

*newly elected commissioners join
dale colby and john daley...*

in public service

It's unusual for a majority of Mt. Lebanon commissioners to leave office, making room for so many new decision makers.

But last year, three commissioners, David Humphreys, Keith Mulvihill and Barbara Logan, opted not to run for another term.

Each of six candidates to fill those slots was unopposed in the 2007 primary. Three of them went on to win in the November election and will be sworn into office on Monday, January 7, at 8 P.M., in the commission chambers in the municipal building.

Taking office are: First Ward, D. Raja; Third Ward, Joe DeJuliis and Fifth Ward, Dan Miller.

They'll join current commissioners John Daley of the Second Ward and Dale Colby of the Fourth Ward.

Each new commissioner gets a 3-inch binder of material, recently revised by Municipal Manager Steve Feller, which explains the responsibilities of being a commissioner and includes profiles of the senior staff members. Feller encourages the commissioners to attend the Newly Elected Officials Course at the Local Government Academy, which is held from November through March in venues all over Allegheny County. Through the academy, they learn in-depth lessons about their roles and responsibilities and have an opportunity to see how Mt.

Lebanon stacks up against other towns. Fifteen current and former commissioners have been through the course, which Feller says is a good investment. Mt. Lebanon picks up the tab, which is \$225 for the five-day short course and \$450 for the 11-day certificate program.

The new commissioners meet individually with Mt. Lebanon department heads, learning everything from how Public Works purchases and stores road salt to the impact weather can have on the Recreation Department budget to public safety's emergency operation plans to what the public information office does in addition to producing **mtl**.

In the weeks between election and swearing in, the new commissioners had plenty of opportunities to ask questions about everything from community demographics to short- and long-term challenges the municipality faces to projects currently under consideration, such as a new aquatic center. And the learning process has just begun, as the veteran commissioners would surely agree.

Mt. Lebanon commissioners take pride in maintaining an open decision-making process and being accessible to the public. To make sure you know who is making the decisions that will have an impact on local quality of life, we asked all five commissioners to tell us about themselves—their families, their civic involvement, why they ran for public office and who inspires them. We hope you'll feel free to contact them (contact information is included in the story) if you have comments.



Raja believes matching appropriate businesses to vacant storefronts would help keep Mt. Lebanon vital.

RAJA

FIRST WARD

Raja, who prefers to use a singular name, is 42 and lives on Osage Drive with his wife, Neeta, and their daughters, Isana, 6, and Omisa, 3. He is president and CEO of CEI, an information technology services and consulting firm. Born in India, Raja takes the inspiration for his public service from Padma Venkataraman, the daughter of one of India's former presidents. Venkataraman has devoted herself to eradicating the stigma of leprosy by making loans accessible to people cured of leprosy and encouraging them to start businesses. Raja's company has been an active sponsor of this project.

Raja has been serving as a member of Mt. Lebanon's Economic Development Council and the South Hills Chamber of Commerce and chairs the University of Pittsburgh's Computer Science Industry Board.

He decided to run for the commission because "Mt. Lebanon has such tremendous potential." His key focus is economic growth. "In my mind, with my background, I'll be able to address some of the problems. I'm used to running a business, and we're used to providing more services for a lower cost."

Raja is a founder of the Business Mentoring Group, a consortium of local business leaders who are helping other businesses to get started and expand. He believes that economic vitality, especially of the Washington Road business district, is critical for Mt. Lebanon's success.

"My whole thing is to bring businesses to Washington Road," he says. He hopes to recruit upscale retail, gourmet restaurants and other unique businesses here.

He views technology as an important component of that effort. "My vision is to make this a technology corridor," he says, noting the town should have wireless access points and be ready to accommodate high-tech businesses.

Contact Raja at 412-341-7252 or at raja@mtlebanon.org.



local government academy

The Local Government Academy's Newly Elected Officials Course began in November and continues through March. It's run by a non-partisan, non-profit company and it seeks to teach policy-making rather than politics, according to its class materials. It also provides camaraderie and networking opportunities for its participants. The class, which has been offered for more than 20 years, was a winner of the Good Government Award from the League of Women Voters. All three new commissioners are enrolled in the class.

The course has 45 hours of instruction and includes classes on:

Understanding the extent and limitations of municipal power; techniques and procedures for running an effective meeting; media and communications; municipal finances; personnel law; public safety and police; infrastructure; planning, zoning and development; intergovernmental relationships and leadership and ethics.

Mt. Lebanon Commissioners Dale Colby and John Daley are graduates of the program.

Daley attended the Saturday-only courses in 2005-06.

"I felt that the Local Government Academy program was helpful in giving an overview

of what locally elected officials face upon coming into office," he says. "Although no

program can fully prepare you for unique situations that sometimes arise in the real

world, Local Government Academy provided a pretty comprehensive coverage of municipal

government issues, including the limits of municipal power, the budget and the different

municipal funds. The opening day provided a pretty realistic and humorous simulation of

'Citizen Comments' at a municipal meeting." Class instructors include municipal experts

from all over the county, including Mt. Lebanon's Finance Director William McKain,

Assistant Manager Marcia Taylor and solicitor James Roberts.

Other notable experts include Ruthann L. Omer, president of Gateway Engineers, John

W. Schombert, executive director of 3 Rivers Wet Weather and Robert A. Full, Allegheny

County fire marshal and chief of the county's emergency services.

John Daley: "Mt. Lebanon took an older Art Deco structure built around 1929 and refurbished it, creating a modern work space while preserving many of its historic attributes, instead of simply starting from scratch."

