in the election set for Tuesday March 21st St. Patrick's Day. The three who total the highest plurality of the general vote will be elected.

The three Independent Party candidates are, John Kocialski, Production Manager at the Lancaster Malleable & Steel Company; Harry J. Shone, an Electrician with the New York Central Railroad and Michael Rusinek who is with the Maintenance Department at the Buffalo Batt & Felt Company.

Progressive Party candidates are Chester C. Flick, with Podsiadlo's Food Market, Edward Szalasny employed at the Westinghouse Corporation and Harry Adamczyk, a Foreman at the Symington-Gould Plant.

Representing the Community Party is Brownie J. Amborski, a Quaker Oats employee, Frank Filipiak with the Sikes Company of Buffalo and Richard Brandenberger employed with the National Battery.

All of the Independent Party candidates were victorious giving total control of village government to the party. There were 3,094 ballots cast for the Trustee candidates.

In the village election in 1951, two parties filed nominating petitions with the Independent Party slate headed by incumbent Mayor Walter Szyperski with his running mates Trustees Cornelius Pfohl, Casimer Pawlicki and Edward Gangloff. They were opposed by the Progressive Party candidate for Mayor, Thaddeus Jakubowski, Trustee candidates John Kotz, Richard Brandenberger and Ignatius Muszocki. Running independently with no party backing was Edward (Eddie Flowers) Kwiatkowski, a candidate for one of the Trustee positions.

The entire slate headed by Mayor Walter Szyperski was swept back in office as the Independent Party continued to control village government.

Shortly after the election Trustee Casimer Pawlicki died of an apparent heart attack while employed by the Depew Paving Company at a job site in Niagara Falls. Following Trustee Pawlicki's untimely death, Frank D. Lipuma was appointed to fill the open seat on the board on June 18, 1951. Mr. Lipuma would then have to stand for election the following spring to fill the un-expired 1 year term left vacant by Mr. Pawlicki's death.

In 1952 with the annual election to be held on March 18th, the Independent Party endorsed the incumbent slate of Trustees including Harry Shone, John Kocialski, Michael Rusinek and Frank D. Lipuma for re-election.

The Progressive and Liberty Parties endorsed a slate of candidates, which included John Kotz, Thaddeus Jakubowski, Sidney Lewis and John Domino, a brash 45 year- old businessman. When asked to put his hat in the ring by then party chairman, Iggy Muszocki, Domino declared, " We're in like Flynn" when he was nominated by the party to be one of their candidates for a Trustee position.

In what was described as a surprise upset, John Domino with 1,249 votes defeated Harry J. Shone with 1,020 votes in Tuesday's election for members of the Board of Trustees in the Village of Depew. The three other Independent Part candidates seeking re-election were all returned to office.

They were John Kocialski who tallied 1,280 votes; Michael Rusinek, 1,213 vote and Frank D. LiPuma who ran for the un-expired one-year term received 1,189 votes. Sidney Lewis who opposed Mr. LiPuma received 1,080.

In 1953, with long time Mayor Walter Szyperski, unbeaten in twenty years of Depew campaigning, retiring from office, the Independent Party nominated Trustee John Kocialski to be their candidate for Mayor. Kocialski was also endorsed by the Protective Party. The Progressive Party, under party Chairman Joseph (Joe Mac) McPartlin, would endorse former Trustee and Independent Party member Michael Swierat as their candidate for Mayor. The Liberty Party also endorsed Swierat.

The Independent/Protective coalition would endorse incumbent Trustees Edward Gangloff, Cornelius Pfohl and Frank D. LiPuma for re-election. Casimer Dworzanowski current Village Justice was also endorsed for re-election.

The rest of the slate endorsed for the Trustee slots by the Progressive/Liberty coalition were Matthew Rzepka, Frank Niemira and Henry Wienckowski. George Matesz was the candidate for Village Justice.

The majority of the contests in the Village of Depew election were won by the candidates endorsed by the Independent/ Protective Parties. They captured the Mayor's post, two Trustee seats as well as the office of Village Justice.

The lone candidate endorsed by the Progressive/Liberty Parties, Henry Wienckowski was victorious and would now be joining Trustee John Domino on the board while the Independent Party would hold a majority by a 5 to 2 edge.

In 1954, three Trustees were to be elected in the annual election. The former Progressive Party was now reformed and named the Good Government Party and would present a slate headed by incumbent Trustee John Domino with his running mates Frank Zak and Joseph Natalzia.

The Independent Party would nominate incumbents Michael Rusinek and Norman Gangloff for re-election. They would be joined on the slate by Michael Lewandowski who had previously served on the Depew Board of Education.

Village of Depew voters again returned two of the three Independent Party candidates to office. Michael Rusinek with 1,125 votes was returned to office and was joined by newcomer Michael Lewandowski who tallied 1,053 votes. The Good Government Party candidate for re-election, John Domino, however, was high vote getter, polling 1,207 votes. The other incumbent Trustee Norman Gangloff failed in his bid to get re-elected, however, the Independent Party would still maintain their 5 to 2 advantage.

The 1955 race for Mayor would pit Trustee John Domino of the Good Government Party against the incumbent Mayor John Kocialski endorsed by the Independent and Best Government Parties and the Citizen's Party candidate Harry J. Shone.

The Independent Party would present a slate for the trustee's position by endorsing incumbents Frank LiPuma, Cornelius Pfohl and newcomer Edward (Watch Your Hat & Coat) Wojtkowiak. The Best Government Party filed a slate of candidates, which included the candidates of the Independent Party thus giving the controlling Independent Party two lines. The Citizen's Party, a third party would present a slate, which included Edward Kwiatkowski, William Muhlenbeck and Michael Marcezin as Trustee candidates.

John Domino would defeat the incumbent Mayor John Kocialski by a scant seven votes, 1,232 to 1,225 with Citizen's Party candidate Harry Shone polling 306 votes. Incumbent Independent Party Trustee Frank D. LiPuma was re-elected along with newcomer Edward Wojtkowiak and incumbent Trustee Henry Wienckowski of the Good Government Party was also re-elected. The Independent Party would continue to hold the majority on the board by a 5 to 2 margin. Norman Gangloff would be appointed by the ruling Independent Party, to fill Mayor John Domino's un-expired term as a trustee until the next election.

Thaddeus J. Piusiensi replaced long time Village Attorney Harold P. Kelly and Anthony Krieger Village Clerk was retained along with Treasurer Stanley Lewek, who was appointed on October 1, 1952 replacing Richard J. Kubiak who had resigned, continuing as Village Treasurer.

In 1956 after a change in New York State Village Law, the Village of Depew adopted a resolution providing that the terms of office of the mayor and trustees of the Village of Depew shall be a four (4) year term.

It was intended that said elections would be held biennially in odd number years. The village election for village trustees, which was scheduled for Tuesday March 20th, 1956, would elect the trustees for a five- year term.

The Independent Party would present their slate for the 1956 election, which included all incumbent Trustees Michael Rusinek, Michael Lewandowski and Norman Gangloff. The three incumbents were victorious in defeating the Good Government candidates, Edward Wargala, Theodore Snios and Gazo Samok.

The 1957 election featured only one race and that was for Village Justice with incumbent Casimer Dworzanowski of the Independent Party defeating the Good Government Party candidate Ignatius Muszocki by a vote of 1,234 to 588.

The winners of the 1959 village election would be for a four year-term. The Independent Party would nominate a well-known local businessman and contractor Joseph Cerullo to oppose Incumbent Mayor John Domino of the Good Government Party. The Good Government Party would present a slate, which included incumbent Trustee Henry Wienckowski, Edward Wargala, who had been a losing trustee candidate in 1956 and newcomer Norman Kibler. The Independent Party candidates of incumbent Trustees Frank D. LiPuma and Edward Wojtkowiak and Peter Wojciechowski, President of Local 1630 AFL-CIO at the Symington-Gould Coupler Plant would oppose them.

Mayor John Domino would retain his seat by defeating Joseph Cerullo by a vote of 2,141 to 1,473. The three Good Government Party Trustee candidates defeated their Independent Party opponents quite handily. Incumbent Trustee Henry Wienckowski polled 2,099 votes, Edward Wargala, 2,011 and Norman Kibler 1,818. Peter Wojciechowski, Frank LiPuma and Edward Wojtkowiak polled 1,625, 1,510 and 1,446 votes in a losing cause. Now the Good Government Party would take control of the Village Board of Trustees by a slim 4 to 3 majority.

Thaddeus J. Piusiensi was named Village Attorney and at the insistence of Mayor John Domino, Anthony Kreiger was retained as Village Clerk and Treasurer John Kocialski was also retained over the objections of some of the members of the Good Government Party who wanted them replaced.

The 1961 election was a three-way contest with a new party, the Wide Horizons Party, led by local attorney Spiro Konst, joining the Independent and Good Government Parties, by nominating a full slate. Joseph S.Gizinski, Richard A.Gessert and the first female candidate to ever be nominated, Della Burgio Williams were the trustee candidates. The Wide Horizon Party and the Independent Party nominated Henry Wick for the Village Justice position to oppose Thaddeus J Piusiensi of the Good Government Party. Long time Village Justice Casimer Dworzanowski decided not to seek office after twenty-five years in office.

The Independent Party candidates were Frank D. LiPuma, Norman Gangloff and Michael Rusinek. They were opposed by the Good Government slate of John Potter, Joseph Natale and Bernard Elmore.

All of the Good Government Party candidates were successful in defeating the opposition thereby giving Mayor John Domino and the Good Government Party total control of the Village Board. This would be the first time since 1950 that any party other than the Independent Party would have total control of Depew Village government.

Judge Thaddeus J. Piusinski defeated Henry Wick by polling 2,105 votes to Mr. Wick's 1,873. John Potter led all of the trustee candidates by polling 1,951 votes, Joseph Natale, 1,786 and Bernard Elmore, 1,754 votes each.

Frank LiPuma, Michael Rusinek and Norman Gangloff polled 1,429, 1,408 and 1,335 votes each in a losing cause. The Wide Horizon candidates Joseph S. Gizinski, Richard A. Gessert and Della Burgio Williams polled 744, 631 and 616 votes respectively after running a low budget campaign.

