

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 2

John J. Anastasio

*Fort Pierce City Attorney
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

John J. Anastasio

Counselor-At-Law

3601 South East Ocean Boulevard, Suite 203

Stuart, Florida 34996

(772) 286-3336

E-mail: Contact.Office@psllaw.net

*If we could read the secret history of
our enemies, we should find in each
man's life, sorrow and suffering
enough to disarm all hostility.*

- Longfellow

19 October 2018

Colin Baenziger, President
Colin Baenziger & Associates
2055 South Atlantic Avenue, Suite 504
Daytona Beach Shores, Florida 32118
Email: Recruit37@cb-asso.com

Re: Fort Pierce City Attorney

My dear Mr. Baenziger:

Attached to this email is my resume for the above advertised position.

Under separate cover I am forwarding to you a copy of my, *A Blueprint for the City of Delray Beach City Attorney's Office* and *A Blueprint for the Village of Indiantown Village Attorney's Office* This presents in detail my legal, philosophical, and managerial thoughts on local government and governing bodies, both for an established and a startup municipality.

Thank you for taking time to review my application, in preparation for my interview.

Cordially,



John J. Anastasio

Email attachment: Resume

JOHN J. ANASTASIO

10410 South Ocean Drive # 502
Jensen Beach (St. Lucie County) Florida 34957
john@psllaw.net (772) 286-3336

SUMMARY

A self-motivated, self-sufficient, and accomplished lawyer offering more than 37 years of broad experience in the field of municipal law, involving the representation government entities, officials, employees and citizens.

Relevant experience includes expertise in the fields of:

Land Development Regulations	Public Employment Relations Commission
Community Redevelopment law	Real estate and foreclosure law
Public employee discipline under chapter 112	Employee grievances and hearings
Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)	Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
Drug Free Workplace and testing	Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)
Occupational Health and Safety Act (OSHA)	Labor Contract Issues
Health Insurance...Act (HIPAA)	Chapter 120 Administrative Procedures Act
Local government Section 1983 liability	Land Development Regulations
Federal and Florida Tort Claims Act	Injury, med-mal, and workers compensation
Commercial, contracts and construction litigation	Florida and federal jury trials, non-jury trials
Public policy analysis and rule drafting	Contract and pension plan analysis
Root cause and methodology analysis	Investment and financial statement analysis
Equal Opportunity Employment Comm. (EEOC)	Public records law and Sunshine Law
Administrative hearings, jury trials, and appeals	

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LAW EXPERIENCE

Public Entity and Public Official Representation:

Counsel to the Honorable Joann Faiella
Mayor, City of Port Saint Lucie
Commissioner, Saint Lucie Fire District

Engaged in rendering daily legal advice to former Mayor on all aspects of local government law. See profile summary for a partial list of issues.

Municipal Attorney's Office

Young Dorsey & Fisher

With Senator Dorsey serving as Municipal Attorney providing day to day legal support for the municipalities of:

- Butler
- Dover
- East Hanover
- Montville Municipal Utilities Authority

Special counsel for Parsippany on hiring issues.

This involved all aspects of municipal law, (see summary) including legal advice at public meetings, zoning, land use, redevelopment law, housing, police and other employee discipline, state and federal labor issues, Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC), eminent domain issues, construction and contract review and dispute litigation, municipal tax appeals, municipal electric company issues involving the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), public records and public meeting acts, drafting ordinances and resolutions, Guidance at Public Meetings, real property tax appeals, and Municipal Utility Authority (MUA) issues involving rate making methodology.

Attorney for the statutory Mount Arlington, Municipal Investigating Committee

Closed door Municipal Investigating committee authorized by statute, conducted the investigation of the Mount Arlington Police Department, drafted procedures for conducting closed door investigation hearings and procedures for disciplinary hearings, advised the governing body and the committee in all aspects of the proceedings, drafted charges brought against the defendants.

Special Prosecutor for Mount Arlington

Prosecution of the chief of Police and two other officers for violation of municipal regulations.

Authority Attorney for the Dover Housing Authority

Housing development, Section 8 low income housing, and related admirative and lability issues.

Eminent Domaine Commissioner

Appointed by Superior Court as one of the Commissioners to conduct a wide-ranging inquiry into valuation of condemned property and make findings and recommendations as to real property valuation.

SELECTED OTHER EXPERIENCES

Invalidated public records law records retention regulations, in an administrate rule challenge before the Division of Administrative Hearings, in which the State of Florida was forced to adopt a valid system for public records retention.

Numerous successful career service hearings under Chapter 112, including the only successful Career Service Board hearing in the Saint Lucie County Sheriff's Office, along with a number of successful appeals. Numerous other successful local government administrative hearings.

Extensive ligation experience in public records and Sunshine law litigation, successfully resulting in the dismissal of all charges against Mayor Faiella.

More than 75 appeals before the Fourth district court of appeals, and numerous appeal state and federal in other courts. Numerous reported appeal decisions, including *Finnegan v. Deutsche Bank*

Nat'l Tr. Co., 96 So. 3d 1093 (Fla. 4th DCA 2012) and *Dominko v. Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.*, 102 So. 3d 696 (Fla. 4th DCA 2012)) in the areas of real property foreclosure law, *Mancini v. Personalized Air Conditioning & Heating*, 702 So. 2d 1376 (Fla. 4th DCA 1997) in defamation law, *Dalem v. Dep't of Corr.*, 720 So. 2d 575 (Fla. 4th DCA 1998), involving public employee termination before Public Employees Relations Commission, *Gramm v. Port St. Lucie*, 574 So. 2d 1163 (Fla. 4th DCA 1991) and *Bernas v. Knowles*, 648 So. 2d 272 (Fla. 4th DCA 1995) involving police discipline, *Rauch v. Rauch*, 711 So. 2d 582 (Fla. 4th DCA 1998) involving the application of the full faith and credit provision of the United State constitution, *Janos v. State*, 763 So. 2d 1094 (Fla. 4th DCA 1999) involving the double jeopardy clause of the constitution

Authored *A Blueprint for the City of Delray Beach City Attorney's Office*, this mapped out most aspects of a City Attorney's Office and *A Blueprint for the Village of Indiantown Village Attorney's Office*. mapping out a Village Attorney's Office for a startup community, and *The Municipal Investigating Committee*, which mapped out procedures for the conduct of an investigating committee.

37 years involvement in numerous other fields of law, including civil trial, criminal trial, family law, civil rights law, and real estate development.

Appointment by the court as guardian ad litem for a minor in a multi-million-dollar settlement, resulting in the reduction of the minor's attorney fees by \$250,000.00.

Member of the Supreme court's electronic service committee.

FORMAL EDUCATION AND SEMINARS

Bachelor of Arts	Major: Government Minor Labor Relations	Seton Hall University
M.P.A. Program (Discontinued to go to law school).		New York University
Juris Doctor		Seton Hall University

SELECTED SEMINARS (FROM DOZENS):

Association of Municipal Attorneys Annual Seminar	Annual Environmental Law Seminar
City, County & Local Gov't Law Certification Review	Sunshine Law and Records & Ethics
Public Employment Labor Relations Forum	Civil Trial Certification Review
Criminal Trial Certification Review	Appellate Law Certification Review
Advanced Legal Writing and Drafting	Circuit Court Mediator Certification

MANAGEMENT

Managed law practice involving 1 to 4 employees over a 36-year period. Lead the Florida Bar Traffic Rules Committee with 40 judges, state attorneys, public defenders, clerks, motor vehicle administrators in the legislative drafting of court rules.

Candidate Introduction

John J. Anastasio

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts	Major: Government Minor Labor Relations	Seton Hall University
M.P.A. Program	(Discontinued to go to law school).	New York University
Juris Doctor		Seton Hall University

EXPERIENCE

I am a self-motivated, self-sufficient, and accomplished lawyer offering more than 37 years of broad experience generally. And, in the field of municipal law, involving the representation of government entities, officials, employees and citizens. My post graduate personal and professional studies include all fields of human endeavors.

BACKGROUND

Since 1989, I have served the Treasure Coast community offering legal services in many areas of law. This included most facets of municipal law, representing public officials, public employees and citizens. I have spent a lot of my life in the Sunrise City.

I have received a number of awards through the years, from Florida Rural Legal Services, for free civil and family cases performed for the poor on the Treasure Coast.

My first contact with the Treasure Coast was in 1969, when my maternal grandparents moved to Port Saint Lucie, then a city of 400 people. My ancestral homeland is the great state of New Jersey.

I first started learning leadership and organization through becoming an Eagle Scout. Later my first job out of college was as a District Executive with the Boy Scouts. My leadership training and experience has continued throughout my life.

My own law practice of 36 years has employed between 1 and 4 employees, including using 1 or 2 contract attorneys during the foreclosure crisis.

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

As City Attorney, I am not in charge of legal affairs that are just a “necessary evil” or just part of the bureaucratic overhead. A properly lead City Attorney’s Office for Fort Pierce adds value to the City. It does this not merely by addressing current legal issues. The City Attorney’s Office must address future problems and issues. I can do so through forecasting techniques,

John J. Anastasio

including environmental scanning of present circumstances and horizon scanning for future problems. Simply waiting for an issue to become a problem is unacceptable. Continuous analysis of all legal aspects of City operations to avoid surprise, build trust, and save tax dollars, must be the standard.

Leadership

My leadership style is that of servant leadership. While much has been written on this, I believe the Marine Corps sums it best with its philosophy of “officers eat last” and “lead from the front”. A leader exists not for themselves, but to make their team better. It is a leader’s first obligation to see to their team’s personal and professional welfare. It is the obligation to first be human in dealing with team members, as well as the people we serve. Only in this way can I leverage my own personal talents, in the service of the City.

A leader’s primary job is to train their replacement. This means every day seeking continual professional and personal development of each of your team members. Talent management and succession planning is essential. In this way I will produce for you a high-performance legal team for the City of Fort Pierce.

Trust

Trust building is essential. The Fort Pierce City Attorney’s Office has recently faced two crises of trust. The first on billing issues resulting in the creation of an in-house City Attorney’s Office. The next crisis followed in short order from toxic leadership, and conflict between the City Attorney and Senior Assistant City Attorney, resulting in the departure of the City’s first in-house City Attorney.

As City Attorney my number one priority is rebuilding trust with the Commission, the staff, and the community. Trust is a pragmatic, tangible, actionable asset that can be systematically created. It involves proving: integrity (showing you walk the talk), good intent (showing good motives), credibility (the ability to perform), and establishing a good track record (personal and team performance). It also means, transparency, transparency, transparency, in all things. It’s not the mistakes we make, but what we learn from them, that improves as well as defines us.

What will you say about me when I’m gone?

The legacy I seek working for the City is the creation of a permanent culture, that embodies respect, vision and productivity as its goals. In the same way the police department motto is to “protect and serve”, as City Attorney the motto of the City Attorney’s Office will be “Law, Logic, and Compassion”.

Priorities. Dust in the wind, or...

John J. Anastasio

Again, and again, in business and government, we see promising initiatives fail, and promises and programs turn to memories, dust in the wind. We chuckle at the saying, “When you’re up to your waist in alligators, it’s hard to remember your objective was to draining the swamp.” How will I avoid that problem? With two techniques.

First, as part of a book I am currently writing titled *Legal Operations in Local Government*, I have developed what I call City Attorney Leadership Focal Points or LFPs. It is a concept to provide vision, order, and discipline despite hectic day to day operations, which can distract any City Attorney from achieving their goals.