JOHN DALEY

SECOND WARD

John Daley, 42, is serving his third year on the commission. Daley, who lives on Seneca Drive with his wife, Claudia, and children, Colin, 8, and Caitlin, 6, is a lawyer in private practice with the firm Brennan, Robins & Daley PC. He volunteers with his son's Cub Scout troop, Pack 230, and is the commission liaison to Outreach Teen & Family Services.

He chose to run for commissioner "to give back to the community and to see that Mt. Lebanon continues to provide first-rate services."

Daley's parents inspired him to serve. "They set a good example of trying to do the right thing and providing service to others." Another inspiration for his commitment to public service is John F. Kennedy. "I think [Kennedy represented] the idea that public service could be a calling and a noble profession, and I think he encouraged people to give back," Daley says.

Contact Daley 412-334-6668 or jdaley@mtlebanon.org.



Joe DeLuliis is interested in developing more playing fields for youth sports. He is pictured in front of Mt. Lebanon Public Works' facility on Lindendale Drive.

JOE DEIULIIS

THIRD WARD

DeLuliis, 44, lives on Woodland Drive, with his wife, Grace, and three daughters: Sarah, 17, Victoria, 13 and Elizabeth, 11. He is president and founder of Magnolia Construction.

DeLuliis got the idea to run for office when a friend suggested he would make a good candidate, but he was so busy he wasn't sure he could do it. Then, he says, he realized it was important to make the time. "I'd never had a call to service before," he says.

DeLuliis felt indebted, he says, because Mt. Lebanon emergency workers saved his wife's life when she had a cardiac arrest in church several years ago. His commitment to community grew deeper recently as the result of the help police, firefighters and others provided when his daughter, Sarah, survived a serious attack by a teenage acquaintance just days before DeLuliis was elected.

Becoming a commissioner is "right in line with giving back," he says.

Perseverance—a quality that is helpful when facing the public on tough issues—is important to DeLuliis. As he begins his first term in office, he will be remembering some words of Winston Churchill, which he regards highly: "Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense."

Contact DeLuliis at 412-670-2584 or jdeiuliis@mtlebanon.org



DALE COLBY

FOURTH WARD

Dale Colby, 65, of Fruithurst Drive, is beginning his ninth year on the commission and is its most senior member. He takes his leadership role seriously and looks forward to helping the new commissioners get oriented and ready for the work they'll have.

Colby and his wife, Jody, have two grown children, Brienne Sembrat, who lives in Mt. Lebanon with her husband and two children, and Bryce, who lives with his family in Niskayuna, New York. The owner of PFG Financial Advisors/Colby Financial Consulting, Colby is a financial planner who works with business owners.

He is the commission's liaison to the planning board, the economic development council, the pension investment advisory board and the hospital authority and serves on the board of the Pennsylvania League of Cities and Municipalities. He also is a member of the Mt. Lebanon Partnership and the chairman of the Positive Coaching Alliance, a youth sports group that seeks to help children who are involved in athletics maintain safe and happy lifestyles.

Colby was drawn to public service by former commissioner

Dale Colby believes strongly that public safety is the community's number one priority. Colby was on the commission when the new center opened in 2003.

and former state legislator Tom Stevenson, who asked him to run. "I said 'no' three times in 10 to 15 years," Colby says with a laugh. "I had my arm twisted by Tom Stevenson. I finally said 'yes.'"

One thing that deterred him from accepting the call earlier is the time commitment required; now, with his children grown, Colby says he is better able to focus his attention on community concerns.

Over the years, he has learned how to "work the system." For instance, if you want to make an impact on laws passed at the county or state level, he says, it's important to connect with the legislators. He meets frequently with leaders at other levels of government to air his concerns. He applauds state Rep. Matt Smith, who sits on the house appropriations committee and has asked for funding to improve Mt. Lebanon's uptown area. County councilman Vince Gastgeb, who convinced council to unanimously pass residency restrictions for sex offenders, a bill Colby had pushed the county to support, also impressed Colby.

Contact Colby at 724-746-1600 or dcolby@mtlebanon.org.



DAN MILLER

FIFTH WARD

Miller, 34, of Altoona Place, lives with his wife, Kim, and their 1-year-old son. He is an attorney in the Allegheny County Public Defender's Office and has been serving as a Mt. Lebanon volunteer firefighter.

Both of Miller's parents immigrated to the United States, one from the U.K., the other from Italy. "I was the first person on either side of my family to be born in this country," he says. He traces his interest in public service to his grandmother, who came to America from the U.K. in 1968. "My grandmother felt that being American brought us certain responsibilities," he says. "She told me how her voyage to America was the hardest thing she did in her life but how grateful we should all be to live here," he says.

Miller felt the call to public service after Hurricane Ivan in 2004 brought three feet of water into his and many other peoples' home, and Mt. Lebanon Fire Department responded to pump out his basement. "Before they moved on to another person's house, I asked how we could thank them. I was thinking about writing a check," he recalls. "But, they told me they were

short on volunteers, so I decided to join. This has allowed me to take part in public service at the local level, and I have been honored to do so, especially with such committed and knowledgeable men and women."

That work let him learn how local government works and introduced him to some of the community's needs.

Miller greatly admires Martin Luther King Jr., whose sentiments echoed those of Miller's grandmother. King's "call to service" should ring through every household," Miller says. "We are all neighbors, and our community will be strengthened by our increased involvement."

Contact Miller at 412-561-4370 or dmiller@mtlebanon.org. He hopes to have a Web site up soon.

Dan Miller and his wife, Kim, love to take their son to Mt. Lebanon Public Library. Miller is an avid reader, and there are few things he appreciates more than having access to the public library.