With the election of former Village Attorney Thaddeus J. Piusiensi as Village Justice, Joseph J. Schultz was named to fill the position of Village Attorney.

Prior to the 1963 village election, speculation was that Mayor John Domino would have no opposition while the Independent Party was considering a slate for the office of trustees, which was now held totally by the Good Government Party. The Independent

Party nominated Robert Halicki, Eugene V. Ziembra and James V. LaMartina as the trustee candidates. A last minute nomination, John Schuler, a former Assistant Fire Chief was named to oppose Mayor John Domino. In addition to Mayor Domino, the incumbent Trustees Henry Wienckowski, Norman Kibler and Edward Wargala were nominated for re-election.

In the Mayor's race, incumbent Mayor John Domino bested challenger John Schuler by 179 votes, polling 1,849 votes to Schuler's 1,670. Independent Party candidate Eugene V. Ziembra, with a strong showing, polled the high vote, 1,904 to join incumbents Edward Wargala, 1,863 and Henry Wienckowski 1,801 votes on the Village Board, breaking the Good Government Parties total control which lasted for two years, however, the Good Government Party still held a 6 to 1 majority. Independent Party challenger James V. LaMartina polled 1,649 votes and incumbent Trustee Norman Kibler was a distant last with only 1,501 votes.

Incumbent Trustees John J. Potter, Bernard Elmore and Joseph Natale were seeking re-election in the 1965 Village election campaign. The Independent Party would present a slate that included Henry A. Podsiadlo, Leroy G. Arber and Fred Grzyb. In addition the Community Action Party would nominate community activists John J. Wade and Richard M. Hanlon as trustee candidates.

Attorney M. James Tizzano, the candidate of the Independent Party, opposed Incumbent Village Justice Thaddeus J. Piusiensi, endorsed by the Good Government Party with Piusiensi defeating Tizzano.

The three incumbent Trustees won re-election handily with John J. Potter polling 1,962 votes followed by Bernard Elmore with 1,957 and Joseph Natale 1,797 votes respectively.

Henry A. Podsiadlo polled 1,544, Leroy G. Arber, 1,521 and Fred Grzyb 1,271 votes each in a losing cause. Community Action Party candidates John J. Wade and Richard M. Hanlon polled 1,022 and 937 votes each. It appeared that the Community Action Party candidates and the 442 blank votes were instrumental in the sweep by the incumbent Good Government Party.

The mayoral race in 1967 would pit the incumbent Mayor John Domino, Good Government Party, against challenger Trustee Eugene V. Ziembra, of the Independent Party, who was serving the last year of his four year term having been elected in 1963. Joining Ziembra on the Independent Party slate were trustee candidates Leroy G. Arber, Chester F. Walker and Joseph C. Moser. The Good Government slate in addition to Mayor Domino included incumbent Trustees Henry Wienckowski and Edward Wargala and newcomer Richard J. Vanderlip.

In announcing the Good Government Party slate on February 23, 1969, Chairman John Kotz said, "This organization is extremely proud to present these candidates for the coming election. These men have in the past, given invaluable service to this great village of ours, and have proven without a doubt, they are worthy representatives of our community. They have worked extremely hard, far beyond their normal call of duty." The Depew Citizens Party would also endorse the Good Government Party slate when nominating petitions were filed.

Also on February 23rd, Michael Barone, Chairman of the Independent Party and Donald Braun, President of the Community Action League, jointly announced "an

unprecedented move in Depew's political history, by endorsing a single slate of candidates for mayor and village trustees."

Prior to the election, there apparently was some dissension within the ranks of the Good Government Party which some have speculated led to the defeat of Mayor John Domino by Trustee Eugene V. Ziembra in a close race which gave Ziembra 1,994 votes to Domino's 1,974 with Domino losing by 20 votes. It is interesting to note that there were 28 blank ballots in the mayoral race. The dissension allegedly stemmed from a power struggle within the party.

Prior to the election charges and counter-charges were hurled at each side in the local newspapers and literature handed out throughout the village. The Independent Party charged that "Bossism" was the issue with the incumbent Good Government Mayor and Trustees allegedly being controlled by Party Chairman John Kotz.

The primary target of the Good Government Party campaign was mayoral candidate Trustee Eugene V. Ziembra, a Trustee for the past four years. His attendance at Village Board meetings was targeted with Mr. Ziembra missing 30 evening meetings in the four-year period in which he served as Trustee.

Mayor John Domino and his running mates campaigned on the strength of their record with Mayor Domino completing 12 years in office as Mayor and having served 3 years prior as a Trustee.

Due to the closeness of the mayoral race, Mayor Domino asked for a re-count of the votes to be conducted by the Erie County Board of Elections. The re-count was held on Thursday March 23 rd at 9:30 A.M. at the village garage where the voting machines were impounded after the election. After the re-count, Eugene V. Ziembra was declared the winner with the vote count holding up.

Incumbent Trustee Henry Wienckowski lead all candidates with a total of 2,031 votes followed by Trustee Edward Wargala with 2,031 votes and Leroy G. Arber polling 2,004 votes in his second run for the trustee's position. Independent candidate Chester F. Walker polled 1,939 votes and his running mate Joseph C. Moser 1,813 votes. Losing Good Government candidate Richard J. Vanderlip polled 1,873 votes.

While the consequences were dire for the losing candidates, the election failed to stimulate an interested populace.

With approximately 8,000 residents qualified to participate in the election, less than 4,000 expressed an interest by taking the time to vote. The rainy weather and leaden skies may have deterred many from the election booths.

The administration of Mayor John Domino from 1955 to 1967 was an era of unprecedented growth in the Village of Depew. Residential growth was at its peak during this period.

Probably the highlight of commercial and industrial growth occurred with the relocation of the J.W. Clement Printing Plant from the City of Buffalo to the location on George Urban Boulevard in the T.C. Industrial Park. Along with the J. W. Clement facility other printing related facilities located in the T.C. Industrial Park, which all added to the tax base of the village.

A new Public Works Garage and Office was built in 1962. This was the first new public administrative building in Depew in 50 years.

The report of the Board of Fire Underwriters in 1962, which was extremely critical of the fire defenses of the Village of Depew, led to a complete modernization of the fire department.

Several new pieces of fire apparatus were purchased to replace aging and outdated apparatus along with much needed hose and new equipment was also purchased. Two brand new fire stations were built to replace the four existing and aging buildings. Matching funds were secured from the Federal Government to fund this project.

The outdated fire alarm system was completely re-built and a program of upgrading the water delivery system was undertaken which had not kept up with the new development in the village.

Mayor Domino was considered by many to be a reformer as he brought charges against the Chief of Police of the Depew Police Department for misconduct. After a trial heard by the Village Board and finding the Chief guilty, an appeal of the decision and his firing was made and the higher court ordered a re-trial.

The re-trial resulted in the same verdict being given, guilty. The appeal process was repeated and ended up in the New York State Supreme Court where the decision of the Village Board was upheld.

The Village Treasurer also came under Mayor Domino's fire that led to the dismissal of the Treasurer and restitution being made to the village by the bonding company for missing funds.

With the council chambers of the village hall packed for the re-organization meeting on April 3rd, newly elected Mayor Eugene Ziembra began his official duties by asking that his salary be cut from the proposed \$3,700 to \$3,000 per year.

Mayor Ziembra stated that he felt that the good will of the people is the proper guide for good government.

He asked that the board establish a liaison between village officials and Constitutional Convention delegates so they may be informed of measures affecting village government. He further was of the opinion that the Citizens Planning Committee should be re-activated and expanded to work with professional planners for the good of the village.

The new mayor asked all village employees to give a full measure for compensation received and appealed to all village residents to take an active part in village government, make their desires known and to serve the village when asked.

After only serving in office for three months and 24 days, Mayor Eugene V. Ziembra died in office from an apparent heart attack on July 24, 1967.

The death of Mayor Eugene V. Ziembra set off a controversy within the controlling Good Government Party. The alleged power struggle prior to the last election would now manifest itself in the naming of a candidate to replace the late Mayor Ziembra. Trustee Joseph Natale was selected to be the new Mayor. By virtue of Natale being named Mayor, he also became titular head of the Good Government Party, although long time Chairman John Kotz would remain as chairman but not for long.

Trustee Joseph Natale tendered his resignation as Village Trustee on July 31, 1967 and was appointed Mayor. To fill Natale's un-expired term as Trustee, Richard J. Vanderlip, who had been defeated in his quest for the Trustee's seat in March, was appointed. A special election would be held in March 1968 to fill the un-expired term of Mayor Eugene V. Ziembra and Trustee Joseph Natale.

After the naming of Joseph Natale as Mayor, Good Government Party Chairman John Kotz resigned his position after 11 years and along with former Mayor John Domino, Trustees Edward Wargala and John Potter and with other dissident members resigned from the party and would form a new party, the Progressive Party, to offer a slate for the special election to be held in 1968.

The special election in March 1968 would now have three parties with slates of candidates. The Good Government Party, under new party Chairman Ronald Kibler, would nominate incumbent Mayor Joseph Natale and Norman Downey would be the Trustee candidate. The Independent Party would nominate Leroy G. Arber for Mayor and James J. Mahoney was the Trustee candidate. The Progressive Party nominated Trustee Edward Wargala as the Mayoral candidate and Richard J. Kubiak as the Trustee candidate.

The two Good Government candidates Mayor Joseph Natale and trustee candidate Norman Downey were elected quite handily.

At the re-organization meeting of the Village Board on April 1, 1968, a resolution was passed, subject to a permissive referendum, which said that the term of office of the Village Clerk and Village Treasurer, shall be extended to the number of years of the term of office of the Mayor now in office; to wit April 1, 1971 and that thereafter the terms of the Village Clerk and Village Treasurer shall be filled for (4) four years, commencing at the expiration of the term of office the Clerk and Treasurer in office at the time of this resolution.

