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Edited by John F. Bailey  
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Delfino - Nicoletti - Sassower White Plains Persons of the Year Posted on Monday, January 03 @ 13:06:20 EST by jfbailey

**WPCNR WHITE PLAINS VOICE.** By John F. Bailey  
January 4, 2004, Updated 2:34 P.M. E.S.T.: Mayor Joseph Delfino of White Plains received the most votes of candidates in the annual WPCNR White Plains Person of the Year Poll ended December 31, 2004, with 50% of the votes cast.



Commissioner of Public Works, Joseph Nicoletti finishing a strong second.

Nominated by a number of write-ins from across the country and locally was the city's own Elena Sassower, who was released December 24, after serving a six-month jail sentence for being convicted of Disruption of Congress.



Mayor Joseph Delfino:  
America's Favorite Mayor.  
Photo, WPCNR News Archive.

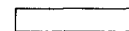
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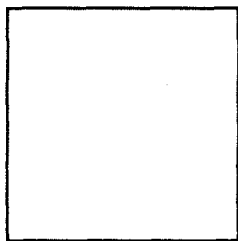
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*"My dancers opened More Than Music for the Fort Hill Players. Thank you for the wonderful words - the kids were thrilled!"*

*-- Dina Giordano City Center Dancers*

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**Joseph "Bud" Nicoletti.**  
Commissioner of Public Works.  
*Photo, WPCNR News Archive.*



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**Elena Sassower, White Plains**

**Defender of the Constitution**

*Photo, Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc.*

*Website: [www.judgewatch.org](http://www.judgewatch.org)*

Delfino, clearly the most popular elected official in America, can do no wrong in White Plains. His indefatigable personality, public fatherly persona, affability in the face of criticism, ability to create policy, and whiplash a lackluster and "adversarial" Common Council into executing his programs by his mastery of the issues, register high marks with Mr. and Ms. White Plains.

Delfino appears to be gearing up for a run for a third term as Mayor in 2005. If he does run, no one can touch him. From the reaction of readers of WPCNR and the voters in our poll, he retains a "man of the people" image that will be hard to beat.

What is the secret of the Delfino political popularity? It is solid record of appearing to achieve what he has set out to do: evidence that his vision for the city (downtown retail development, based on residential growth) is succeeding in both increasing sales tax revenues, and swift rent-up and buy-up of luxury housing; and, his ability to co-opt issues that appeal to the South and Northends of the city where the active voters are.

#### **Helping Because You Want to, Not Because You Have To**

Overlooked in the criticism of the Mayor as being "the developers' Mayor," is what he has actually done for the less privileged: he has grown the Youth Bureau; established six Digital Divide Labs in minority neighborhoods – (I challenge you to find any other city this size in Westchester or the country that has done that); created a waterfront park; created a lively Downtown Business Improvement District outreach program; created a Little League ballpark; purchased open space of dubious value, but high value politically; and maintained labor peace by generous settlements against future revenue hopes.

The vast majority of White Plains citizens appear to view Delfino as a Mayor who gets things done. One need only look to the City of Yonkers which has sunk billions into its downtown-waterfront and its school district in a similar span of time with absolutely nothing to show for it except failure and whining and begging.

Perhaps no other elected official in America is as good at preemptive policy-making before citizens become outraged about it as Mayor Joseph Delfino.

#### **Transition Accomplished.**

Delfino has to be commended for holding his administration together with the departure of the former Executive Officer last July 1. The city has not fallen apart. Whether or not that is because the former Executive Officer is still consulting with the city, (which the present Executive Officer, Paul Wood, denies), is open to conjecture.

The hiring of two well-qualified new employees within the last two weeks at the Mayor's Office by Mr. Wood, **Melissa Lopez** as Policy Specialist and **David Maloney**, as Grants Coordinator/Capacity Builder are a bold step by Mr. Wood in the right direction to beef up an understaffed Mayor's Office. Perhaps no other government in America operates with such a lean executive staff.

Other than being caught offguard with a recent criticism that the City

Comprehensive Plan has not been reviewed, Mayor Delfino has continued to set the pace for the city with an energy and whirlwind speed unheard-of in government.

