

Chamber celebrates the holidays

Town Clerk Acocella named "Man of the Year"



Photo/Mark Lungariello

Town Clerk Joseph Acocella was presented the Man of the Year award by Chamber of Commerce President Ada Angarano.

By MARK LUNGARIELLO

Some believe the country is facing its worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. But town business owners aren't exactly running for the hills just yet. In fact membership in the Harrison Chamber of Commerce (COC) is as strong as ever, judging by the large turnout at the Renaissance Westchester Hotel for the Dec. 15 Holiday Party. According to COC President Ada Angarano, there was such enthusiasm around the holiday party, she was turning away potential guests due to a 100-person limit.

"Membership is up," Angarano said, noting the COC has not raised fees in two years to promote continued support. Many feel that the plummeting economy only strengthens local chambers - as storeowners are feeling

CHAMBER continued on page 15

December 19, 2008 THE HARRISON REPORT • 15

CHAMBER continued from page 1

the squeeze of the recession, they unite to face their troubles together. "Every community is feeling the crisis," Angarano said. "That's why I try to promote our town, let people know you can shop right here in Harrison."

It turns out it is not just Harrison merchants who are uniting. According to the chamber president, the COC is receiving membership from White Plains businesses and as far as Greenwich Hospital. Harrison is also working more closely with the Mamaroneck Chamber of Commerce. "We're all helping each other, which is great," Angarano said.

Harrison Mayor Joan Walsh (D) said she believed it was more important than ever for government to work with the local chamber. "We're very supportive of them," she said. "Our business owners have pledged their heart and soul into their businesses for the benefit of our residents."

At the holiday dinner, the COC celebrated the end to one of the more difficult economic years in recent memory. They also honored their man of the year, Town Clerk Joseph Acocella (R). At last year's Christmas function, Angarano said that 27-year old Acocella would someday become mayor of town. This year, she amended that prediction. "Joe is going to go farther than mayor, I should have said he is going to be president some day,"

Angarano said.

Prior to being sworn in as clerk this year, Acocella worked for the local Recreation Department and Police Department. He also served as a Harrison Central School District trustee. Several guest speakers included former Harrison Mayor Steven Malfitano (R) and Assemblyman Greg Ball (R-Duchess and Putnam), a nine year friend of Acocella. Police Chief David Hall was noted as a bit of a mentor to the clerk. "He's always had Harrison first... What matters is your motivation and Joe's motivation is the community," Hall said.

Acocella said he was humbled by the recognition, but looked forward to continuing to work with the community. His goal in his first year as clerk has been to maintain faith in elected officials. "For far too many, it's easy to be disillusioned in government," he said. "I wanted to change the way people look



Mayor Joan Walsh reads a proclamation from the county naming Dec. 15 "Joseph Acocella Day" in Westchester.

at government."

Acocella told business owners of a "business registry" he hoped to launch in January 2009. The registry would be free of charge but would look to gather information on the names and types of businesses in town and make

the information available to the public. According to the clerk, many residents are not aware of all of the types of businesses that call Harrison home and some may be surprised of what local commerce can offer them in terms of service.