Following the special election of 1968, which seen the emergence of the Progressive Party, with many former Good Government Party members in the fold, a merger of the Progressive Party with the old line Independent Party was proposed and after approval by both parties, the Independent-Progressive Party was formed.

On January 08, 1969, Trustee Edward S. Wargala died unexpectedly of a heart attack. Trustee Wargala had left the Good Government Party to run for Mayor in the special election of 1968. Following Trustee Wargala's death, there developed a controversy as to the appointment of someone to fill the seat until the election in March. After much bickering, with the Good Government Party in the majority, the appointment of Alan E. Young was made on February 02, 1969, after Trustee John Potter had proposed the name of Irving Hahn but could not get a second to his motion.

The 1969 election was slated to elect three trustees for a four-year term and a trustee for two years of the un-expired term of the late Trustee Edward S. Wargala.

The Good Government Party nominated a slate, for the four-year term, of incumbents Trustee Norman Downey and Bernard Elmore and a newcomer Gerald Prawel. Trustee Alan E. Young, appointed on February 2nd, was the candidate for the two-year term. Joseph J. Schultz was the Good Government Party candidate for Village Justice opposing the incumbent Judge Thaddeus J. Piusinski endorsed by the Independent-Progressive Party.

The Good Government slate was also given the endorsement of the Depew Action League. Chairman Ford Shaw of the Depew Action League stated "that we are very proud to co-endorse this exceptional slate of candidates with the Good Government Party of Depew. These are men of proven ability, of high moral character, whose public conduct has been above reproach and who are a credit to our community."

The Independent-Progressive Party candidates for the four-year trustee term were incumbent Trustee John J. Potter with James Mahoney and Charles Pempsell. The candidate for the two-year term was Irving Hahn.

Trustees Leroy Arber and John Potter issued a call for united action on the part of the voters of Depew as the Independent-Progressive Party and the Community Action League of Depew announced the joint endorsements. Earl Schuler was Vice-chairman of the Community Action Party, Leonard Grzybowski, Chairman of the Progressive Party and Gerald Klier was Chairman of the Independent Party who formed a coalition and named John Kotz General Campaign Chairman for the upcoming election.

In their first test after the formation of the Independent-Progressive Party, the IPP pulled off a stunning victory by sweeping all of the contested seats led by Village Justice Thaddeus J. Piusinski who polled 2,686 votes to 1, 941 for challenger Joseph J. Schultz.

Incumbent Trustee John J. Potter who had 2,496 votes led the trustee candidates, followed by Charles C. Pempsell with 2,472 and James Mahoney with 2,464. Irving Hahn won the two-year seat with 2,440 votes over his opponent Alan E. Young who polled 2,053 votes.

The losing Good Government Party candidates Norman Downey, Bernard Elmore and Gerald Pravel polled 2,195, 2,132 and 2,34 votes respectively.

The IPP would now hold a 5 to 2 majority on the board with Mayor Joseph Natale and Trustee Henry Wienckowski of the Good Government Party in the minority. With their majority, the IPP would now appoint M. James Tizzano as Village Attorney along with several other positions, which now went to the party faithful.

Village Clerk Lyman Josker and Village Treasurer John Kocialski would retain their seats as a result of the resolution adopted in 1968, which extended the term of their appointment to that as the term of the mayor.

Following the election of 1969, Good Government Party Chairman Ronald L. Kibler resigned and Donald W. Jaques, who had been a committeeman and Vice-chairman was appointed as Chairman.

The 1971 election would see three slates of candidates nominated with petitions being filed by the Good Government Party, Independent-Progressive Party and a third party under the banner of the Depew Action Party.

The Good Government Party slate consisted of incumbents Mayor Joseph Natale, Trustee Henry Wienckowski, former Trustee Norman J. Downey and Chester F. Walker who had previously ran as a losing trustee candidate in 1967 under the banner of the Independent Party.

The Independent-Progressive Party presented a slate headed by Trustee John J. Potter as the mayoral candidate with incumbent Trustee Leroy G. Arber and trustee candidates Gerald J. Klier and Victor J. Przybyl.

Former Good Government Party trustee Bernard Elmore headed the Depew Action Party as the mayoral candidate with trustee candidates Malcom J. Francis, Joseph Budzinski and Theodore Kocialski.

After a spirited election campaign, John J. Potter won the mayoral race and the incumbent Trustees Henry Wienckowski, Norman J. Downey and Leroy G. Arber were returned to office.

At the re-organization meeting of the Village Board on April 5th, John J. Potter resigned from his Trustee's seat and Gerald J. Klier, a losing candidate in the recent

election was appointed by the majority Independent-Progressive Party to fill the seat vacated by Mayor Potter. Trustee Kleir would serve until March 1992 when he would have to stand for re-election.

The majority IPP named M. James Tizzano as Village Attorney, Gasper Aronica as Village Clerk and John Kocialski was re-appointed as Village Treasurer.

Mayor John J. Potter, “thanked the voters of the Village of Depew for their confidence in electing him as Mayor of this fine village and promised to uphold the traditions of his office with dedication, dignity and the respect that it represents and with the co-operation of the Village Board, the Mayor feels that we can realize the fulfillment of the goals of the Village of Depew”.

In the Special Village Election in 1972, incumbent Trustee Gerald J. Klier was nominated by the IPP, under party Chairman Joseph Ardino, for re-election to fill the one-year un-expired term of Mayor Potter. Stanley J. Wojcik, Good Government Party and Joseph Budzinski of the Concerned Citizens Party opposed him.

Trustee Klier easily defeated his two opponents with 1,584 votes to Wojcik’s 1,169 votes and Budzinski’s 131 votes. The IPP would continue to hold a 5 to 2 majority on the Village Board.

The 1973 village election featured the unopposed candidacy of incumbent Village Justice Thaddeus J. Piusinski and three trustee seats were up for election.

With incumbent Trustee Gerald Klier not seeking re-election as he was moving from the village, the Independent-Progressive Party nominated Charles C. Pempsell, Jr, James T. Mahoney and David E. Rodler as candidates. The Good Government Party presented a slate, which included Stanley J. Wojcik, Richard Gramza and Roger D. Paluszak.

Roger D. Paluszak led all trustee candidates by polling 1,658 votes; Stanley J. Wojcik had 1,625 votes and Charles C. Pempsell, Jr. had 1,612 votes. Richard Gramza polled 1,606 votes in a losing effort, as did James T. Mahoney with 1,553 and David E. Rodler with 1,388 votes.

With the election of Roger Paluszak and Stanley J. Wojcik, the Good Government Party now regained control of the Village Board by joining with the incumbent Trustees Henry Wienckowski and Norman Downey.

At the April 2nd re-organization meeting of the Village Board, Joseph J. Schultz was named as the Village Attorney, a post that he previously held when the Good Government Party was in power. Other party faithful were rewarded with the patronage jobs that were available. One of the appointments made was that of Leonard Rogers, brother-in-law of former Mayor Joseph Natale. Mr. Rogers was a partner with his brothers in Howard Builders, a firm that developed much of the area of the village, in the French Road section, in the 1960’s and early 1970’s.

On September 20, 1974, Mrs. Lillian Ansel was appointed Village Clerk at a special meeting of the Depew Village Board, to fill the un-expired term of former clerk, Gasper Aronica, the first woman to ever serve in that capacity in the Village of Depew.

Mrs. Ansel, who started work as a part time clerk in the clerk’s office in 1961 and had served as deputy clerk since 1971, has served under four different mayors including John Domino, Eugene V. Ziembra, Joseph Natale and the present Mayor John J. Potter.

In mid January 1975, Depew's Good Government Party announced the endorsement of Norman J. Downey for mayor to oppose incumbent Mayor John J. Potter in the March 18th village election.

Party Chairman Warren Jamison also announced the endorsement of Henry Wienckowski, Richard Gramza and Edward Gasiiecki for the office of trustee.

Downey, currently a Trustee on the Village Board, received the party's unanimous endorsement. He has served on the board for a total of five years.

Wienckowski, also a Trustee, is a 22- year veteran on the village board, while Gramza and Gasiiecki will be seeking their first terms. Gramza is a life long resident of Depew and Gasiiecki, is a former member of the Depew Zoning Board of Appeals and currently serves on the Village Planning Board.

In announcing the endorsements, Jamison said he felt the slate of candidates "is an ideal mix of experience and enthusiastic youth" offering an "excellent alternative" to the present village situation.

Incumbents, Mayor John J. Potter and Trustee Leroy Arber, headed the Independent-Progressive Party slate. Joining them on the slate were Fred Grzyb and Richard J. Kubiak who had served on the Depew Board of Education and also held the Village Treasurers position briefly.

"This is what politics is about, somebody has to win and somebody has to lose," said mayoral candidate Norman J. Downey when the final tallies of Tuesday's village election were announced.

His remarks summed up the action as the Depew Independent-Progressive Party swept the village elections in which the posts of mayor and three trusteeships were at stake.

Incumbent Mayor John J. Potter defeated Village Trustee Norman J. Downey by a vote of 2,593 to 1,809. Perhaps the biggest surprise of the election was the defeat of Trustee Henry Wienckowski, who with 2,137 votes was the biggest vote getter on the Good Government Party ticket.

Wienckowski, a veteran of village government, had served seven consecutive terms on the village board dating back to 1953.

The remainder of the victorious Independent-Progressive Party was Trustee Leroy G. Arber, who served on the board for eight years, with a total of 2,383 votes, Fred Grzyb, who garnered 2,207 votes, and Richard Kubiak with 2,342 votes.

The other losing candidates, Richard Gramza had 1,986 votes and Edward Gasiiecki had 1,909 votes.

Mayor Potter called the stunning victory a result of "super efforts on the part of the party workers" and he was "surprised and elated" at the party's sweep of the election.

The victory gives the Independent-Progressive Party an impressive 5 to 2 majority on the board. The two remaining Good Government members on the board are Roger Paluszak and Stanley J. Wojcik.

Voter turnout was heavy, with 17,366 votes being cast for the eight candidates. There was little doubt, though, as to the outcome of the mayoral race after the first few districts results were announced.