It involves categorizing important activities, prioritizing them, and allocating time for each weekly without fail, so that things do not get lost in the rush. It is the time allocation which is essential and allows constant movement forward of essentials. See graphic attached.

Second, long term priorities (6 to 12 months), will be achieved through the *4 Disciples of Execution*. Working on the wildly important (1 or 2 projects only that will make a difference). Acting on lead measures (20% of activities produce 80% of the results). Keeping a compelling scoreboard (keeping each team member on track with a scoreboard that motivates). Creating a cadence of accountability (a weekly process that highlights successes, analyzes failures, and course-corrects).

These two techniques will allow me as City Attorney and my legal team, to keep on track and sustain a performance management system, that produces a high-performance legal team.

Priorities Long Term (6 to 12 months)

1. Top down review of every ordinance, resolution, policy, procedure and contract.
2. Development of a City Attorney Policy Manual, Procedure Manual, including procedures for the creation, organization, and publication of formal City Attorney Opinions, and creating of procedures for turning the City Attorney’s Office into a Center for Lessons Learned.

Implementation of the first set of long-term priorities

These priorities are on an ongoing process. It is an expansion of Goal G8 of the 2018 City Strategic Plan, to be done in-house. Each month the City Commission and the City manager will be presented with finished work for that month, for consideration, revision and approval. Chapter by chapter of ordinances, department by department of policies and procedures, contracts by topic areas and City Attorney policies and procedures.

Monthly in small strides, step by step we will avoid the problem of giving someone a drink with a fire hose, rather than a garden hose. It’s time to get off the information overload merry-go-round with large legal projects.

John J. Anastasio

Immediate priorities

1. Relationship development with the Commission, City Staff, other local governments, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), and the public
2. Establishing new impact related metrics for evaluating City Attorney Office. All ordinances and resolutions are not created equal. A ceremonial resolution should not be scored the same way as a land development regulation or some other regulatory function.
3. Immediately scrapping the City Attorney's Office Mission Statement. The present mission statement provides neither operational or ethical guidance.
4. Immediately scrapping the City Attorney's Guidelines on providing legal services. The present Guidelines are unworkable, and violate civil and criminal law.
5. Establishing accountability rules for the use of outside counsel when needed. This includes rules for timekeeping, legal budgets, litigation monitoring, and compliance with the Public Records Law.

Implementation of immediate priorities

Spending regular quality time and thoughtful discussions with the Mayor and each City Commissioner at least weekly, to impartially provide full support for each governing body member's political agenda. And, develop a deep working relationship with each member.

Spending the time daily to learn what the City Manager and each Department head really needs, to "plow the road" and reduce legal distractions, so they can spend the maximum time managing.

Relationship development with city employees, other local governments, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), and citizens. Frequent police ride-alongs, visits to community associations, churches, temples and mosques and consultations with other government attorneys, to provide depth to legal public policy options generated.

I guess I'm not having breakfast or lunch alone for the foreseeable future, and perhaps even dinner.

Other Challenges

In an appearance before the Tallahassee City Commission earlier this year, I was asked what the most significant legal issue faced by City government in Florida. My response was compliance with the Public Records law and the Sunshine Law. This was because these issues had the greatest potential to impact City Commissioners on personal, political, and legal (civil and

John J. Anastasio

criminal) levels. Too often City Attorneys do not proactively protect governing body members, so that they can do the job of representing the people.

Litigation style.

There are exceptions. Some people are inherently unreasonable. Sometimes time is too short. But, generally, if the City faces litigation, I would consider it a failure on my part as City Attorney not to have avoided litigation.

If the City or its employees or policies are wrong, then we squarely face it. And, when necessary, promptly pay full and fair compensation. If the City is right, then aggressive tactics to swiftly bring the litigation to a conclusion must be pursued. On occasion, even initiating litigation, if it is advantageous.

But, we must always remember that we're the good guys (and gals). The question for every piece of litigation, and every action taken by me as City Attorney, but always being with the question, "But, is it right?"

Final thoughts

My successes

Two come to mind. A number of years ago I was appointed by the Circuit Court as guardian ad litem, to review a multi-million-dollar settlement for a minor, who suffered burns over 90 percent of his body, from a large commercial plane crash. I spent three solid days reviewing boxes upon boxes of records in West Palm Beach. In the end, I was able to reduce the attorney fees by \$250,000.00 for the young man. I insured the young man received just not just from the airline, but from his own attorney.

A few years ago, in connection with the representation of Port Saint Lucie Mayor Joann Faiella, I challenged the validity of the decades old public records retention system of the State of Florida. I forced the Attorney General's office to admit it was invalid, requiring the entire system to be re-evaluated after public hearings across the state, and later adoption of valid retention schedules. The twin philosophies of "question everything" and "think outside the box" brought that tremendous litigation victory.

A failure.

A few years ago, I received a \$500,000.00 jury verdict in federal court. I did not push my client hard enough to settle for less than the judgment amount. (The post judgment offer was \$347,000.00) Later the court reduced the judgment to \$35,000.00. A valuable, but costly lesson in humility.

John J. Anastasio

Employee terminations

I have had to fire a few staff in my time. The best way to summarize my employment approach is hire slow and fire fast. It does no good to keep an employee on any longer than necessary. It is not fair to the employee and poses a danger to the organization.

The Media

I have always had what I consider a good relationship with the press. In the past I have when appropriate, initiated contact with the press.

Leisure.

I freely admit my addiction. That's right, I'm a book addict. I enjoy sucking up information on every field of human endeavor. I particularly enjoy studying strategy, decision science and public policy analysis. Of course, while listening to any kind of jazz. But, since a person does not live by bread alone, I'll put myself up against any chef in the county.

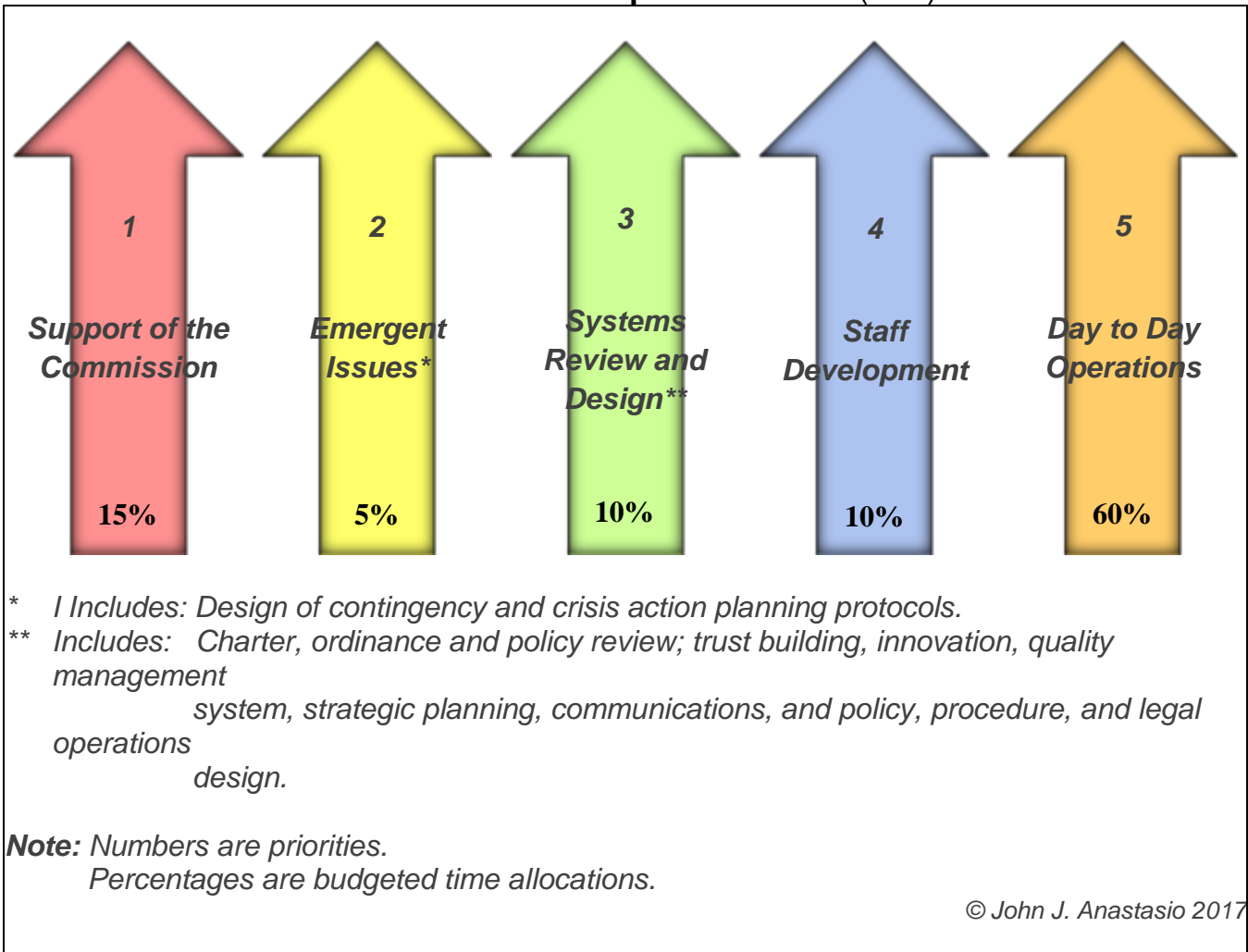
SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

1. Communicative
2. Driven
3. Meticulous
4. Dedicated
5. Creative
6. Team player

REASON FOR WANTING TO LEAVE CURRENT OR MOST RECENT JOB?

One-hundred years ago, the richest man in history, measured by today's dollars, John D. Rockefeller said, I spent half a lifetime acquiring a fortune and the other half giving it away. I have spent half a lifetime acquiring legal and public policy knowledge and experience. I wish to spend the second half of my life giving that knowledge and experience away in public service.

**City Attorney
Prioritized Leadership Focal Points (LFP)**



CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
JOHN J. ANASTASIO**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County St. Lucie County, FL	No Records Found
State Florida	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County St. Lucie County, FL	No Records Found
Federal Florida	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Florida	No Records Found
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Credit

Satisfactory

Bankruptcy

Results Pending

Education

JD – Seton Hall University
Enrollment – New York University
Confirmed

BA – Seton Hall University
Verifications Pending

Employment

Confirmed

Florida Bar Number

Member in Good Standing
Bar #722367

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern.

**Background Check Summary for
JOHN J. ANASTASIO
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: John J. Anastasio

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes No
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes No
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes No
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
6. Have you ever been convicted of driving while intoxicated?
Yes No
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No
8. Do you have a personal My Space, Face Book or other type of Web Page?
Yes No
9. Do you have a personal Twitter Account? (not used)
Yes No
10. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes No
11. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.

Attested to: 
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to Lynelle@cb-asso.com or via fax to (888) 539-6531 **no later than 5:00 PM PST 11/01/18.**
(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

Section 2

CB&A Reference Notes

**Reference Notes
John J. Anastasio**

Alan Bernstein – Attorney, Law Office of Alan S. Bernstein P.A., FL (954) 347-1000

Mr. Bernstein has known Mr. Anastasio since 1998 where they met at a seminar. Mr. Anastasio is sharp and he has an excellent command of the law. On one occasion he was asked an administrative law question and knew the answer right away. He meticulously covers all the details. He does a great deal of work in the appellate courts; a person has to have a deep knowledge of the law to accomplish this.