For an example of how fast government works in the real world, simply look at Washington, D.C., Albany, or two blocks West of 255 Main Street in the Michaelian Office Building, where decisions and policies are made at a glacial pace and \$30 Million mistakes occur routinely.

Maybe that is why Mr. and Ms. White Plains voted Mr. Delfino the White Plains Person of the Year.

#### **Mr. Public Works**

**Commissioner Joseph "Bud" Nicoletti** is easily the most loved city official because he removes the snow better than Minneapolis, Minnesota or Buffalo, N.Y. Thanks to him the city is never paralyzed. Thanks to him, new projects are built within a year, not 20 as they are with the New York State Dormitory Authority and Westchester County.

Mr. Nicoletti will not stand by and approve projects he feels will jeopardize the city. He proved that by his valiant refusal to sign off and pay lip service to his engineer's license on the City Center Main Street Sewer capability under intense pressure. He held out for lining of the Main Street Sewer despite ridicule, and created the famous "Nicoletti Bypass" solution for the 221 Main Street project. Nicoletti fought the sewer battle alone, a real life counterpart to Hank Riordan in *Atlas Shrugged* and the water engineer in *Enemy of the People*. Like all of the city commissioners in White Plains, he works hard and earns his money.

Mr. Nicoletti is perhaps the hardest working Commissioner of Public Works with a wide variety of expertises that extend from optical infrastructure, to construction, to sewer and water management, to concrete to repaving. He is an asset.

#### **The New Nathan Hale.**

**Elena Sassower**, is the Chair of the Center for Judicial Accountability. A lifelong White Plains resident, she has spent her career lobbying and campaigning for fair selection of judges in New York State, based on competence and judicial experience, rather than political favoritism.

In 2002, she was campaigning against the nomination of Richard Wesley to the federal bench in New York because of his alleged conflict of interest when he was on the Court of Appeals, and refused to recuse himself on a case involving the governor's commission on judicial conduct.

In May of 2002, she asked to speak at the Senate Judiciary Committee confirmation hearing on Wesley's nomination. She asked her question after Judiciary Committee Chair, Saxby Chambliss had gavelled the hearing closed. When she asked her question, in a polite manner, Chambliss had her jailed on charges of Disruption of Congress. She was convicted last May of the charge, and was offered a suspended sentence if she would cease her activity with the Center for Judicial Accountability and stay out of government buildings and hearings (I am paraphrasing the conditions).

She refused, saying that was a threat to her freedom of speech, upon which she was dispatched directly to jail and served six months, longer than the convicted bribe artist, Guy Vellella. (Previously in 2002, protesters at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing waved placards and shouted for the firing of Donald Rumsfeld, but they were not jailed or charged.)

Ms. Sassower emerged from prison December 23, arriving home at 3 A.M., December 24. She served her full six months.

No government official from New York, Westchester or the City of White Plains spoke up on her behalf, or criticized Senator Chambliss for the jailing.

No court granted her a stay pending appeal, something they do all the time for big time executive thieves who have bilked the public of millions.

Ms. Sassower appears to have been thrown in jail simply because she was about to show how judgeships are used by political parties to pay off persons to run for unwinnable races, and as rewards for doing things for the party. Ms. Sassower's testimony on Mr. Wesley was to have pointed that out.

In the last decade alone, we have seen Andrew O'Rourke, former Westchester County Executive, given a judgeship after he ran a Quixotic race against Mario Cuomo. The candidate who ran against Eliot Spitzer was given a judgeship, and most recently Larry Horowitz, the last straw man to run against Andy Spano for County Executive was given a judgeship. Does that look like a pattern to you? It does to Ms. Sassower.

Well, she was going to speak out about it. And she was thrown in jail for it, by a U.S. Senator.

Ms. Sassower deserves to be a White Plains Person of the Year because she stood up for free speech and went to prison for it. You have to ask yourself, would you do that for what is right?

Congratulations to White Plains "Best of 2004."



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**White Plains CitizeNetReporter - "We Are There Because They Are Not." - Connie Desmond**

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