Downey carried seven of the 18 districts, most of them by a handful of votes. Potter carried the other 11 districts, many with a resounding majority.

Many observers expressed surprise at the domination of the Independent-Progressive Party in the election.

Police Chief Louis R. Wenzka, looking over the final results said, "I never thought Henry (Wienckowski) would get beaten. He's been around longer than most of us can remember."

Following the March 18th election the Depew Herald editorialized in part about the "Poor Voter Turnout" by stating that, "In the Village of Depew, where the election was touted as showing a "large voter turnout", less than 50 Percent of the 9,032 registered voters went to the polls. In that election 4,444 persons cast ballots.

In a Democracy we are supposedly committed to a government by the people, the majority of the people, but, if the voter turnout were any indication of our government, it would appear the majority doesn't care. If the situation weren't so pathetic, it would be laughable."

A ticket headed by experienced candidates was one of the prime factors in the Independent-Progressive Party's overwhelming victory in last week's village election said IPP Chairman John Kotz in a statement to the Depew Herald.

He said Mayor John Potter's lengthy tenure in office, 10 years as trustee and 4 years as mayor, worked to his advantage in the campaign against Norman J. Downey. Kotz commented that Downey, with 5 years experience on the board was a "relative newcomer."

Kotz said the election result was "an honest-to-goodness mandate" for his party and added the board is obligated to "re-evaluate the financial situation of the village."

Former Trustee Norman J. Downey, unsuccessful candidate for the office of Mayor, said although the election result was a severe blow, both personally and to his party, he plans to stay active in politics.

"It was like a bolt of lightning", he said, "but the party plans to continue and we will be meeting in the near future to regroup and map out our strategies."

He felt that his party might have suffered at the polls as a result of letters circulated blasting the party. "Among other things, we were labeled the "Bad Government Party." I hope that people don't believe everything they read, as "I believe we have been conscientious in our responsibility to the people of the village."

April 7, 1975 was the re-organization meeting of the village board. In a surprise move, Leonard Grzybowski who was serving as secretary of the Independent-Progressive Party and had been serving by appointment as Village Assessor replaced Village Treasurer Edward Pyc.

Pyc, later said he was "quite surprised" at hearing that he had been replaced and said that he had no prior knowledge of his ouster. He could not and/or would not offer a reason for his dismissal.

Henry J. Romanczak was named to succeed Grzybowski as Village Assessor and Joseph J. Schultz was renamed to his post as Village Attorney. A number of other positions were filled by party faithful, as is the case when there is a change in administration.

In the April 10th edition of the Depew Herald, an editorial appeared which stated that, "Today, more than ever before, the task of government is a complicated procedure, demanding the full time and attention of public officials. But, the community's elected

officials can't hope to find the solutions to complicated problems without the community's support.

All too often we tend to view government with concern only during elections. Once the election is over our concern diminishes. The problems, however, remain just as complicated and a lack of public input makes the solutions all the more difficult.

We urge total community support of our local governments and along with that support total involvement on the part of individuals as well as groups. This is our village. It needs your concern 12 months a year."

As the 1977 village election drew near, the Independent-Progressive Party was the first to announce their slate of candidates.

John Kotz, IPP Chairman, announced the slate in the February 17th issue of the Depew Herald. "The people we have running represent all sections of Depew," Kotz said in making the announcement. "They are people used to servicing Depew in the fire department, labor and judicial areas."

Trustee Charles C. Pempsell and Justice Thaddeus J. Piusiensi will seek re-election. Newcomers to the political scene, Harry Sulczewski and Florian Urbanski, will seek positions as trustee on the Village Board.

Charles C. Pempsell has been a village trustee for eight years, serving on various committees including the Police and Fire and Water Committee.

Pempsell has been a resident of the Village of Depew for the past 40 years. He graduated from Depew High School and St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute. He was employed in Depew until 1965, when he joined Streng Oldsmobile as assistant parts manager.

The trustee is a member of several clubs and fraternal organizations. He has been an active member of the Aetna Hose Company for the past 29 years.

Florian Urbanski, candidate for trustee is employed by the Houdaille Hydraulic Corporation of Buffalo. He attended Transfiguration School, Emerson Vocational and East High School.

Urbanski is the vice-president of the Houdaille Credit Union, an officer on the Bargaining Committee of the United Auto Workers Local 850 and recording secretary of the UAW Western New York Citizen Council. He is a member of the Polish American Labor Leaders and a Democratic committeeman in the 68th District. Urbanski is a former Democratic committeeman in the University District in Buffalo.

Harry Sulczewski, candidate for trustee has been employed by Pen-Truck lines for the last 20 years and is a member of the Teamsters Union. He has been a member of the Holy Name Society for 12 years, having served as an officer.

Sulczewski is a volunteer fireman for the Central Hose Co. No. 4, and has held the offices of lieutenant and captain, as well as heading the fund drive for the Depew Fire Department. He holds membership in the Polish Falcons Club in Depew and other organizations.

Thaddeus Piusiensi, 52, a life-long resident of the village, is seeking re-election to the position of police justice he has held for more than 16 years. He served as village attorney for six years prior to becoming police justice.

During his years of service to the board, Piusiensi received the Depew Citizen of the Year Award and later the Honorary Woman of the Year Award from the National Organization of Women.

Piusiensi, a WWII veteran, attended St. Augustine's Parochial School, Depew High School, Canisius College, New York University and the University of Buffalo Law School, where he obtained his Bachelor of Law and Doctor of Juris Prudence degrees.

The Good Government Party announced its slate of candidates on March 3rd. Incumbent Trustees Roger D. Paluszak and Stanley J. Wojcik were endorsed while former long time Trustee Henry Wienckowki would attempt a comeback to the political scene after a two-year absence due to his defeat in the 1975 election.

In making the announcement, Warren Jamieson, Party Chairman, said, "This slate of candidates represents a combination of experience, maturity and vigorous youth that has not previously been available to the Depew voters." The party did not endorse a candidate for Village Police Justice.

Roger D. Paluszak, who has served on the village board for the last four years, is a sales representative for Biel's Microfilm Corporation, and is active in various organizations including the Depew Hose Co. No. 1, the Polish Falcons Club of Depew, the New York State Conference of Mayors and Village Officials and the Erie County Volunteer Firemen's Association. He served in the US Navy during the Viet Nam War.

Stanley Wojcik, an Army Air Corps veteran of WWII, is employed by Trico Products Corporation as shipping clerk.

The incumbent Trustee is also a member of the Polish Falcons Club of Depew, the Fraternal Order of Eagles, Aerie 2692, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Twin Village Post 463.

Henry Wienckowski was first elected to the village board in 1953. The former Deputy Mayor is a member of Central Hose Co. No. 4 and had served the Depew Fire Department as an assistant fire chief for several years prior to joining the board in 1953.

Wienckowski also is a member of the Polish Falcons Club of Depew and the Fraternal Order of the Eagles, Aerie 2692. He is employed by the New York State Department of Transportation and is a member of the Civil Service Employees Union.

After the March 14th election, control of the Depew Village Board remained nearly unchanged. Henry Wienckowski unseated incumbent Trustee Roger D. Paluszak, but incumbent Trustee Charles C. Pempsell and Stanley J. Wojcik retained their seats on the board, and Police Justice Thaddeus J. Piusiensi, who ran unopposed, was also re-elected with 2,046 votes.

Politically, control did not shift since newly elected Trustee Henry Wienckowski and outgoing Trustee Paluszak are both members of the Good Government Party. Wienckowski will join Wojcik as the only Good Government Party members on the board. Control will still remain in the hands of the Independent-Progressive Party.

Incumbent Trustee Pempsell led all the candidates by garnering 1,684 votes with his running mates Florian Urbanski and Harry Sulczewski garnering 1,497 and 1,383 votes respectively. Wienckowski received 1,605 votes and Stanley Wojcik 1,560.

Trustee Richard Kubiak who had been elected to a trustee post in 1975, resigned from the post on August 1, 1978 and the majority Independent-Progressive Party appointed Florian Urbanski in his place on August 1, 1978.

The 1979 village election would feature the mayoral race as incumbent Independent-Progressive Mayor John J. Potter was seeking re-election along with incumbent Trustee Leroy G. Arber. Joining them on the IPP slate was newcomer James

S. Nusall and incumbent Trustee Florian Urbanski who had been appointed to fill the unexpired term of former Trustee Richard Kubiak.

The Good Government Party endorsed a slate that had Trustee Roger D. Paluszak opposing Mayor John Potter. Newcomers Donald E. Snios and Joan M. Priebe sought the trustee seats. Incumbent Trustee Fred Grzyb who had been elected in 1975 under the IPP banner now had the endorsement of the Good Government Party after leaving the IPP Party. August H. Hein was an independent candidate in the mayoral contest.

In the hotly contested mayoral race, Roger D. Paluszak outpolled incumbent Mayor John J Potter by 127 votes with Paluszak having 1,673 votes, Mayor Potter, 1,546 votes and Mr. Hein ran a distant third with 788 voted which probably helped Paluszak gain the edge.

All of the Good Government Party candidates were victorious giving the Good Government party a clean sweep. The first woman to ever hold elective office in the Village of Depew, Joan Priebe polled a high 2,114 vote, followed by Fred Grzyb with 2,114 votes and Donald E. Snios with 1,917 votes. They would join with Trustee Henry Wienckowski and give the Good Government Party a 6 to 1 majority with Trustee Charles Pempsell, Jr. the lone representative of the Independent-Progressive Party.

James S. Nusall led the losing candidates with 1,743 votes, incumbent Trustee Florian Urbanski, 1,703 and incumbent Trustee Leroy Arber garnered 1,651 votes after having served for 12 years as a trustee.

During the administration of Mayor John J. Potter, the ice skating rink was constructed with funding provided in part by the Federal government and the expansion of Firemen's Park was accomplished by the purchase of additional land.

Perhaps the greatest accomplishment of the administration was the purchase of the former parochial school and convent from St. Augustine's Parish, which was converted into the current village hall and police station, replacing the old and over-crowded building on Terrace Boulevard.