Mr. Anastasio has a great ability to look at a situation analytically, figure it out, put the pieces together and get to the bottom of the situation. He is an extremely hard worker; he is dedicated to getting tasks completed. Many times, he completes tasks ahead of time. When he starts something, he finishes it. Mr. Anastasio is responsive and his responses are timely. He solves problems very well and at times can see a problem and solve it before it comes up.

Mr. Anastasio helps his fellow attorneys. He came to watch part of a trial Mr. Bernstein was working on. Afterwards, they went to the office and were discussing the case. Mr. Bernstein had some questions and Mr. Anastasio helped out. He is a really smart individual and by the end of the night, Mr. Anastasio had the details of the case down.

Mr. Anastasio makes solid recommendations to elected bodies. When counseled on a situation, he did the research, saw how things were running, and then came up with a suggestion to help their efficiency. He seeks to always follow the law, but looks for solutions to meet the desires of his client. He is a consensus builder and does it within the parameters of the law.

Mr. Anastasio has a reputation for being thorough and a hard worker. He makes excellent decisions when dealing with the law and negotiates incredibly well on behalf of the party he represents almost to the chagrin of opposing counsel. In one case Mr. Bernstein and Mr. Anastasio were negotiating, the other side became quite aggressive and disrespectful. Mr. Anastasio did not stoop to that level; he kept his cool and got everyone to a consensus.

Mr. Bernstein is aware of Mr. Anastasio's experience in the following areas: constitutional law, contracts, dealing with a homeless population, utilities (represented the Mayor in a case regarding utilities), labor and personnel matters, and development, redevelopment and land use.

Mr. Anastasio stays on top of things and does a good job of managing the office as well as handling the legal affairs of his office. He has an excellent person who works with him as well. They anticipate each other's needs. Mr. Anastasio keeps Mr. Bernstein informed of the cases he is working.

Mr. Anastasio is an experienced, smart speaker. He thinks before he talks and works well with the public. He also works well with elected officials and is considered responsive.

Mr. Bernstein is not aware of Mr. Anastasio being involved with anything controversial. He does not know of anything in Mr. Anastasio's background which would cause a reasonable person

**Reference Notes
John J. Anastasio**

concern. There are always people who have issues with other people, however Mr. Bernstein does not personally know of anyone who shares a different opinion of Mr. Anastasio than the one he has shared.

Mr. Anastasio will make an amazing City or County Attorney. Mr. Bernstein would hire him; he is the smartest person Mr. Bernstein knows! A City Attorney needs to be aware of the multiple administrative legal issues which can come up. Mr. Anastasio has the knowledge to combat those issues. He is good at bringing people together for a consensus. He comes up with solutions. He is a likeable, intelligent person who has the knowledge, intellect and drive to succeed. You could not find a more qualified or quality person than Mr. Anastasio.

Words or phrases used to describe John Anastasio:

- Relentless,
- Intellectual,
- Thoughtful,
- Hard working,
- Politically correct, and
- Knowledgeable in the law.

Strengths: Analytical ability to look at something, knowledgeable, gives thorough answers, good at seeing the issues and does not give up.

Weaknesses: None identified.

JoAnn Faiella – Former Mayor, Port St. Lucie, FL (772) 708-8052

Ms. Faiella has known Mr. Anastasio since 2010. She considers Mr. Anastasio a long time friend. He is a great, passionate attorney who has represented her in the past. He shows his passion by working hard, long hours, working pro bono and helping people out. He has a good command of the law. He answers questions, but also researches to have the best facts available for his clients. He is a compassionate man who fights for what he believes in.

Mr. Anastasio has great communications skills. He has experience dealing with the public and is good at it. He is incredibly verbal and being transparent is important to him. He breaks down complex ideas to make them understandable to his clients and lays out the options which are available.

Mr. Anastasio is responsive and responds in a timely manner. He accomplishes tasks on time. He solves problems and finds solutions; he is very honest and will not get involved in anything illegal. Mr. Anastasio negotiates well on behalf of his client. Ms. Faiella went to Mr. Anastasio in reference to the city she represented. He advised her on which direction to take a situation to be

**Reference Notes
John J. Anastasio**

successful. He makes good recommendations to elected bodies. He also makes solid decisions when dealing with the law. Mr. Anastasio works well with elected officials, City Manager, Department Heads, City Attorneys and staff. They all like him.

Mr. Anastasio does a good job of managing the office as well as handling the legal affairs through delegating to his staff. He has reliable people working with him. Mr. Anastasio keeps Ms. Faiella informed of what he is working on. While working on Sober Homes in Port Saint Lucie, Mr. Anastasio informed Ms. Faiella on the way things were structured and ordinances which were in place to ensure reasonable accommodations. With this knowledge, they placed six residents per house.

Mr. Anastasio has experience in constitutional law, contracts, environmental law, utilities, dealing with a homeless population, labor and personnel matters, and development, redevelopment and land use. He is incredibly knowledgeable about city and county ordinances.

Ms. Faiella does not know of anything in Mr. Anastasio's conduct or background which would concern an employer. She does not know of anyone who may have a different opinion of Mr. Anastasio, he is well spoken of.

Ms. Faiella would hire Mr. Anastasio as a City Attorney. He will make an excellent City or County Attorney because of his passion and commitment to people. He will let you know if you are wrong and tell you if you are right and support you. He gives back to the community. He is a very impressive person.

Words or phrases used to describe John Anastasio:

- Loyal,
- Respectful,
- Conscientious,
- Into his work, and
- Wants to do the right thing.

Strengths: Loves his work, does the best for his clients, stubborn, does not relax.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Sylvia Majik - Attorney, Municipality Corporation or Organization, FL (772) 212-5632

Ms. Majik has known Mr. Anastasio since 1989. Mr. Anastasio is an off the chart attorney. He is the one no one likes to see walk into the courtroom if they are not 100% prepared because they know he will be. He works long hours to prepare. Mr. Anastasio is extremely intelligent and has an incredible memory; he remembers statutes. He is a good educator; he relayed knowledge to Ms. Majik in a way which was accessible. They interact on both a professional and personal basis. Mr. Anastasio is a sociable, nice man. He is approachable.

Reference Notes
John J. Anastasio

Mr. Anastasio is responsive and his responses are timely. He has an excellent support staff. He does a great job of managing the office as well as the legal affairs. Mr. Anastasio keeps his clients informed of progress along the way. He keeps others apprised of what he is working on through face-to-face meetings. Mr. Anastasio works well with elected officials. Even though he may be in charge, Mr. Anastasio involves others and makes everyone feel involved. At times he may seem hurried, but he works really well with people.

Mr. Anastasio unequivocally solves problems! He comes up with solutions and different avenues to accomplish the goals of the client. He accomplishes tasks in a timely manner. He makes good decisions when dealing with the law by examining all the options, weighing the pros and cons, and deciding the best course of action. He does all this within the confines of the law.

Mr. Anastasio negotiates well on behalf of the party he represents. There was a case from couple of years ago; his client wanted something which Mr. Anastasio viewed detrimental to the client. Mr. Anastasio told the client, the client reviewed Mr. Anastasio's opinion and followed his advice and was not sorry. Mr. Anastasio teaches as he goes. He does not make recommendations without understanding the flip side of things; he is well rounded in this way.

Ms. Majik is aware of Mr. Anastasio's experience in constitutional law, contracts, and development, redevelopment and land use. He has a great deal of experience dealing with the public and is better at it than most attorneys.

Ms. Majik is not aware of anything in Mr. Anastasio's background or conduct which would concern an employer. She does not know of anyone who may have a different opinion of Mr. Anastasio than the one she has shared. He has a reputation for being a hard worker and a diligent advocate.

If Ms. Majik needed an attorney, she would hire Mr. Anastasio. He is a generous, big hearted person. Mr. Anastasio is driven, approachable, and quite knowledgeable; however he is not intimidating about it. He has been in the area for 30 years and knows local lawyers and politicians. He makes contacts well, he can put himself out there; he is not reticent. Mr. Anastasio will make an excellent City or County Attorney. He will work hard for the City. If the City needs items brought up to date, reprogramming or exposure, he will do it. He will be a very strong leader.

Words or phrases used to describe John Anastasio:

- Hard worker,
- Loves his job,
- Persistent,
- Thorough,
- Teaches when appropriate, and
- Always prepared.

**Reference Notes
John J. Anastasio**

Strengths: Intelligent, knows the law, good memory, good educator, diligent, persistent and a hard worker.

Weaknesses: Can come off as aggressive.

Michael Flee – Legal Secretary, Law Office of John J. Anastasio, FL (772) 979-6900

Mr. Flee has known and worked for Mr. Anastasio since 2002. Mr. Anastasio is an extremely competent attorney. He has handled personal legal issues for Mr. Flee's family as well. Mr. Flee holds a great deal of faith in Mr. Anastasio; he always puts the client first. Mr. Anastasio has a strong command of the law, but always double checks his work to make sure he is giving up to date information.

Mr. Anastasio is a problem solver. He tries to find solutions and a way to make it work within the means of the law. He has done what all other attorneys said was impossible. On one occasion he got a client's license reversed from a habitual traffic offender status. He helps with foreclosures. Most of this assistance to his clients has all been done through research.

Mr. Anastasio manages his office well and handles legal affairs. He relies on his staff to look over work he has completed and make sure wording is understandable to everyone. He is a positive, uplifting employer who encourages his employees to follow their passions. He keeps Mr. Flee informed of cases he is working on. They have regular discussions on cases, so Mr. Flee can do some of the ground work.

Mr. Anastasio accomplishes tasks in a timely manner. He responds quickly to clients. He makes good decisions when dealing with the law. One client did not take Mr. Anastasio's advice in a legal matter, he returned years later and said Mr. Anastasio was correct in the advice he had given. Mr. Anastasio negotiates well on behalf of the party he represents. He makes good recommendations to elected bodies, and works well with elected officials and the staff at the City. He likes to socialize and get people's input on what he does.

Mr. Anastasio has experience with contracts, constitutional law, environmental law, dealing with the homeless population, utilities, labor and personnel matters and development, redevelopment and land use. He is also experienced in dealing with the public. Mr. Anastasio has dealt with the news with some older cases. He thinks about what he wants to say and has it written out. He does not answer a question in which he does not know the answer.

Over the many years Mr. Flee has known Mr. Anastasio, he has not been aware of anything controversial in his conduct or background. Mr. Flee does not know of anyone who may have a different opinion of Mr. Anastasio. Clients only have a positive opinion of him. Mr. Flee would hire Mr. Anastasio, given the chance. He will make an exceptional County or City Attorney.

Reference Notes
John J. Anastasio

Words or phrases used to describe John Anastasio:

- Smart,
- Hard working,
- Dedicated,
- Trustworthy,
- Responsible, and
- Charismatic.

Strengths: Research, troubleshooting and problem solving,

Weaknesses: Time, sometimes over thinks issues.

Troy McDonald – Former City Commissioner, City of Stuart, FL (772) 260-9458

Mr. McDonald has known Mr. Anastasio since 1998. Mr. McDonald has used Mr. Anastasio's services through Mr. McDonald's personal business. They have interacted with regards to legal situations as well as discussing working in government and governmental law. Mr. Anastasio is a smart and capable attorney. He has a great command of the law.

Mr. Anastasio is responsive. He responds and accomplishes tasks in a timely manner. His success as an attorney demonstrates his excellent decision making skills when dealing with the law. Mr. Anastasio seeks to find solutions to problems or situations. He is experienced dealing with the public and constitutional law. He has done criminal defense and had some high profile cases.