December 15, 1980 seen the end of an era in Depew politics when incumbent Trustee Henry Wienckowski tendered his resignation from the Board of Trustees after serving on the board for a total of 25 years, longer than anyone in the history of the village.

With the Good Government Party holding the majority on the Village Board, Irene Piusiński was appointed on January 03, 1981 to fill the unexpired term of former Trustee Henry Wienckowski.

The Good Government Party endorsed Mrs. Piusiński for re-election in the March 1981 election. Joining her on the slate were incumbent Trustee Stanley J. Wojcik, and newcomer Matthew Filipowicz. Incumbent Village Justice Edward A. Gasiński was endorsed to try and retain the Village Justice seat to which he had been appointed to fill the unexpired term of the late Village Justice Thaddeus J. Piusiński, who had died in office in July 1980. The majority Good Government Village Board appointed Gasiński to the position on September 23, 1980.

The Independent-Progressive Party endorsed incumbent Trustees Florian Urbanski and Charles C. Pempsell for re-election and added newcomer Dennis H. Gabryszak as the 3rd trustee candidate. A local attorney, Henry S. Wick was endorsed for the Village Justice's seat. Mr. Wick had previously ran for Village Justice in 1961 having been

endorsed by the New Horizons and Independent Parties in a losing cause to Justice Thaddeus J. Piusinski.

The Independent-Progressive Party swept the 1981 election with Trustee Charles C. Pempsell garnering 1,963 votes, Dennis H. Gabryszak with 1,832 votes and Florian Urbanski 1,828 votes. Henry S. Wick received 1,920 votes to Edward A. Gasiiecki's 1,116 votes in the race for Village Justice.

Incumbent Trustee Stanley J. Wojcik received 1,148 votes, Irene J. Piusinski, 1,111 and Matthew Filipowicz, 1,063 votes. However, the Good Government Party was still in the majority following the election.

In early January, as the 1983 village election was approaching, Depew Mayor Roger Paluszak and Trustees Donald Snios and Joan Priebe will receive the endorsement of the Good Government Party for re-election to their positions, according to a high party source reporting to the Depew Herald.

Trustee Fred Grzyb, the fourth Good Government Party member on the village board, has declined to run for re-election, A Depew Village Board member for eight years, he cited a limited amount of free time for his decision.

The four seats held by the board members will be at stake in the Depew election on March 15th.

It was reported that the Good Government Party members would be meeting, with party Chairman Edwin Gates, at the Polish Falcon's Club to choose their candidates on Sunday, January 9th.

Donald Massara, owner of the Massara Agency and Mark Barszcz were seeking the party's endorsement for a trustee candidacy at the meeting. Barszcz was serving as Chairman of the Village of Depew Planning Board. Mayor Paluszak was unopposed for re-election within the party.

The January 20th edition of the Herald carried the announcement of the Independent-Progressive Party candidates by party Chairman John Kotz.

The party named former Depew Fire Chief Arthur J. Domino as candidate for Mayor. Domino, a lifelong resident of Depew, the son of former Depew Mayor John Domino.

The three candidates endorsed for trustees are Norman J. Downey, Michael J. Rusinek and Robert C. Meyer.

Domino was a 1953 graduate of Depew High School and the General Motors Institute, Flint, Michigan. He has been employed at Dresser Industries for 26 years as a technician in the Engineering Test Department, and is a member of Local 5875 U.S.W.A., having served four years as a safety committeeman. A 25-year member of the Depew Hook & Ladder Co. No. 1, Domino had served as Captain for eight years, Assistant Fire Chief for eight years and Chief of the Depew Fire Department for two years.

Domino serves as disaster coordinator for the Village of Depew and is a member of the Erie County Disaster Preparedness Advisory Board representing the Erie County Fire Services Council.

Domino is a former member of the Lancaster-Depew Jaycees, past president of the Depew Rod and Gun Club, past president of the Lancaster Fire Council, a member of the Village of Depew Diamond Jubilee Committee and a member of the Legislative

Committee of the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs, serving as chairman for three years.

Robert C. Meyer, a graduate of Bryant and Stratton Business Institute; he is an accountant. A self-employed businessman since 1976, Meyers owns and operates RCM Services, a public accounting firm. He also owns and directs operations for the investment firm, Individual Money Investors. He is also a NYS licensed insurance broker and notary public.

His prior positions include director of centralized accounting for a multi-million dollar wholesale grocery corporation and vice-president and general manager of a subsidiary owned insurance agency (Retail Grocers Services, Inc.).

Meyer has been a fixture at Village Board meetings for more than four years. He has also served as vice-president of the Depew Homeowners Association and has served on the Village of Depew Zoning Board of Appeals.

Meyer is a former member of the National Association of Accountants and is a current member of the Fraternal Order of Eagles and the Benevolent Protective Order of the Elks.

Norman Downey, a disabled veteran of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. Served during WWII and was wounded in the Battle of Iwo Jima. He has been employed by Westinghouse for more than 35 years.

Downey served as a Depew Village Trustee for a total of 5 years from 1968 to 1969 and again from 1971 to 1975 as a member of the Good Government Party.

Downey is a member of the Polish Falcons of Depew and former member of the Board of Directors of the Westinghouse Veteran Employees Association, Twin Village Post 463 VFW, Depew American Legion Post 1528 and Local 1581, IUE-AFL-CIO.

Michael Rusinek has been employed for 19 years ay Westinghouse Electric Corp. where he is a member and chief steward of Local 1581, International Union of Electrical Workers.

Rusinek has attended Bryant and Stratton Institute, Erie Community College and Cornell University.

A Vietnam veteran, he received the Army Commendation Medal for service in the conflict. He is an exempt member of the Central Hose Co. No. 4 of the Depew Fire Department and a member of Buffalo AFL-CIO Council and CLUW.

Following the nomination meeting of the Independent-Progressive Party, August (Gus) Hein, who had lost the parties nomination for mayor to Arthur J. Domino, and his supporters from the IPP decided to enter the election by forming a third party, the Depew Action Party which had been active during the 1971 village election. The Depew Action Party endorsed Hein for mayor along with trustee candidates Mary Lucariello, William Lynch and Theodore Kocialski who had been a Depew Action Party trustee candidate in 1971.

For the second village board election in a row Depew voters gave a resounding victory to the Independent-Progressive Party candidates when they elected Arthur J. Domino Mayor and gave trustee seats to Norman J. Downey, Michael J. Rusinek and Robert C. Meyer in Tuesday's election.

The vote gave the same clean sweep to the Depew Independent-Progressive Party that Trustee Florian Urbanski, Charles Pempsell and Dennis Gabryszak enjoyed two

years ago. When the newly elected village officials take their seats Monday, April 4, the party will hold all seven positions on the Depew Village Board.

Domino, Downey, Meyer and Rusinek, from the time the first district's results were announced at the Depew Municipal Building, held a commanding lead over incumbent Good Government Party Mayor Roger Paluszak and Trustees Joan Priebe and Donald Snios. Good Government candidate Donald Massara, Jr. was also defeated.

Also failing to win seats on the board were Action Party candidates August Hein, who ran for mayor, and Mary Lucariello, William Lynch and Theodore Kocialski who sought trustee positions.

The count gave Domino 1,833 votes; Downey, 1,838; Meyer, 1,684; and Rusinek, 1,762. Paluszak received 1,186 votes, Priebe, 1,195; Snios, 1,290; and Massara, 1,117. Hein polled 864 votes; Ms. Lucariello, 908; Lynch, 816; and Kocialski, 839.

The first results were announced from the ballots of District 13's Municipal Building voting booth at 9:10 p.m., in which Domino received 140 votes and Paluszak 42. The crowd remained silent as the results came in, although by the time the third set of results, from District 11's South Side Fire Hall booth were announced, there were murmurs as Domino received 207 votes to Paluszak's 59.

It appeared that the Depew Action Party drew votes from the Independent-Progressives, in some districts. Results from District 7 gave Hein 106 votes and was one of the few not carried by Domino as he received 23 to Paluszak's 29.

In District 60 Hein had his second strongest vote of 96. Domino and Paluszak were tied with 79 votes each.

Domino is the first former Depew Fire Chief and the first son of a former mayor to be elected to the village's top post. His father, John Domino, held the mayor's position from 1955 to 1967.

During the victory celebration, at the Twin Village Post 463 VFW, Domino told the jubilant crowd "my door will always be open." He expressed appreciation to Independent-Progressive Party chairman John Kotz who "worked... as he did 25 years ago when he worked beside my dad."

Among those at the victory party was Arthur Prestine, 84, who was a founder of the Independent Party in the 1930's and served as Mayor from 1933 to 1942. During this election he was still contacting voters and acting as an advisor to the IPP.

Following the village elections in Erie County, George J. Measer, Publisher of the Bee Publications analyzed the voter turnout in the village elections in the communities that, his newspapers cover including the Village of Depew.

In his March 24th article, Measer said that only 39 percent of the possible registered voters in the Bee Publication's circulation areas cast a ballot in the local elections.

The "grassroots" communities that our newspapers cover are the villages of Akron, Depew, Lancaster, Kenmore and Williamsville...all substantial communities of well-educated individuals.

In these incorporated municipalities there are 32,346 registered voters. Of this amount, only 12,743 took the time to cast their vote to determine the future of their villages.

This does not speak well for the residents who later probably will complain about some problem in their village and wonder how so-and-so ever became a village mayor or trustee.

In the Village of Depew, one of the largest incorporated villages in New York State, there was a hard fought campaign for all offices. The 3,906 voters that pulled a lever (out of 8,606 registered voters) gave a clean sweep to the Independent-Progressive Party.

Depew had the second highest voter turnout with 45 percent of the populace voting. This might be due in part to the fact that the incumbent Good Government Party distributed more than 35,000 pieces of campaign literature. That party however was defeated. The third party in Depew, the Action Party, received fewer than 1,000 votes per candidate and probably drew votes from other contestants, particularly those in power. The Independent-Progressive Party candidates were the big winners, scoring a clean sweep.