Mr. Anastasio has encountered controversial situations as an attorney. He represented the former mayor of Port Saint Lucie on non-criminal public records violation. He successfully represented her as her private attorney. Mr. McDonald is not aware of anything controversial or concerning in Mr. Anastasio's personal background or conduct. Mr. McDonald does not know of anyone who may have a different opinion of Mr. Anastasio than the one he has stated.

Mr. Anastasio was up for the City Attorney position while Mr. McDonald was the City Commissioner for the City of Stuart. Mr. McDonald voted against hiring Mr. Anastasio. He had to compare Mr. Anastasio to the other candidate, who had a slight edge. If Mr. McDonald were looking for a City Attorney, Mr. Anastasio would make the short list. He will make a great City or County Attorney.

Words or phrases used to describe John Anastasio:

- Intelligent,
- Smart,
- Intuitive,
- Able,
- Capable, and
- Flexible.

Reference Notes
John J. Anastasio

Strengths: Incredibly smart and intellectual person with a strong personality.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Barbara Davis - Client, Hobe Sound, FL (772) 214-6941

Ms. Davis has known Mr. Anastasio since 1998. Mr. Anastasio is a fantastic attorney. He is quite helpful and has a good amount of patience in explaining things. He interacts well and does wonders for his clients, is a good person, and a joy to work with. He is very knowledgeable. When asked a question, typically Mr. Anastasio knows the answer right off the top of his head.

Mr. Anastasio is responsive and does so in a timely manner. He always accomplishes tasks on time, and does what he says he is going to do. He solves problems in an exceptionally efficient manner. He makes first-rate decisions when dealing with the law and makes good recommendations to elected bodies. He has worked well, in the past, with the City Manager for the Town of Stuart. Ms. Davis has been part of the mediation process with Mr. Anastasio and he negotiates incredibly well on behalf of his client.

Mr. Anastasio finds solutions to problems. If the law does not allow it, he will not do it. He gives his client reasons and definitions of the law and why something cannot be done. If it is possible, he tells how he is going to do it and why.

Ms. Davis is aware of Mr. Anastasio's experience in environmental law, dealing with a homeless population, and labor and personnel matters. As a client, Mr. Anastasio kept Ms. Davis informed of the developments in her case. He or his office contacted her personally as well as following up with letters; everything was down on paper. Mr. Anastasio does a good job managing the office as well as the legal affairs. He is experienced at dealing with the public and is good at it.

Ms. Davis is not aware of anything controversial in Mr. Anastasio's past or present which would cause concern. She does not know of anyone who may have a differing opinion of Mr. Anastasio. She would hire Mr. Anastasio and thinks he would make an ideal City or County Attorney.

Words or phrases used to describe John Anastasio:

- Reliable,
- Efficient,
- Trustworthy,
- Competent,
- Positive, and
- Good attitude.

Strengths: Punctual, reliable, honest, diligent and expedient in his processes.

Weaknesses: None identified.

**Reference Notes
John J. Anastasio**

Michael Spotts - Attorney, Spotts Law Offices, FL (772) 781-7878

Mr. Spotts has known Mr. Anastasio since 1989. They have interacted professionally that entire time. Mr. Anastasio is an exceptional attorney. He has a command of the law in a great many areas, due to his experience working in many different areas of law. If Mr. Spotts did not have experience in a particular area of law, he refers a client to Mr. Anastasio because of his experience.

Mr. Anastasio communicates clearly. He breaks down complicated issues and puts them into understandable and meaningful terms. He is candid; he tells a client what they need to know under the circumstances. He is responsive and does so in a timely manner.

Every time Mr. Spotts has gone against Mr. Anastasio in a case, he has been a tough opponent. He is good at what he does and is very thorough. He does not play games or try to hide anything, everyone knows when you work with Mr. Anastasio you know what you are getting. He fights hard-nosed and does it within in the bounds of the law. While working on cases, they kept each other up to date on what they were working on.

Mr. Anastasio is a problem solver and solution oriented. He expresses to his clients their best options. He tries to find solutions before going into litigation. He makes quality decision in regards to the law. Mr. Anastasio is an extremely accomplished negotiator. He knows where he can push an issue because of his strength in that position and where he should back off.

Mr. Anastasio has experience in constitutional law, contracts, utilities, labor and personnel matters, as well as development, redevelopment and land use. Mr. Anastasio finds obscure procedural issues fascinating. He has experience dealing with the public while working on high profile cases. Mr. Anastasio managed the press well and stayed clear and to the point.

Mr. Anastasio manages his office as well as his legal affairs. He has always been on the cutting edge of technology, he is computer savvy. Mr. Anastasio constantly looks for ways to increase the efficiency in the office.

Mr. Anastasio was involved in a controversial case where he represented a police officer who had been fired. Mr. Anastasio got the firing overturned and the officer was reinstated. Mr. Spotts has only interacted with Mr. Anastasio professionally; he has no knowledge of anything in his professional life which would concern an employer. Mr. Spotts does not know of anyone who may have a differing opinion than the one he has stated about Mr. Anastasio.

As a former Assistant City Attorney for Fort Pierce, Mr. Spotts has a good understanding of municipalities. The City will get the information they need to know in every area of the situation if they hired Mr. Anastasio. Mr. Anastasio should be the first choice for a new hire. He has lived on the Treasure Coast for close to 30 years. He has connections to the community, knows the law, and knows what municipal lawyers need to do in this area of Florida to accomplish what their client needs. He has seen the growth of the community and has been a resident through all of those changes.

Reference Notes
John J. Anastasio

Mr. Anastasio has a nice way about him. He is approachable and does not put off airs. A person would not be intimidated to ask him questions. Mr. Anastasio would bring stability to the City. He is highly capable and will make an excellent City or County Attorney.

Words or phrases used to describe John Anastasio:

- Candid,
- Diligent,
- Vast command of many different areas of the law,
- Responsive, and
- Smart.

Strengths: Ability to communicate, his candor, and he informs his clients of a number of different options available to them.

Weaknesses: Has a strong New Jersey accent, can lead to preconceived notions about him.

**Jennifer Wildonger – Administrative Assistant, Law Office of John J. Anastasio, FL
(772) 626-3875**

Ms. Wildonger has known and worked for Mr. Anastasio since 2014. Mr. Anastasio is an incredibly capable attorney. He has a huge amount of passion for his work, is meticulous and spends a great deal of time on a case. He makes first-rate decisions in regards to the law and has a good command of it. He gives good advice right off the top of his head. He is an avid researcher who researches every angle.

Mr. Anastasio is a laid back employer who does not lose his temper. He is always professional yet friendly and is great to work for. He is responsive and accomplishes tasks in a timely manner with help from his staff. He always makes deadlines. Mr. Anastasio spends more time than any lawyer Ms. Wildonger knows, making sure the client gets the best possible service. He negotiates well on behalf of his clients

One of Mr. Anastasio's strengths is solving problems. He looks at a situation from all angles to find the best solution. He always finds a solution if there is one to be had. He had a client who was having troubles with a construction company. Some of the evidence was not making sense; Mr. Anastasio dug up old statutes and history and laid it out to win the case.

Mr. Anastasio has chaired multiple committees; he takes the time to give advice which is easy to understand, yet direct. He makes excellent recommendations to these elected bodies.

**Reference Notes
John J. Anastasio**

Mr. Anastasio ran for congress so he has experience in and a good grasp of constitutional law. He has touched base on some environmental law. He has experience with contracts, utilities, labor and personnel matters, and development, redevelopment and land use. Ms. Wildonger believes he worked with the homeless population in New Jersey.

Ms. Wildonger is kept informed of what Mr. Anastasio is working on through email, notes, and text messages. He keeps her up to date so she is aware of the happenings in the office. Mr. Anastasio manages the office well; he is on top of everything. He has a good handle of the office as well as the legal affairs.

Mr. Anastasio works well with the public; juries warm up to him quickly. He does a great deal of pro bono work. He has done speeches and spoken at conferences. He is quite personable and gets along well with people. He is responsive, including with elected officials. He is very diplomatic and tries to understand everyone's view point. He does a great deal of research and brings the facts. He calmly listens to all sides, lays out the facts and advises on how to proceed.

Ms. Wildonger is not aware of anything in Mr. Anastasio's background which would concern an employer. He has not been involved in anything controversial in the time she has known him. Mr. Anastasio maintains good relationships; Ms. Wildonger has not met anyone who has not liked Mr. Anastasio. She is not aware of anyone who may have a different opinion of Mr. Anastasio.

Ms. Wildonger would hire Mr. Anastasio as a City Attorney. He will make a good City or County Attorney because Mr. Anastasio's first love is Government Municipal Law. It is where he started, and he is passionate about it. He is good at delegating and enjoys challenges; he will thrive in this environment. Mr. Anastasio wants to make a difference and could accomplish that through being City Attorney.

Words or phrases used to describe John Anastasio:

- Thoughtful,
- Meticulous,
- Responsible,
- Approachable,
- Hard working, and
- Dedicated.

Strengths: Meticulous with the details, does what it takes to get a task done, great personality, very personable, easy to get along with and tough but fair.

Weaknesses: Time management, spends a great deal of time on a case.

**Reference Notes
John J. Anastasio**

Susan Morgan - Client, Jensen Beach, FL (772) 260-3474

Ms. Morgan has known Mr. Anastasio since 2008; he has handled legal situations for herself and others. Mr. Anastasio is an extremely efficient and effective attorney. He has a great command of the law and has a better understanding of constitutional, local and federal laws than anyone Ms. Morgan has spoken with. He is as efficient with family and business law as he is with prosecution.

Mr. Anastasio interacts professionally with his clients. He accomplishes tasks in a timely manner and is responsive and does so quickly. He communicates via email or phone calls. He responds between two to six hours later, but no later than the next business day. When presented with a question, Mr. Anastasio thoughtfully considers all sides and then advises immediately. He is persuasive so the client can make an informed decision quickly and effectively. He sticks to the point and brings up arguments which are to the point and suggest an effective way to handle a situation.

Mr. Anastasio manages the office well as well as handles the legal affairs. He has a dedicated employee; the shop is run in an exceptionally effective manner.

One of Mr. Anastasio's greatest talents is solving problems and assisting his clients. Due to his knowledge base, he gives responses or reactions based on law and not conjecture. He seeks to find solutions, if the law does not fit the circumstance, he searches for a law which does fit it and negotiates from that position.

Mr. Anastasio makes high-quality decisions when dealing with the law. With the many projects he has worked on, he has made decisions which have resulted in success. His presentation of a law suit or case is incredible effective. In Ms. Morgan's personal cases and the ones she has referred to him; he has been successful. Mr. Anastasio is humble in his success. He has worked effectively with a few different city governments.

Mr. Anastasio has a great deal of experience with contracts. With his wealth of experience, he is very strong in constitutional law. One of his special interests is environmental law; he is an encyclopedia on the subject. One of Mr. Anastasio's greatest talents is his negotiating skills. He works with both sides to come to a binding agreement.

In every case, Mr. Anastasio has been faced with some level of controversy. He handles it well. As to his personal life, Ms. Morgan is not aware of anything in his background or conduct which would concern an employer. Ms. Morgan has not encountered anyone who has had an unkind or unprofessional word to say about Mr. Anastasio.