At the re-organization meeting of the Depew Village Board, Mayor Arthur J. Domino used the wooden gavel of his father, former Mayor John Domino to open the first meeting of the new administration at the Municipal Building.

Mayor Domino was administered the oath of office by his father. Another former Mayor John J. Potter, who served as the village's top official from 1971 to 1979, administered the oaths, which included the promise to support the Constitutions of the United States and the State of New York, to the three new board members.

One of the new mayor's first official acts was to accept from his father the wooden mallet, which bears a brass plate recording the 12 years John Domino served as Mayor.

Rev. Gerald Green, pastor of St. Barnabas Parish and Depew Fire Department Chaplain, led the board and audience, which overflowed the council chambers in a prayer of invocation at the opening of the meeting.

On behalf of the new board, Mayor Domino expressed thanks to outgoing board members former Mayor Roger Paluszak and Trustees Joan Priebe, Fred Grzyb and Donald Snios for their efforts during the past four years.

"I am sure they all had the best interests of the village at heart," he said.

Depew's new top official also expressed appreciation to the residents of Depew for the confidence shown in the new board members and renewed his pledge to "serve all the people with dignity and integrity."

Joseph J. Schultz was renamed Village Attorney, Leonard Grzybowski was appointed as Village Treasurer and Deputy Village Clerk Dorothy Wojtylak was named Village Clerk. Other patronage positions were also filled by supporters of the IPP, many of who had served in previous years so that the administration started out with a great deal of experience to back up the new board.

Trustee Dennis H. Gabryszak was elected to the Cheektowaga Town Board in the November 1983 election on the Democratic ticket. Immediately after his election to the Town Board, Gabryszak sought an opinion from the State Department of Audit and Control on whether he must resign his position on the Depew Village Board following his election to the Town Board. He was seeking a decision on whether holding both positions would be a conflict of interest.

Depew Village Attorney Joseph J. Schultz offered the opinion that Gabryszak can legally hold both positions.

He cited the examples of Town of Lancaster Councilman Ronald Czapla who for a period of time continued to hold his seat on the Lancaster Village Board and Cheektowaga Councilman John Rogowski who kept his position as Mayor of the Village of Sloan for a time.

Gabryszak's term on the village board would expire in April 1984. If he resigned immediately an election would be required to fill the vacancy. If there are fewer than 75 days before the next fiscal year at the time he should resign, the vacancy can be filled by appointment of the mayor or left vacant.

Dennis H. Gabryszak would continue to serve on both the Depew Village Board and the Cheektowaga Town Board until he resigned on August 20, 1984. Mark V. LiPuma would be appointed by Mayor Arthur J. Domino on December 4, 1984 to fill Gabryszak's seat

The 1985 election would be to fill the position of Police Justice and three trustee positions. The Independent-Progressive Party would nominate the three incumbent Trustees Charles C. Pempsell, Florian Urbanski and Mark V. LiPuma who was appointed to replace Trustee Dennis H. Gabryszak who had been elected a Councilman on the Town Board of Cheektowaga. Henry S. Wick would get the endorsement of the IPP for re-election as Village Police Justice and would be unopposed for re-election.

The Good Government Party nominated former Trustee Joan M. Priebe and newcomers Woodrow J. Becker and Guy Lichtenberger as the party's candidates for trustees.

The incumbent Independent-Progressive Party candidates swept the general village election on Tuesday March 19th by a wide margin over the challenging Good Government Party hopefuls.

Charles C. Pempsell, Jr., and Florian M. Urbanski were re-elected to their positions of Village Trustees and Mark V. LiPuma was returned to the trustee position he took over from Councilman Dennis H. Gabryszak when he resigned from the board.

Henry S. Wick, who ran unopposed in his bid for re-election as village justice received 1,887 votes from the 19 voting districts.

The final vote counts in the trustees race in which the top three elected were: Florian M. Urbanski 1,666, Charles C. Pempsell 1,636, Mark V. LiPuma, 1,611, Joan M. Priebe 755, Woodrow J. Becker, 748 and Guy H. Lichtenberger, 668.

The degree of the margin of victory was surprising to almost everyone in attendance at the council chambers of the Municipal Building, where the vote totals were announced.

Even the victorious candidates were a bit surprised at the wide margin of the wins.

"I was nervous but I'm the type who always gets a little nervous," LiPuma said, "I expected us to win but not by such a wide margin. Our entire party did very well and this is a real vote of confidence from the people."

Pempsell, who has served as a trustee for 16 years and as Deputy Mayor since 1983, said he was pleased with the outcome and felt it represented a victory for more than just the incumbent candidates.

"A victory for us is a victory for the entire administration," he said, "I feel that it shows the people are happy with the job we are all doing. If there were numerous faults in the way our administration has acted, I think the people would have voted us out."

Mayor Arthur J. Domino was also confident the election proved the people are satisfied with the present administration.

"The people have put their faith in us and we will continue along the same path we have followed in the past," he said, "We will continue to try and present the best service possible while at the same time keeping costs down."

Ed Gates, chairman of the Good Government Party, accepted the losses as a temporary setback but refused to let it deter him from his cause.

“We lost decisively but we are not dead,” he said, “ We will continue to strive to have a two party system represented in the Village of Depew. This is a case of a solid party board winning again, we attempted to provide the people with opposing viewpoints and we offered constructive opposition to the present administration. But a very poor voter turnout really damaged our efforts,” said Gates.

Dan Wojcik, a member of the party, stressed the fact the party isn’t giving up by any means.

“We have to re-group and reassess our position and then come back strong,” he said. “ The Good Government Party will still be around working for what is best for the people of Depew.”

Despite all of the optimism shown following the 1985 general village election by the leadership of the Good Government Party, this was the last election in which they would be heard from.

As the 1987 general village election approached, John Kotz, Chairman of the Independent-Progressive Party, officially announced the candidates the party has endorsed for the March 18th election.

The candidates, all incumbents, are: Arthur J. Domino, Mayor, Norman J. Downey, Robert C. Meyer and Michael J. Rusinek, Trustees.

“These four men have been endorsed by the party,” Kotz said. “They were approved 100 percent, there were no opposing votes from anyone in the organization. Each one of them is qualified for the position,” he said. “There is no way we’re going to endorse people who are not qualified.”

There are at least independent candidates who are planning to mount a challenge for Depew Village Board trustee positions in March.

Sharon Whipkey and Edwin Gates have both expressed their intent to campaign for a seat on the board.

Both candidates have stated that they have a problem with the current board, mainly that it is made up of seven members of the Independent-Progressive Party.

“The main thrust of our campaign is that we have a full board in the village,” Gates said. “All seven members are from the same party and that alone calls for a change.

“A board is supposed to be a team,” he said. “Its members should forget about parties and focus on the issues.”

Gates, who has been chairman of the Good Government Party for the past 5 years, said he resigned the chairmanship when he could not find any candidates to run.

“I’m running because I believe in the two-party system, no matter who is in charge,” he said.

Whipkey stated she felt the current village board makes too many decisions behind closed doors of the mayor’s office.

John Kotz, chairman of the Independent-Progressive Party, said he feels the current board is operating very smoothly and there is no need for a change.

“As long as they are doing a good job, they should be kept in office,” he said. “Just because they are all from the same party, I don’t think that should be viewed as dangerous.”

Kotz said he resents it very much when people start “blowing their horns” about the current board, when these people never attend any meetings. “They don’t know a nickel from a dime because they never attend any village board meetings,” he said.

He said he believes in a two-party system and welcomes opposition, but only if they are qualified. “Opposition is good, but the candidates should have the village’s interests at heart, they shouldn’t be running for the sake of running.”

Kotz said the complaints from the general public have been practically nil lately.

With the February 17th deadline for filing nominating petitions, in addition to those filed by the Independent-Progressive Party, a newly formed party, the People’s Watch Party filed nominating petitions listing Edwin Gates and Sharon Whipkey as trustee candidates.

With no opposing petitions being filed to oppose Mayor Arthur J. Domino for re-election, Mayor Domino was assured of re-election to a second four-year term. This would be the first time that an incumbent mayor was unopposed since 1945 when then Mayor Walter Szyperski ran unopposed.

Depew Mayor Arthur J. Domino in addition to his duties as Mayor is also the first vice-president of the Erie County Village Officials Association and is a member of the executive committee of the New York State Conference of Mayors.

Domino is also a member of the Board of Managers of Sewer District No. 4. and is an active member of the Depew Hook & Ladder Co. No. 1 and a Past Chief of the Depew Fire Department.

Domino is an honorary member of the Depew-Lancaster Sertoma Club and is a member of the Fraternal Order of Eagles, Aerie No. 2692.

Edwin Gates, running under the People’s Watch Party was Chairman of the defunct Good Government Party for the past five years, until resigning the position earlier this year.

Gates was village water commissioner for a year under former Mayor Roger Paluszak.

A WWII flying combat veteran, he served in the south, central and northern pacific. He wears three major combat stars and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and five air medals.

He is a member of the Twin Village Post No. 463 V.F.W. in Depew.

Gates has been self-employed since 1958. He operates an engineering and construction business in Lancaster with his two sons.

Sharon Whipkey, the other Peoples Watch Party is a housewife, who is also a hair technician.

Whipkey has lived in Lancaster and Depew for the past five years and has attended schools in both districts.

Whipkey acted as an assistant to her husband while he was the village dog warden in 1983.

She is involved in school groups such as the Lancaster Band Boosters and also performs volunteer work for the Lancaster youth Bureau.

A week prior to the election the Depew Bee’s editorial related to the upcoming village election.

“This year’s general election in the Village of Depew will be an unique one in that the mayoral race has only one candidate.

Incumbent Mayor Arthur Domino, a member of the Independent-Progressive Party, is running unopposed. In seeking his second four-year term, Domino has been a strong force in the village during the 80's and deserves the voter's support.

The question then for village residents to decide is which three trustee candidates they feel will best serve their interests on the seven-member board.

The Bee has chosen not to endorse any candidates in this year's election, as we do not feel any particular candidate stands out head-and-shoulders above the rest.