Mr. Anastasio has a big heart. He is filled with compassion and is kind and thoughtful. Any elected body will be blessed with his participation and would be amazed at his ability to effectively communicate. He has a complete base understanding of laws and how they are written and pulls laws and statutes out from his wealth of knowledge to answer questions. Ms. Morgan would hire

Reference Notes
John J. Anastasio

him. His value would best be realized by working for the public as a City or County Attorney. He is a tremendous asset.

Words or phrases used to describe John Anastasio:

- Knowledgeable,
- Compassionate,
- Effective,
- Good humored,
- Brilliant, and
- Humble.

Strengths: Knowledge base, has helped people on both sides of the legal field (defense and prosecution), efficient in all areas of the law.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Prepared by: Stephanie Bailey
Colin Baenziger & Associates

Section 2

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. Anastasio
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

St. Lucie News Tribune (FL)
September 16, 2015

Ex-PSL Mayor Could Face Trial

Author: Nicole Rodriguez

Former Mayor JoAnn Faiella could be back in court after the appellate court reversed last year's dismissal of charges that she violated Florida's Government-in-the-Sunshine Law. A Martin County judge in May 2014 dismissed two civil charges against Faiella for deleting text messages — which are considered public records — from her city-issued cellphone and speaking with another City Council member about city business outside of a public meeting, both in violation of the Sunshine Law. Judge Kathleen Roberts dismissed both cases, ruling they had expired under the speedy-trial rule of criminal proceedings. Prosecutors appealed. The dismissal was reversed Aug. 25 by a panel of circuit judges that serves as the appeals court, documents show. "The Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure do not apply," the ruling stated. "The case is reversed and remanded for disposal on the merits." Faiella's attorney, **John Anastasio**, said he plans to appeal the decision this week. "It was just kind of odd they threw up their hands and said the rules of criminal procedure don't apply, but they don't tell us what applies," **Anastasio** said Tuesday. If the appellate court upholds the ruling, the case could go to trial in March, **Anastasio** said. Faiella could not be reached for comment Tuesday, but is taking the ruling "all in stride," **Anastasio** said.

Faiella was charged on Dec. 3, 2013, after then-city manager and now Mayor Greg Oravec publicly released 85 pages of emails and text messages in February 2013 that suggested city officials were not conducting government business in public and communicating privately about ousting him from his position. The release prompted an investigation by the State Attorney's Office. Oravec received a severance package from the city when he left his post shortly after the documents were released. Councilman Ron Bowen and Councilwoman Shannon Martin also were charged as a result of the 10-month long investigation. Bowen, who was charged with a second-degree criminal misdemeanor and suspended from the council for four months, pleaded no contest to a civil infraction of using former City Attorney Roger Orr to poll council members on Oravec's employment. He paid a \$300 fine and was reinstated to the City Council in April 2014. Bowen sued the city for reimbursement for his legal fees. The case is still pending. Martin was charged with a civil infraction for deleting text messages and paid \$250.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Stuart News (FL)

June 19, 2014

Faiella Lawsuit Placed on Hold

Author: Nicole Rodriguez

A suit filed by Mayor JoAnn Faiella against the state, alleging it didn't follow its own protocol in making Florida records retention schedules, has been put on hold until at least September. Tallahassee Judge Lawrence P. Stevenson issued an order Tuesday, canceling a Monday morning administrative hearing in St. Lucie County and suspending it until Sept. 23, court documents show. "Going forward with the scheduled hearing under these circumstances would be a waste of time and resources of all concerned," Stevenson wrote in the order. The delay gives the Division of Library and Information Services time to hold a series of workshops that gives the public a chance to give input on the rule-making process and incorporate the comments in its general records retention schedule, documents state. The Department of State is also listed as a respondent. The workshops are scheduled for July, September and November. An initial workshop will be held July 30 at 11 a.m. in the R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough St., in Tallahassee, State Department documents state. Subsequent workshops were not scheduled but will be held at various locations around the state.

John Anastasio, Faiella's Stuart attorney, said the state scheduling the workshops is a win. It should have held the hearings years ago when the retention rules were made, he said. Faiella is challenging the same record retention rules that prompted state prosecutors to cite her last year with a noncriminal infraction for allegedly deleting text messages from her city-issued phone. She faced a second civil infraction for allegedly privately discussing city business on her phone when a public meeting wasn't scheduled. Both infractions were dismissed May 9 in a ruling being appealed by the State Attorney's Office. Martin County Judge Kathleen Roberts threw out the citations on the grounds that Faiella's right to a speedy trial had expired. The state has appealed that decision. **Anastasio** filed a motion Wednesday to dismiss the appeal, citing the dismissal by Roberts and the pending case against the state. The challenge involves several statements of the library services division that **Anastasio** claimed meet the definition of being a "rule" under the state's Administrative Procedure Act, but should be stricken because they were not properly adopted, according to the division's rule-making procedures.

Specifically, **Anastasio** claimed that when the library services put into place retention schedules relied upon by local governments to aid in complying with public record laws, officials violated the law by failing to follow public notification policies, and by not identifying specific retention schedules being adopted. He wants Stevenson to rule that, as "unadopted rules," the retention schedules should be voided until officials initiate a new adoption process that complies with the law. "If they didn't follow the adoption rules, then it's an invalid creation," **Anastasio** said in a previous interview with Scripps Treasure Coast Newspapers. "If it's an invalid creation, then it's an invalid charge."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Stuart News (FL)

May 25, 2014

Faiella Records Challenge Could Have a Big Impact

Author: Melissa E. Holsman

When Port St. Lucie Mayor JoAnn Faiella faces an administrative law hearing June 23, she'll be asking a Tallahassee-based judge to strike down long-held record retention rules that local governments use to make sure laws for preserving or destroying public records are followed. If Faiella wins her administrative law challenge, her Port St. Lucie attorney, **John Anastasio**, and state prosecutors have said the victory could have significant consequences for city and county governments. It could mean that until new retention rules were formally adopted, state officials would be prohibited from eliminating any public record, whether digital, electronic or paper. That's because by statute, all state entities — from city governments and county commissions to the State Attorney's office — are allowed only to destroy public records in accordance to retention schedules established by the Department of State's division of Library and Information Services to ensure compliance with government-in-the-sunshine laws.

"I can't think off the top of my head of something that would have a greater impact on local, county and state government than the resolution of this issue," **Anastasio** said. "Because any records that were disposed of — based upon invalid retention schedules — were improperly disposed of. Think of that: all those records that are now gone that shouldn't have been gone? At all levels of government?" Faiella is challenging the same record retention rules that prompted state prosecutors to cite her last year with a noncriminal infraction for allegedly deleting text messages from her city-issued phone. She had faced a second infraction for allegedly privately discussing city business on her phone when a public meeting wasn't scheduled. Both were dismissed May 9 in a ruling being appealed by the State Attorney's Office. Martin County Judge Kathleen Roberts threw out the citations on grounds that Faiella's right to a speedy trial had expired. Still, she and **Anastasio** are expected to lay out their challenge before Administrative Law Judge Lawrence P. Stevenson, who will appear via teleconference.

THE PETITION

The challenge involves four statements of the Library Services division that **Anastasio** claimed meet the definition of being a "rule" under the state's Administrative Procedure Act, but should be stricken because they were not properly adopted according to the division's rule-making procedures. Specifically, **Anastasio** claimed that when the Library Services put into place retention schedules relied upon by local governments to aid in complying with public record laws, officials violated the law by failing to follow public notification policies, and by not identifying specific retention schedules being adopted. He wants Stevenson to rule that as "unadopted rules," the retention schedules should be voided until officials initiate a new adoption process that complies with the law. **Anastasio** claimed that by virtue of Faiella's prosecution by a state agency relying upon "unenforceable" record retention schedules, she was subjected to possible sanctions, a fine and damage to her "good name." Brittany Lesser, spokeswoman for the Department of State, said they expect to continue using retention schedules currently in place.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

“The retention schedules have been relied upon by state agencies and local governments for decades,” Lesser noted, “and the department is committed to continuing to administer the retention process in a transparent manner.” Lawyers with the state Attorney General’s office assigned to the case declined to comment, but court papers shed some light on potential defenses.

RULE, OR NOT A RULE

In court papers, lawyers with the state’s Attorney General’s office have urged Stevenson to reject Faiella’s challenge against two staff “manuals” cited in her complaint that discuss records management practices. The lawyers contended that as manuals designed to aid employees in retaining and disposing of public records, they aren’t “rules” that must comply with agency rule-making procedures. The manuals, “Electronics Records and Records Management Practices,” and “The Basics of Records Management, Revised,” merely provide an accurate summary of existing law, assistant general counsel Ashley E. Davis noted in court papers. Ryan Butler, a state prosecutor litigating the appeal filed against the court order that dismissed the infractions Faiella had faced, agreed that if her rules challenge prevails, the impact could be onerous and widespread. “A successful effort to invalidate the public records retention schedule for local governments means that no local government would be able to dispose of any public record, even phone messages on post-it notes, until new retention schedules are proposed and enacted,” Butler said. “That would certainly tax the resources of any city or county.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

St. Lucie News Tribune (FL)

May 15, 2014

Ruling in Faiella Case Appealed

Author: Melissa E. Holsman

The State Attorney’s Office is appealing a Martin County judge’s May 9 ruling that dismissed civil infractions against Port St. Lucie Mayor JoAnn Faiella for allegedly violating public records laws, court records show. A notice of intent to appeal Martin County Judge Kathleen Roberts’ ruling was filed Tuesday. The appeal will seek to overturn Roberts’ order that threw out the noncriminal infractions filed against Faiella last year on grounds that her right to a speedy trial had expired. Since December, Faiella had faced a pair of civil infractions for allegedly deleting text messages — considered public records — from her city-issued cellphone and speaking with another council member about city business outside of a public meeting in violation of Florida’s Government-in-the-Sunshine Law. Roberts ruled both cases expired under the rules of speedy trial and recapture periods, under criminal proceeding laws.

Assistant State Attorney Ryan Butler said the state is appealing “because the court made an error. “A person shouldn’t escape justice,” he said, “just because the court makes a mistake.” He said the state’s appeal will argue Roberts committed an error by dismissing the citations Faiella faced, because there is no right to a speedy trial for noncriminal infractions. “The court erred as a matter of law in holding that there was,” he said Tuesday. Roberts further erred, Butler said, “in changing a prior judge’s order that the speedy trial rule did not apply.” That’s a ruling Butler said St. Lucie County Judge Phillip J. Yacucci Jr. made in March before he stepped off the case and it was reassigned to Roberts. Yacucci ruled that speedy trial periods would not hold up because there is no mention of them in regard to noncriminal infractions under criminal proceeding laws. “(Roberts) didn’t have any authority to change the prior judge’s ruling,” insisted Butler, “because that was already the law of the case.”

Faiella’s lawyer, **John Anastasio**, on Tuesday disagreed with Butler, and said they will fight the appeal. “I am shocked that they would waste more taxpayer money,” **Anastasio** said. A key issue now, he insisted, is that the state convinced the first judge on the case, St. Lucie County Judge Kathryn Nelson, to rule that applying the rules of criminal procedure was proper for resolving the civil infractions she faced, rather than rules of civil procedure, which opened the door to Faiella’s right to a speedy trial. “Judge Roberts correctly asked the question to the state, do you agree that the rules of criminal procedure apply? The state said yes,” **Anastasio** recalled. “And then she asked ‘if the rules of criminal procedure apply, why wouldn’t the speedy trial in the rules of criminal procedure apply?’ “The state essentially said it applies, but not this rule,” he noted. “Judge Roberts looked at (prosecutors) and said ‘you’re either all in or all out, and you said the rules applied but now you’re picking what rules apply?’ She wouldn’t buy that argument and I don’t think the appellate panel will buy that argument.” The appeal eventually will be heard by a panel of three circuit judges. It could be late summer before the state files its brief and **Anastasio** is expected to file a written response. It could take from six months to a year for the appeal to be ruled upon.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. Anastasio
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

St. Lucie News Tribune (FL)
May 8, 2014

Faiella Set to Fight Sunshine Law Charges

Author: Brittany C. Valdes

Mayor JoAnn Faiella’s attorney, **John Anastasio**, is preparing to fight a lengthy battle on Friday to defend the mayor against charges she violated Florida Sunshine Laws in 2013. **Anastasio**, who is based in Port St. Lucie, will present several motions before Judge Kathleen Roberts at 9 a.m. in the Martin County Courthouse. The motions are aimed to discredit a pair of misdemeanor charges filed against Faiella after former City Manager Greg Oravec submitted 85 pages of emails and text messages to the State Attorney’s office when he resigned. Faiella also faces an infraction for discussing Oravec’s employment with other council members through City Attorney Roger Orr when an open meeting wasn’t scheduled.

The basis of **Anastasio’s** arguments include:

Text messages Faiella is charged with deleting still exist. The messages were retained by Oravec and then submitted to the State Attorney’s Office. **Anastasio** will ask the court to take notice of that as a public record. He will also question the scientific methodology used to determine that the texts were in fact deleted from her phone. The evaluation of the state’s public records retention laws and clarification of which part of the retention schedule Faiella violated. “Point out which part of the retention schedule we violated because there are a lot of transitory messages that don’t need to be kept,” he said. “Something dictated as public record is not dictated by its location, but by its content.” The expiration of Faiella’s speedy trial request. Speedy trials for misdemeanors are normally 90 days with a 17-day extension period, but **Anastasio** said the mayor’s request for a hearing to dismiss the charges has surpassed that time frame.

The expiration of the Florida statute of limitations for a civil case. **Anastasio** said the text messages the State Attorney’s Office are alluding to date back more than one year from the time Faiella was charged, which is against the statute. Investigators from the State Attorney’s Office never read Faiella her Miranda rights upon her questioning. Faiella and the State Attorney’s Office could not be reached for comment Wednesday. “The point is, she’s the elected head of the eighth-largest city in the state of Florida, and she should not admit to something she didn’t do,” said **Anastasio**, adding if the mayor wins, she will request the city pay her legal fees. Council members Ron Bowen and Shannon Martin also were charged in the investigation. After a four-month suspension, Bowen pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor charge of using Orr to poll council members on Oravec’s employment, and he paid a \$300 fine. Martin paid a \$250 fine for deleting text messages. Interim City Attorney Pam Booker said the city did not pay Bowen or Martin’s legal fees.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

St. Lucie News Tribune (FL)

February 15, 2014

Mayor’s Lawyer: Case is too old

Author: Isadora Rangel

Mayor JoAnn Faiella’s attorney says the statute of limitations has expired for the civil infraction Faiella is facing for allegedly deleting text messages, and therefore she did not violate Florida’s public record retention laws. Faiella is accused of deleting messages she exchanged with former City Manager Greg Oravec from May 30, 2012, through Jan. 28, 2013, records show. Florida statute states prosecution for a noncriminal violation must be commenced within one year after it is committed, Stuart-based lawyer **John Anastasio** wrote in a motion filed last week to dismiss her case. **Anastasio** claims the statute of limitations expired on Jan. 31. However, it is unknown when Faiella allegedly deleted the text messages. The state Attorney’s Office filed a civil infraction against Faiella in November. Oravec provided screen shots of the text messages to the State Attorney’s Office, which conducted a 10-month investigation into potential violations of the Sunshine Law by the Port St. Lucie City Council. The investigation ended with complaints filed against Faiella, Councilman Ron Bowen and Councilwoman Shannon Martin. Faiella’s conversations with Oravec are mostly transitory, **Anastasio** claims. Most of the text messages were about setting up meetings or talking about city events. Faiella also praised Oravec in many of those messages. “Great job!” Faiella wrote on Dec. 7, 2012. “I am proud of you. ... This is what I wanted in leadership.”

Anastasio wrote in his motion that there is no set schedule for how long transitory text messages must be retained — the Florida Department of State establishes different time frames for which a record must be stored according to its importance. He also claims the alleged deleted text messages could be copies of the ones Oravec kept and therefore those records have not been destroyed. **Anastasio** said in an interview on Friday that the city and not Faiella should have been responsible for storing the text messages. “At worst, (the state Attorney’s Office) should have sued the city as an agency for not properly maintaining public records,” he said. “The agency is the only who should be liable.” Faiella faces a civil infraction and a potential \$500 fine for allegedly deleting text messages, which are considered public record by Florida’s Sunshine Law. Martin faced the same infraction and paid \$250 in December. Bowen has been charged with a second-degree criminal misdemeanor for allegedly using City Attorney Roger Orr as an intermediary to discuss with other council members Oravec’s continued employment. He has been suspended from office. Faiella faces a civil infraction for allegedly using Orr as an intermediary to discuss Oravec’s employment. Oravec entered into a separation agreement with City Council in February 2013, after the alleged Sunshine Law violations. The Sunshine Law prohibits elected officials from discussing issues that could come up for vote outside of an open scheduled meeting. **Anastasio** said Faiella could pay the \$500 fine but is fighting the infractions because those could tarnish her reputation. “The problem is they assume everybody is going to behave like Shannon Martin and roll over and pay the fine,” **Anastasio** said. “The mayor isn’t going to do that because she didn’t do anything wrong.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

St. Lucie News Tribune (FL)

December 13, 2013

Faiella Details Talk in Inquiry

Author: Isadora Rangel

Mayor JoAnn Faiella said she talked to the city attorney privately about a former city manager but didn't know that information would be shared in what the state says is a violation of Florida's open meetings laws. Faiella's statement is included in a 10-month investigation by the State Attorney's Office, which accuses Faiella and two council members of violating Florida's Government-in-the-Sunshine Law. The investigation, released Wednesday, has more than 46 files and 5,000 pages of phone logs, emails, city memorandums and interviews. The State Attorney's Office says evidence gathered in those documents shows Faiella committed an infraction when she discussed the employment of former City Manager Greg Oravec with another council member through an intermediary, City Attorney Roger Orr. Florida's Sunshine Law prohibits two or more elected officials from discussing public business outside of an open scheduled meeting or using an intermediary to do so.

Faiella's interview shows she allegedly was negligent when she answered a poll by Orr about whether to offer a severance package in exchange for Oravec's resignation in February, Assistant State Attorney Jeff Hendricks said. There is no proof, however, that Faiella knew she was participating in a private meeting to discuss public business, Hendricks said. That is why she is facing a civil infraction — and not a criminal charge, he said. The State Attorney's Office has charged Councilman Ron Bowen with a second-degree criminal misdemeanor for also allegedly using Orr as a conduit. Bowen said he instructed Orr to poll other council members about a severance package for Oravec, according to a report released with the investigation. According to Orr's August interview at the State Attorney's Office, Faiella was the only council member who answered his poll. Faiella and Councilwoman Shannon Martin also faced civil infractions. The State Attorney's Office accused them of destruction of public records by deleting text messages. Martin paid a \$250 fine last week.

Here are some key points from a transcript of Faiella's interview at the State Attorney's Office in August: ORAVEC. Faiella said Oravec was a good worker but she had an issue with his personality. "There was so much turmoil," she said. "Mr. Oravec in the last eight months has threatened to quit or resign many times."

THE PHONE CALL

On a Saturday in early February, Faiella said Orr called her and told her a council member asked him to ask City Council about Oravec's resignation. Orr did not disclose who that council member was, but he said he was also calling other council members besides her, Faiella said. "I says, 'Roger (Orr), you know what? I'm done,' " Faiella said. " 'I mean, it's whatever (Oravec) wants to do now. I'm tired of him threatening me he was going to quit or he had enough. The ball's in his court. I'm not asking him to leave. He's a great city manager but, you know, every other month something comes up.' " In phone interview with a reporter Thursday, Faiella's

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John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Stuart lawyer, **John Anastasio**, said she made the statement above in a second phone conversation. The first time Orr called her, their connection was interrupted, **Anastasio** said. When Orr called a second time, he did not say he was polling City Council and simply asked what Faiella's thoughts on Oravec's resignation were. But Hendricks said by answering Orr's question, Faiella was negligent because she indicated how she would vote. City Council on Feb. 7 approved a separation agreement with Oravec and to give him a \$102,000 severance package.

WHAT OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS SAID

Martin changed the subject during her phone conversation with Orr and declined to comment, Hendricks said. Had she given Orr an answer, Hendricks said, she could have faced an infraction. Councilwoman Michelle Lee Berger told Orr to stop the polling, Orr said. Orr couldn't reach Vice Mayor Bartz, he said.

FAIELLA, BOWEN TALK

Faiella said she talked to Bowen by phone after Orr called her. Bowen did not mention he talked to Orr earlier in the day, Faiella said. Before that conversation in February, Bowen had issues at City Hall, Faiella said. He felt city staff didn't like him. He had trouble with the council's secretaries and was upset he didn't have a fob for his key, Faiella said, and because his business cards were not printed out. He also demanded a refrigerator and brought in a new coffee maker because he didn't like the one City Hall provided. During their phone call in February, Bowen and Faiella did not discuss city business, she said. They talked about a toy drive. Faiella said she was trying to get Bowen familiarized with some of the city's committees and churches because he had recently been elected in late 2012.

ATMOSPHERE AT CITY HALL

Faiella said the council offices are next to each other and she can hear conversations by other council members. She said she has talked to Orr about this. "You get a developer, for argument's sake, who's lobbying the council, whoever it is, and he goes into the conference office and pulls us one at a time to talk about what's going to go on the agenda," she said. "He happens to come out of the office and he says, 'Mayor, thank you for your support' ... but council's sitting at the desk ... is that breaking Sunshine?"

TEXT MESSAGES

"Because my phone only holds so many gigabytes I was told that if you have things there lingering ... to delete them," Faiella said, in an interview with investigators. She said she didn't know how many gigabytes her phone has and one of her secretaries told her to delete the messages. Some of the messages were city-related, she said, but Orr told her those would be stored on a city server. Orr said he could have misspoken or maybe Faiella misunderstood him. He could have thought Faiella was referring to emails, which are automatically stored, he said. Port St. Lucie does not have a database to store text messages and it is the city's responsibility to preserve public records, **Anastasio** said, not Faiella's. He said by not being in compliance with public record retention laws, the city should be to blame for the deleted text messages. "Had (the city) been in compliance and backed up everything, this would have never occurred," **Anastasio** said. "She's not the custodian of those records."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. Anastasio
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Stuart News (FL)
November 6, 2012

Defamation Suit against Port St. Lucie Mayor Resolved

Author: Christin Erazo

A resolution has been reached in a former police captain's defamation suit against Mayor JoAnn Faiella. Joe D'Agostino claimed Faiella authored an anonymous handwritten letter which accused him of using a friend as a confidential informant and refers to \$10,000 in missing money from the Port St. Lucie Police Department narcotics division. Faiella has denied she wrote the letter. Terms of the resolution were not disclosed late Monday afternoon and neither party nor their attorneys provided additional comment, according to a news release from D'Agostino's attorney, Guy Rubin. Calls to Faiella and Rubin for comment were not returned. All of the terms of the resolution are, and will remain, confidential, states the release. There will be no further comment to this private matter. Details of the settlement could be subject to public record, but it's still left to be determined, said City Attorney Roger Orr Monday. As of July, TRICO, the city's self-funded insurance company, had covered more than \$44,000 of its \$50,000 cap toward Faiella's initial legal fees.