Incumbent Trustees Norman Downey, Robert Meyer and Michael Rusinek, all members of the Independent-Progressive Party, have performed admirably in their positions during the past four years, and their records are quite consistent.

However, we feel independent candidates Edwin Gates and Sharon Whipkey would perform equally as well given the chance.

Depew residents must decide, and vote accordingly, if they are satisfied with the present board and its policies or if they want a change.

The bottom line is voters should weigh each candidate as an individual and choose the three which they feel are best suited for the job, regardless of the party line."

Independent-Progressive Party Chairman John Kotz doesn't like to use the word "mandate", but feels the vast majority of village residents are extremely pleased with the job the current village board has done.

The results of last week's general election would seem to back up Kotz's sentiment with some very clear numbers.

In the March 18th election, Mayor Arthur J. Domino, running unopposed, was re-elected to office as he received a total of 1,478 votes.

Trustees Norman Downey, Robert Meyer and Michael Rusinek, all members of the IPP, were all re-elected by large margins.

Downey received 1,308 votes, Meyer received 1,296 votes and Michael Rusinek received a total of 1,400 votes.

Independent trustee candidates Sharon Whipkey and Edwin Gates, both of the People's Watch Party, received 390 and 368 votes respectively.

Village Clerk Dorothy Wojtylak said the election drew an average-size voter turnout.

"The numbers were pretty average, in view of the fact the mayor ran unopposed," she said. "The election may have been more heated if the mayoral race had been contested."

Kotz said he doesn't like to look at such election results as being "a mandate from the people", but would rather think it simply means most residents feel the candidates have done their jobs well.

"We feel we have made outstanding contributions to the village," he said.

Kotz said among the areas the current board has been most effective in are: holding the village property tax rates down, obtaining federal grants, ensuring tremendous savings through the construction of three gas village-owned gas wells and obtaining less expensive insurance rates for the village.

"We feel the village board is doing to do a tremendous job in the years to come," he said. "We have seven members from the same party, but we are not all in one house."

Kotz said the party's by-laws are very strict and a number of people inside the party contribute much input.

“We have a lot of intelligent people in our organization besides the elected officials and they contribute,” he said.

Kotz said the party contains registered Democrats and Republicans, as well as those residents who are unaffiliated, but everyone has the same goals.

“Anyone who joins our party must take an oath,” he said. “They pledge to do their best for the village, not just for self-preservation.

“When you win an election by that many votes, it shows the people are satisfied with the job that is being done,” he said.

Mayor Domino said he was not surprised the voter turnout was not as great as in years past. “I feel the biggest reasons for the low turnout were there was no mayoral race and there were no major issues,” he said.

“At first I thought the off-day might have been a contributing factor, because the election was moved to a Wednesday due to St. Patrick’s Day,” Domino said. But I don’t believe that anymore because there were good turnout in some of the surrounding communities.”

Domino said the absence of major issues, such as a transfer station or sewers, as in previous election years, was a big reason for the low voter numbers.

“The volatile issues tend to pop up at anytime,” he said. “Right now, I don’t see any major issues the board will have to deal with in the near future, but that is not to say they are not out there.”

Domino said he checked the vote totals from the last two village mayoral races and found approximately 3,9000 people voted in 1983 and more than 4,000 residents voted in 1979, when John Potter was ousted from office.

“Past history shows if residents are dissatisfied with the way things are, a large number of voters turn up at the polls and since this year’s election had a very low turnout the vast majority of residents are satisfied with the job the board is doing,” said Domino.

“I feel we have done everything above board and we will continue the policies we have been operating under for the past four years, because that is what the people have said they wanted,” said the mayor.

Long time Trustee and Deputy Mayor Charles C. Pempsell, Jr. was stricken with a heart attack in his home and died in St Joseph’s Intercommunity Hospital on September 23, 1987.

Mayor Arthur J. Domino, who had himself been hospitalized, when Deputy Mayor Charles Pempsell was stricken, named Trustee Norman J. Downey as Deputy Mayor at the Village Board meeting on October 20th.

James S. Nusall an Assistant Fire Chief in the Depew Fire Department was appointed by Mayor Arthur J. Domino to fill the seat on the Village Board of Trustees caused by the untimely death of Charles C. Pempsell.

In accepting the appointment to the Village Board of Trustees, Nusall resigned his position as an Assistant Chief of the Depew Fire Department as required by village law.

A special election in the Village of Depew was held on March 15, 1988 to fill the one-year un-expired term of the late Charles C. Pempsell, now filled by Trustee James Nusall.

Because the only race on the ballot is uncontested, it is expected a usually hectic event will be quite serene. Trustee James S. Nusall is the only candidate on the ballot

The Meridian Street resident ran unsuccessfully for Depew village trustee in 1979, although he did garner the most number of votes of those candidates not elected.

He also ran on the Republican ticket for a councilman's seat in the Town of Lancaster in 1973, but was defeated.

Nusall has been employed as a construction equipment mechanic at the New York State Thruway Authority for 18 years.

Nusall running unopposed garnered 492 of the 494 votes cast, with one write-in vote recorded and one vote voided.

In late January 1989 the Depew Bee first reported that Trustee Mark V. LiPuma would not be seeking re-election in the March general village election.

When contacted by the Bee, LiPuma gave the main reason for declining the Independent-Progressive Party nomination for re-election was that he had recently purchased a home in Lancaster and would be moving out of the village. Additionally being in the asbestos removal business required that most of this type of work be done at night making him unavailable to put in the necessary time as an elected official.

"This board is a hard working group and meets at times several evenings a week in addition to the committee work," said LiPuma. "It only hurts myself and them when I can't put the time in needed to do the job properly."

Among his accomplishments as a board member, LiPuma said he was most proud of his work on the central purchasing system implemented in the treasurer's office.

"It took about two years to get the system up and running, but it can really save the village a lot of money," he said.

Another project LiPuma said he put a lot of time on was serving on the Northeast Solid Waste Management Board. "This is the biggest issue concerning towns and villages," he said.

LiPuma also said his work in obtaining an energy grant for the village municipal building was very satisfying. "I think the energy grant was a decent project, there is an entire pool of resources in that area which remains virtually untapped. The village is planning to apply for additional grants in the near future," he added.

LiPuma first contemplated leaving politics when fellow Trustee Charles Pempsell died. "Charlie's death took the wind out of my sails," he said. "He was a man who stood for all of the good things in politics. I campaigned for him as a kid and I was proud to serve along side him on the board. I'm going to miss the entire board, I've never seen a more hard-working group of guys."

The Independent-Progressive Party selected another former Fire Chief Francis (Bill) Roscoe as the candidate to replace Trustee Mark LiPuma. The other candidates were incumbent Trustees James Nusall and Florian Urbanski. Police Justice Henry Wick was again endorsed for re-election and would be unopposed.

The only other candidate in the trustee race was Edwin Gates of the People's Watch Party.

Just prior to the election in the "This Is Our Opinion" column, on March 16th the Depew Bee wrote:

"In quaint communities such as Lancaster and Depew, it is often difficult to rise above "small-town politics", but it is of paramount importance that such petty bickering be avoided at all costs. One clear way to distinguish between the twin villages this spring is to monitor next week's village elections and results.

In Depew, there is little mystery. No matter what the outcome of Tuesday's vote, the Independent-Progressive Party will retain its majority on the village board.

Talk about majority, the worst possible scenario for the IPP is to only have six of seven seats on the board. And if they get their way, they will continue to maintain all seven seats.

Some call it a "rubber stamp" board; others argue it is a dedicated and progressive group of men who are doing a more than respectable job.

We don't have any qualms with the present board and we have no problem with seeing Trustees James Nusall and Florian Urbanski re-elected to four-year terms.

The other two trustee candidates vying for the three vacant positions are Francis Roscoe of the Independent-Progressive Party and Edwin Gates of the People's Watch Party.

While we know little about Roscoe other than his experience in the Depew Fire Department, we would give him the nod over Gates based on what we do know about the People's Watch candidate.

We admire Gates for his attempt to gain a trustee position on a board, which he would clearly be in the minority on, but we have found his campaigning style to be questionable in taste and have found some of his information to be unreliable at best.

We wish there were more people in the village who would at least have the urge to try their hand at running for a trustee position."

All was quiet on the Village of Depew front after Tuesday's election, which provided little noise and no real surprises.

Four Independent-Progressive Party candidates, three of whom were incumbents, were re-elected by wide margins.

Thus the seven-member village board will remain in total control of the Independent-Progressive Party.

Village Trustees James Nusall and Florian Urbanski were both re-elected in the at-large trustee race with Nusall receiving 835 votes and Urbanski garnered 702 votes.

Francis Roscoe, a newcomer to the board, received 767 votes and beat out Edwin Gates, of the People's Watch Party, who polled 244 votes.

Village Justice Henry S. Wick received 824 votes, running unopposed. All those elected were for four-year terms.

Village Clerk Dorothy Wojtylak described the voter turn out as "extremely light."

John Kotz, chairman of the IPP, said he was pleased with what he termed a "convincing win." "That to me shows confidence in the job well done by our people," he said. "It reflects well on the service the current board has provided to village residents and they can look forward to such continued service," Kotz said.

Kotz added that he sees nothing wrong with the two-party system, and that he would have liked to see a full slate of candidates challenge his party's candidates. "That way the people can choose accordingly, I certainly respect opposition," he said.

Kotz said he was unsure of why there weren't more candidates in the election, but pointed to the collapse of the Good Government Party, which Gates was once chairman of, as one of the factors.

A post-election controversy surfaced when losing candidate Edwin Gates filed a written complaint with the Village Clerk's office describing "peculiarities" he feels that affected the outcome of the election.

“In an at-large election, those gaining the largest number of votes are the winners, these machines were not set up properly for this type of election,” said Gates. He first realized there was a problem at about 2:00 p.m. on election day.

“When you pulled the lever for Urbanski, you couldn’t vote for Gates, and when you pulled the Lever for Gates you couldn’t vote for Urbanski. Voting for one cancelled out the other.” Gates also added that he received two other complaints from voters that day.