Both parties had a hearing scheduled Monday afternoon before 19th Circuit Court Judge Dwight L. Geiger, but it was abruptly canceled. **John Anastasio**, Faiella's attorney, said before the resolution was reached the hearing was for a summary judgment to dismiss the case. **Anastasio** and Rubin agreed it was time to end the lawsuit, according to the release. It's time to put this behind them, so that the Mayor can continue her work as a public official and Mr. D'Agostino can get on with his law enforcement career, said **Anastasio** in the release. Faiella, whose April 2011 personal emails indicated she was trying to gather what she called ammo against D'Agostino, said in the release she's glad she and D'Agostino were able to resolve the matter. This has been a distraction from serving the people of Port St. Lucie, Faiella said. D'Agostino, who was laid off in April by City Manager Greg Oravec as part of a Police Department restructuring, echoed Faiella's statement and pointed to a pending wrongful termination suit filed by six former Police Department employees who were also let go by Oravec in April. I'm glad that Mayor Faiella was able to clear the air in this case. But the city will still need to account for its wrongful acts in violating my rights and the rights of my colleagues, D'Agostino stated in the release. D'Agostino was Faiella's supervisor when she worked in the crime intelligence analysis division at the Police Department. Faiella later voluntarily transferred to the department's records division before taking a leave of absence for her 2010 mayoral run.

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John J. Anastasio
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Fort Pierce Tribune (FL)
December 5, 2000

Attorney Ordered to Repay \$17,500 in Estate Case

Author: Jeni Brock Steele

Even King Solomon would have been challenged by a complicated case last week that stretched over two afternoons and involved more attorneys than witnesses. In the end, Judge Marc Cianca ruled that Port St. Lucie attorney **John Anastasio** has only 30 days to put \$17,500 back into an estate that three other attorneys are still trying to straighten out. Cianca ruled late Thursday that **Anastasio** must replace the money that he took in several different increments for what he claimed were his legal fees. **Anastasio** took the money from the estate of Raimo Suikki, who died in December 1996 at age 62. Suikki left no will. He did leave two heirs: a daughter, Ariane Brown, 40; and a son, Johans Suikki, 36, who has Down syndrome. Suikki lives with his mother, Maile Suikki in Port St. Lucie. Raimo Suikki also left property in Alaska (where he worked for many years) Arizona, and Port St. Lucie.

In early 1997, Brown hired **Anastasio** to handle her father's estate. Nearly four years later, the estate -- originally estimated by **Anastasio** to be worth \$110,000 -- has no money. All of the property has been sold, and only about \$5,500 can be positively accounted for in payments of medical bills for Johans Suikki. **Anastasio** said the final value of the estate was far less than the original estimate, attributing the discrepancy to an overestimate of the property value. The second draft of the final accounting placed the estate's value at about \$40,000. Another complicating facet of the case was the provision of a guardian for Johans since payments from the estate could not be paid to him. **Anastasio** failed to properly handle the guardianship requirement, according to a previous order. As a consequence, Maile Suikki was removed as Johans' guardian despite the fact that he continues to live here, where he has always lived.

In the best interests of the ward, a legal guardian, Elsie Meleski, was appointed by the court because **Anastasio** failed to file the guardianship requirement in a timely manner. The court appointed Port St. Lucie attorney Charles Ray to complete the guardianship requirement of the estate. Another attorney, Kevin Hendrickson, was hired to represent Meleski and protect her interests. When Brown realized there was money missing from the estate, she hired attorney Marydenyse Ommert of the firm John A. Racin & Associates to represent her interests. The three attorneys -- Ray, Hendrickson, and Brown -- grew concerned about the estate and how it was handled, and filed for a hearing with Cianca, which started a week ago Monday.

Jodi Dudeney, a former legal secretary for **Anastasio**, was the first to take the stand. She testified about files she handled in regard to the estate and also said **Anastasio** at one point had told her to "dummy up" the files in order to cover up payments that he made to himself. "And that is what prompted me to leave his employment," she said. **Anastasio** disputed Dudeney's testimony, maintaining that fees were paid to him from the estate for legal work he did for Brown on a variety of misdemeanor charges for her and her family members. He said that legal work was completely separate from the estate and the guardianship. During earlier testimony that Monday,

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John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Ray called the condition of the estate "a nightmare." "And these errors are **Mr. Anastasio's**," he said. "There are multiple problems here, and why was the personal representative paid without the court's approval?"

Brown testified that she was never paid as the estate's personal representative and that she never received "a penny from the estate." During testimony, it was revealed that property was sold from the estate without any appraisals. A 10-acre parcel in Alaska with a three-bedroom, two-bathroom home on it was among the property sold. It was sold for \$20,000 and after a state mortgage was paid, the estate received \$5,000. "The property didn't even need to be sold," Hendrickson said. "It could have just been deeded to the heirs. [**Anastasio**] knew he had an illiquid estate, which means it could not easily be converted to cash." **Anastasio** said paying back the estate is a temporary setback, remedied simply by transferring funds from one account and then applying to the court for the monies back. "I did a lot of work outside the estate, and now it's just the client trying to rip me off," he said.

Hendrickson said it's not that simple. "He presented no experts," Hendrickson said. "He presented no documents to prove what he did. There are no time records for the work he did. It's a shame what he's done to this case." Hendrickson said when the money is returned to the estate, he will appeal to the court for the three attorneys now involved to be paid by **Anastasio**, instead of from the estate. "Why should the attorneys be burdened by trying to collect our fees?" he asked. "The reason we're involved is the result completely of what **John [Anastasio]** didn't do."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post (FL)

November 6, 1999

**PSL Attorney Judge Decision Language Fine Ethics
'Jesus Christ' Exclaimer Loses Contempt Appeal**

Author: Pat Moore

When a Port St. Lucie attorney spouted the words "Jesus Christ" in disgust in a crowded courtroom last year, his comment was not protected by laws affording freedom of religion. A panel of Treasure Coast judges rejected attorney **John Anastasio's** appeal of a contempt of court conviction and the \$500 fine imposed by St. Lucie County Judge Tom Walsh for "enunciating Jesus Christ in a profane manner" during an August 1997 court hearing. **Anastasio** argued he was simply exclaiming disgust when he looked down at a document and discovered an arrest warrant for one of his clients. In their Tuesday ruling upholding Walsh's order finding **Anastasio** in contempt of court, the three-judge panel sided with Walsh, who found the tone of **Anastasio's** words offensive and profane. "Judge Walsh did not order (**Anastasio**) to study the ethics of St. Thomas Aquinas. . . . **Mr. Anastasio** was not required to study the Torah or to say Kaddish for a departed soul," the judges wrote. They found the words "Jesus Christ" are accorded with reverence and worship to believing Christians. "When used in this context, they express anger, dissatisfaction and even opprobrium," according to the opinion written by Circuit Judges John Fennelly and Ben Bryan and Indian River County Judge David Morgan. Bryan added he believed that Walsh would have been justified in finding **Anastasio** in contempt had he said "Geronimo."

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John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post (FL)

July 31, 1999

**Attorney Protest Fine Religion Language Court Issue
Lawyer Appeals Fine for Saying 'Jesus Christ!' in Court**

Author: Pat Moore

A panel of Treasure Coast judges pondered Friday whether a Port St. Lucie attorney would be fighting a criminal contempt conviction had he disgustingly quipped "Oh Mohammed" or "Oh Buddha" rather than spouting the words "Jesus Christ" during a court hearing last year. St. Lucie County Judge Tom Walsh found attorney **John Anastasio** guilty of the contempt charge and fined him \$500 for "enunciating Jesus Christ in a profane manner" during an August court hearing. **Anastasio** said he exclaimed "Jesus Christ" as he looked down at a document that he discovered was an arrest warrant for one of his clients. "I explained to (Walsh) that I was talking to myself out loud in a complete state of shock that something so fundamentally unfair could occur," **Anastasio** told the appeals panel. "It was like: I can't believe this. It's terrible."

Walsh declared **Anastasio** guilty, finding "the tone and manner of **Mr. Anastasio's** utterances were clearly offensive, uttered in a profane way and heard by every person in open court." **Anastasio** appealed the conviction, arguing that the words "Jesus Christ" are not obscene or profane and that his comment was protected by his rights of freedom of speech and freedom of religion. "If he'd said, 'Oh Mohammed,' do you really think we'd be in here today?" Circuit Judge Ben Bryan asked a prosecutor trying to persuade the three-judge appeals panel to uphold **Anastasio's** contempt conviction. "It all depends on how he said it when he said it and who he said it to," Assistant State Attorney Dean Merten said. He argued the words "Jesus Christ" are appropriate when said in church - or even by a father on a Sunday afternoon when his team lost the game - but not in court. "He's a lawyer. He was in a courtroom. He should be held to a higher standard," Merton said. The panel did not issue a ruling Friday.

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John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Stuart News (FL)
September 23, 1998

Court Jesters: Lawyers Show They Can Take It – And Dish it out

Author: Barbara Lowell

Did you hear about the three guys who went fishing off the Jupiter Inlet last week? There was a doctor, a lawyer and an accountant. They were all having a good time, when suddenly a shark jumped out of the water and gobbled up the doctor. A few minutes later, the big fish did the same to the accountant. Then, the shark jumped into the air, looked at the lawyer, smiled a toothy grin, and dove back underwater. Wonder why the shark didn't devour the lawyer? Professional courtesy. Hee hee hee hee hee. "Very funny," says Stuart attorney Philip DeBerard, who says he has heard his share - and then some - of lawyer jokes. Funny thing is, he means it. He likes them. "Lawyers need to lighten up. They're too stuffy," DeBerard said. "When you see a lawyer, you know he or she is one, because we all seem to have adopted the same uniform - dark suit, somber expression, black briefcase, purposeful walk. It's fun to make fun of people who take themselves so seriously."

To prove he's not above poking fun at himself or his profession, DeBerard quickly launches into his favorite lawyer joke: A busload of folks show up at the Pearly Gates, where they are greeted by St. Peter. Suddenly a group of angels rushes out and pulls one man from the bus. They shower him with gifts and affection, throw feathers down onto the ground so his walk is cushioned, and escort him to a huge palace that will be his home. Seeing this, the other passengers feel a little slighted, since they are left to get off the bus alone and make their way to their own nice, but not exactly palatial, homes. One of them tugs on St. Peter's sleeve and asks, "Who's that?" "That's a lawyer," St. Peter replied. "We don't get too many of them up here." "I love that one," DeBerard said. "People need to laugh, because face it, a lawyer's day is filled with hostility, anger, lies. There's nothing fun about their occupation.

"If you've committed a crime, if you're getting a divorce, if your house is being foreclosed upon - these are not fun situations, but you need a lawyer to help you through them." The jokes don't bother Stuart attorney Jeffrey Kirsch. He understands that they go with the territory. "If you can't laugh at a job, then what have you got? You can't take it personally," he said. "Of course people make fun of lawyers. There's a common bond - everybody hates lawyers because the only time you see them is when you're miserable. "You don't hear any gardener jokes, do you?" Bad seeds and ill weeds notwithstanding, lawyer jokes are nothing new. Benjamin Franklin had a saying: A countryman between two lawyers is like a fish between two cats. And William Shakespeare sneaked a zinger into his Henry VI, Part II with the line, "The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers."