Village Attorney Joseph J. Schultz said three complaints regarding “jammed voting machines” were recorded the day of election, but Erie County election inspectors who programmed the machines initially immediately corrected the problem.

Gates expressed dissatisfaction with the minimal action that had been taken and said that he intended to pursue the matter further. He also sent letters to the Buffalo Board of Elections, and the State Board of Elections in Albany, advising them of the problem, but said they took a “hands-off attitude. “The decision is Village Clerk Dorothy Wojtylak’s,” said Gates.

Attorney Schultz said he agrees that the decision for taking any type of action is Wojtylak’s, but also stated that with Gates losing by such a wide margin, nearly 500 votes; one cannot say it was the voting machine problem that affected the election outcome.

Erie County Board of Elections Deputy Commissioner Vicki Hook said that, “unfortunately we found that the machines were programmed incorrectly The problem was corrected, however, and our people were reprimanded.” She also explained that although the village runs the election, the County Board of Elections is contracted to program the machines.

Deputy Commissioner Hook said, “ we are waiting to hear from the state Attorney General’s office regarding whether or not another election can be held.” She explained that this type of decision couldn’t be made on a local level. The state Attorney General is the only one who can render the decision regarding the validity of an election.

Five months after the Depew Village election, Edwin Gates vowed to keep fighting for another vote. The Attorney General it seems does not have the authority to void an election as was previously thought, however, he is authorized to commence State Supreme Court action to contest the right of an official to hold an office.

In this case, the action would seek to establish that Nusall, Roscoe and Urbanski are holding office illegally.

The latest communication from the Attorney General’s office dated July 13 and signed by Assistant Attorney General Allithea Lango, informed Gates that while the information he submitted, “is extremely detailed and helpful,” it is “insufficient” to commence an action in State Supreme Court.

“Our office would need some evidence that but for the “malfunction” you would have been the successful candidate in the election,” Lango’s letter stated.

“Gates should win fight for a second election” editorialized the Depew Bee in their August 24, 1989 edition.....If the state supreme court were to determine that the three trustees in office now as a result of the March 21st vote are holding office illegally, as Gates hopes, a dozen problems and questions would arise. And if a second vote were held and Gates won a seat on the board, several more would no doubt come up.

Which trustee will have to step down? Will action taken by the trustees in office now regarding village business hold up? What about the five months Gates lost in his term? The list goes on.

Obviously, it would be much easier to leave everything as is and forget the whole mis-programming mess. But that just doesn't seem right. Gates was a legitimate candidate for office who was the victim of someone else's mistake. The Erie County Board of Elections confirms that with its reports.

Is it fair to tell Gates to accept that and forget about it?

The issue was eventually solved when Gates dropped pursuing the matter.

With the 1991 general election approaching, the Independent-Progressive Party endorsed a veteran slate of incumbents lead by Mayor Arthur J. Domino, and Trustees Norman J. Downey, Robert C. Meyer and Michael J. Rusinek for re-election.

The slogan of the party was "On The Job-----Doing The Job" just as it had been in the previous election.

Edwin Gates, the challenger in a controversial election in 1989, would again seek election to a trustee post in the March election.

Gates said he is making a third run for a trustee's seat because, "I believe in the two-party system, and I believe the people of Depew are tired of patronage and bad management."

An unopposed mayoral race and only one opposition party candidate on the trustee ballot may have led to low voter turnout, and a lack of surprises in the March 19th elections in the Village of Depew.

Mayor Arthur J. Domino's bid for re-election went unopposed, and his 1,078-vote total led all candidates. Domino's second unopposed candidacy for the mayor's post was unprecedented in Village of Depew politics.

Only an unlikely write-in vote for a surprise candidate could have kept Domino from a third four-year term in the mayor's office, but that did not materialize.

In the trustee race, the Independent-Progressive Party incumbents also sailed to easy victories.

Michael J. Rusinek, Norman J. Downey and Robert C. Meyer, all trustees in Depew since 1983, bested People's Watch Party challenger Edwin Gates. It was Gates third unsuccessful try for a village board seat.

Rusinek gathered 1,021 votes, Meyer, 956; Downey, 914; and Gates, a distant 375 votes.

Meyer, who said he was happy with the voter turnout despite somewhat inclement weather, said an all Independent-Progressive village board leads to a cohesive government. "I think the way the village board is right now, there's probably better control of the finances with all the fiscal problems in the state right now," Meyer said.

Meyer said the results were a "vote of confidence for the way the board has handled things the past eight years."

Several days before the election, Domino speculated the lack of opposition to the IPP might be the result of the state's poor fiscal condition. "Nobody wants to run now that they see all the problems that are coming up," Domino said, noting that local governments had more control over projects and money in previous years.

For the first time in eight years, two parties are contesting three seats on the Depew Village Board in the March 16, 1993 election.

Running on the newly formed People's Party slate are: former trustee Fred Grzyb, Gerald E. Ruzala and Richard H. Futch

Three incumbent trustees of the Independent-Progressive Party, Florian M. Urbanski, James S. Nusall and Francis W. Roscoe, are seeking re-election. The Independent-Progressive Party has held all seven seats on the board since 1983.

Justice Henry S. Wick is unopposed for another term on the Independent-Progressive Party slate.

Grzyb, who served two terms on the board first as a member of the Independent-Progressive Party and then as a member of the old Good Government Party, is retired.

Ruzala is a salesman for a collection agency and is a coach in a youth hockey program.

Futch is a fire-equipment salesman and a volunteer fireman with the Aetna Hose Company in Depew.

The 1993 village election again resulted in a clean sweep for the incumbent Independent-Progressive candidates. Village Justice Henry S. Wick running unopposed garnered 1,166 votes.

Trustee Jim Nusall led all the trustee candidates with 1,019 votes followed by Florian Urbanski with 942 votes and Francis W. Roscoe with 921 votes.

Former trustee Fred Grzyb received 558 votes; Gerald E. Ruzala, 489 votes and Richard Futch had 460 votes.

Mayor Arthur J. Domino announced his resignation to a surprised and saddened audience at the village board meeting Monday evening May 17, 1993. He would leave office May 30th.

Domino cited personal pressures and a heavy workload as reasons for leaving the post he has held for ten years. The Mayor has been beset by personal problems, including the death last year of his father, former Mayor John Domino. Two of Domino's children also are reportedly suffering from major health problems.

'It's been a hard thing to come to,' Domino said, his voice occasionally breaking with emotion. 'I've served the village for 35 years and I feel I just can't do it anymore. It's just too much work for one person.'

He told the Depew Village Board of his decision just minutes before its regularly scheduled 8 p.m. meeting. The trustees must appoint an interim mayor to serve until March 1994 when a special election will be held.

'I'm confident the Board of Trustees will choose a replacement who will continue to move the village forward.'

Domino ruled out taking anything more than a "background role" in village government after May 30. 'I've had my day in the sun,' he said.

The Domino family has been a part of village government for as long as most people can remember. His father, the late John Domino was a Trustee and Mayor for many years. Mayor Domino was for almost 30 years a member of the Depew Fire Department having served as an Assistant Chief for eight years and Chief of the Department for two years.

He estimated he shares with his father more than 60 years in public service. 'I think that may be some kind of a record,'

Domino reflected as well on the many changes that have taken place in the village during his tenure as mayor.

For example, the municipal building underwent a technological revolution, as computers and automation were introduced for the first time. All of the village buildings received major upgrading including new roofs, windows, doors and other equipment as well as other major maintenance.

Several pieces of fire apparatus were replaced in accordance with the twenty –year plan developed when Domino was serving as an assistant chief in the fire department. The Department of Public Works was provided with new trucks and plowing equipment and the police and fire communications equipment was upgraded.

He pointed to residential growth as a sign of growing prosperity, as well as commercial projects such as the Harlequin building and small-business development.

Despite several well-publicized controversies surrounding the Airborne Express facility at Walden and Dick Roads, Domino said that project, and the Leica development continue to provide stable tax revenue to the village.

Village ordinances were also revised and upgraded during his tenure. The Village Board is currently in the process of examining the village zoning laws.

Domino said the growth of the village was assisted by a cooperative spirit among the members of the village board of trustees. “It’s very difficult to have six people keep pulling the wagon in the same direction,” he said. “I think a lot of the successes we have had were because we’ve been able to put our differences aside.”

“One testament to the esteem in which village residents and officials hold Domino alike, was the reaction to his surprise decision. Many in the room wept after he announced his resignation, and Domino accepted well wishes from several individuals until well after the meeting concluded”, wrote the Depew Bee.

Following the abrupt resignation of Mayor Arthur J. Domino, the Village Board of Trustees on June 7th appointed Michael J. Rusinek to fill the mayors seat until a special election to be held in March 1994.

Judith Michaels was appointed on September 20, 1993 to the vacant trustee seat created when Michael Rusinek was named Mayor. Trustee Michaels would also have to run in the special election in March 1994 for a one-year term.

In the special election Robert M. Kucewicz endorsed by the Depew Action Party opposed Mayor Michael J. Rusinek of the Independent-Progressive Party and William Maryniewski of the Depew Action Party opposed Trustee Judith Michaels also of the Independent-Progressive Party.

Mayor Michael J. Rusinek was able to withstand the challenge by Robert M. Kucewicz and retained his seat, however, Trustee Judith Michaels lost in her bid for re-election to newcomer William Maryniewski, a former member of the Depew Board of Education. The Independent-Progressive Party would now hold a 6 to 1 majority on the Village Board.

As the Village of Depew prepared to celebrate it’s centennial in 1994, one thing was certain, that many people from all walks of life have governed the Village of Depew. If one was to study the genealogy of the men and women who have served in the various capacities of local government, one would find that the political power in the village has been held by several families and related individuals, who have lived in the village for many, many years. The political parties may have changed names from time to time but the same families and individuals continued to be involved.

With the changing of the demographics particularly in the oldest sections of the village where the political power has really been held over the past 100 years, will this trend continue or will a whole new generation of politicians become involved, only time will tell.

Revised: April 11, 2007