"People dislike lawyers because lawyers do exactly what they're paid to do," insists Port St. Lucie attorney **John Anastasio**. "The fact is, most people are scumbags. They call lawyers to get them out of trouble. "Lawyers are a mirror of society, and when people look into that mirror, they don't like what they see, so they take it out on the lawyers. Don't look for an end to lawyer

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**John J. Anastasio***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

jokes - this kind of thing will keep going on until people are different." Meanwhile, it's fun to crack jokes at the pinstripe suit-wearing, torte-writing lot. Here's a favorite from **Anastasio's** files: A 29-year-old lawyer dies in a car accident and goes to heaven. Puzzled, he asks St. Peter why he's there at such a young age. "But you're over 200 years old," St. Peter tells the man. "No I'm not," the lawyer replies. "According to your billing records you are," says St. Peter. Lauri Goldstein, who has law offices in Stuart and Fort Pierce, said she isn't bothered by lawyer jokes either. "Hey, I'm a Jewish female and I laugh at Jewish jokes," she said. "There's good and bad in every profession, and jokes about jobs are usually all in good fun." In fact, lawyer jokes cross her desk every day. A friend gave her a Lawyer Joke-A-Day calendar as a gift. "Some of them really crack me up," she said.

Still, not everybody is laughing. Carole Post, an attorney with Watterson, Hyland & Klett in Palm Beach Gardens, insists the Bard didn't intend that Henry VI line as a slam against lawyers at all. "The phrase was uttered out of a show of respect for lawyers, not disdain," she wrote in a column for The Jupiter Courier in June. "The phrase is spoken in context of a group of rebels plotting the overthrow of King Henry VI. The rebels singled out the lawyers because of their status in society - the overthrow of lawful society would never be successful if the lawyers were there to preserve law and order." And although lots of local lawyers say they enjoy a good joke, some admit they're a bit irked that they are categorically classified as bloodthirsty ambulance chasers. DeBerard, for example, has initiated numerous programs for children, including an annual bike rally and fingerprinting session. He sponsors baseball, football and hockey programs for kids, too. "Most of the lawyers in this area are very active in the community. They're a real compassionate bunch," he said. He thinks the negative public perception began years ago, when lawyers were allowed to advertise on television. "Before Florida got regulations that lawyers had to talk in a monotone and directly into the camera while saying certain things, there were some really silly commercials," he remembers. "You had guys yelling, 'If you've been bumped by a car, see me' and 'If the bank is on your back, I can get them off'." "That was garbage, and it really demeaned our profession."

On the other hand, television programs showing good, capable and honest lawyers often do equal justice to boost the profession. "When L.A. Law first came out, law school applications went through the roof," DeBerard said. "People thought that was great - actors sat around every morning drinking coffee and talking about all the big cases they had, then you saw them getting into their \$100,000 cars and driving off to fancy lunches. Those of us who were already lawyers were sitting here thinking, 'too bad it's not really like that.'" "Now you've got Ally McBeal, who comes across like a real person who makes good, honest choices. She's not a wicked person who'd sell your soul for a buck." Then again, if you were standing before a judge whose hand was poised on a book he meant to throw at you, who would you want defending you? Goldstein, who is originally from Fort Lauderdale, was driving on I-95 near her old neck of the woods recently, where she spotted a billboard with a shark on it. "It said, 'If you want a real shark, call this guy' and it gave a lawyer's name and number," she said. "At first I thought it was odd, then, hmmm. I thought to myself, 'Wow. What an ad.'"

CASE IN POINT: LOCAL ATTORNEYS SHARE THEIR FAVORITE JOKES

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

There's no burden of proof that attorneys can't take a joke, but to argue the point, here is a sampling of what makes local lawyers laugh.

- * What is a criminal lawyer? Redundant.
- * What's black and brown and looks good on a lawyer? A Doberman pinscher.
- * What do you have when a lawyer is buried up to his neck in cement? Not enough cement.
- * Why should lawyers be buried 100 feet deep? Because deep down, they're really good people.
- * How many law professors does it take to change a light bulb? Heck, you need 250 just to lobby for the research grant.
- * How can you tell when a lawyer is lying? His lips are moving.
- * What do you get when you cross The Godfather with a lawyer? An offer you can't understand.
- * How do you save a drowning lawyer? Take your foot off his head.
- * God decided to take the devil to court and settle their differences once and for all. When Satan heard this, he laughed and said, "And where do you think you're going to find a lawyer?"
- * How many lawyers does it take to roof a house? Depends on how thin you slice them.
- * If a lawyer and an IRS agent were both drowning and you could save only one of them, would you go to lunch or read the newspaper?
- * What's the difference between God and a lawyer? God doesn't think he's a lawyer.
- * Why did the lawyer cross the road? To get to the car accident on the other side.
- * Did you hear about the terrorist who hijacked a 747 full of lawyers? He threatened to release one every hour if his demands weren't met.
- * What's the difference between a lawyer and a herd of buffalo? The lawyer charges more.
- * Why does California have so many lawyers and New Jersey have so many toxic waste dumps? New Jersey got to pick first.
- * A man walked into a bar with his alligator and asked the bartender, "Do you serve lawyers here?" "Sure do," replied the bartender. "Good," said the man. "Give me a beer and I'll have a lawyer for my gator."
- * It was so cold last winter I saw a lawyer with his hands in his own pockets.
- * What's the difference between a good lawyer and a bad lawyer? A bad lawyer can let a case drag on for several years. A good lawyer can make it last even longer.
- * What did the lawyer name his daughter? Sue. And his son? Bill.
- * How many lawyers does it take to change a light bulb? How many can you afford?
- * Signs you might need a different lawyer: He tells you that his last good case was a Budweiser. When the prosecutors see who your lawyer is, they high-five each other. He picks the jury by playing "duck-duck-goose." He tells you that he has never told a lie. A big sign in his office says "Don't ask me." A prison guard is shaving your head.
- * Arguing with a lawyer is like mud wrestling with a pig. After a while, you realize that the pig actually enjoys it.
- * Why did the post office stop making the new lawyer stamps? People couldn't tell which side to spit on.
- * What's wrong with lawyer jokes? Lawyers don't think they're funny, and nobody else thinks they're jokes.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. Anastasio
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Stuart News (FL)
August 29, 1998

Lawyer: Deputies Denied Justice

Author: Sarah Eisenhauer

An attorney for two St. Lucie County sheriff's deputies who were disciplined last year for blowing a co-worker's cover at a beachside bar told a panel of judges Friday that the officers deserved a hearing before being placed on six months of probation. Attorney **John Anastasio** said the sheriff's office denied Deputies Dean Sackos and Vincent Gosden their right to a hearing where they could argue their case after probation was imposed in November. Although a set of Florida laws called the Career Service Act does not list probation as punishment that requires a hearing, **Anastasio** asked Circuit Judges Paul Kanarek, John Fennelly and Charles Smith to rule that a hearing was necessary. The sheriff's office suspended the deputies for five days and placed them on probation after they gave away the identity of an undercover deputy Oct. 18 to a patron at a Hutchinson Island bar, reports said. They were told "You're on probation. You're on probation, but you have no right to a hearing," **Anastasio** said. The sheriff has the right to fire a deputy on probation without cause, he said.

But attorney Dwayne Evans, who represents the sheriff's office, said because the laws do not specifically mention probation as a punishment that requires a hearing, it should be up to the sheriff to decide whether one is necessary. He said the issue is moot for Sackos and Gosden because their probation period is over, but he acknowledged that the issue could come up again. The judges will issue their ruling within the next few weeks, Evans said. The sheriff's office said Gosden and Sackos, who were both off duty, were at an oceanfront club when they saw a fellow deputy, who was working undercover, sitting on the patio. Gosden saw an intoxicated friend at the undercover deputy's table and, worried that his friend might say something incriminating, introduced his friend to the undercover deputy. A few minutes later, Sackos came over and whispered into the undercover deputy's ear, wanting to know whether she was on duty, the investigation report said. The report found the deputies guilty of improper conduct. Undersheriff Dennis Williams said in a Nov. 13 letter that he decided not to fire Sackos because of the overall circumstances, and that Gosden's excellent work record spared him from being fired. Both deputies had clean records before the incident.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Stuart News (FL)

July 25, 1998

Family Suing Sheriff Over Hanging

Author: Thomas W. Kruase

The mother and sister of a man who hanged himself at the St. Lucie County jail in 1996 have filed a wrongful death suit against Sheriff R.C. "Bobby" Knowles, claiming he was aware of problems that contributed to the man's death, but did nothing to correct them. On July 26, 1996, 33-year-old William Clark of Fort Pierce hung himself with a bed sheet wrapped around a sprinkler head. At the time, he was in the jail's medical wing. Clark was not on suicide watch, but jail rules stipulate all inmates in the medical wing are to be checked every 15 minutes. In the midst of an internal affairs investigation, detention deputy Barbara Bates resigned. The investigation determined that she failed to watch Clark at the specified intervals and attempted to cover up her actions by altering the medical wing logbook.

Two years before Clark's death, Douglas Moran, of Freeport, N.Y., hung himself in a similar fashion at the medical wing. **John Anastasio**, the lawyer for Ana Jean Clark and Norrita Clark, said Knowles was aware of the previous suicide and should have altered the surroundings to prevent the situation from recurring. "This hanging took place in the exact same way, in the exact same spot of the exact same medical unit," **Anastasio** said. Knowles is legally responsible for the actions of his deputies, **Anastasio** said. He is therefore responsible for the lack of supervision for Clark and the coverup. The disciplinary action against the deputy and the admission of the coverup, however, may benefit Knowles in the eyes of a jury, he said. In addition to the wrongful death suit, the family has filed a claim for federal civil rights violations.

The wrongful death suit is limited to \$100,000 in compensatory damages, **Anastasio** said. The civil rights suit, however, has no monetary limit. Clark was arrested on charges of grand theft and dealing in stolen property. He was being held in the medical wing for an alcohol detoxification evaluation because he complained of pains in his side.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. Anastasio
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Stuart News (FL)
December 19, 1997

Court Disbars 1 Lawyer, Disciplines Another

Author: Michael Peltier

One local attorney was disbarred and another publicly reprimanded Thursday when the Florida Supreme Court announced disciplinary actions in the two unrelated cases for breaking rules of conduct set up by the Florida Bar. Port St. Lucie attorney **John Anastasio**, 41, is slated to receive a public reprimand for a pair of actions in 1995 that included failing to safeguard a \$40,000 trust fund that was in dispute. It is the third time in less than three years that **Anastasio** has been disciplined by the Bar. Anthony Eladio Ramos, a Jupiter-based attorney who also had an office in Indiantown, was disbarred for misappropriating funds from a series of personal injury cases during the past several years. The Florida Bar charges that Ramos settled insurance claims, often without his client's consent, but failed to pass on the awards to his client.

Anastasio, who ran against U.S. Rep. Mark Foley in the 1994 congressional campaign, pleaded no contest to Florida Bar charges that he inappropriately advertised his law practice without clearing the ads first with the Bar. On a second count, **Anastasio** was charged with failing to properly safeguard trust funds in a dispute involving a \$40,000 personal injury settlement. **Anastasio** was hired by a physician, Bruce Platzek, who was concerned that he would not be paid by a patient who had received the award in an insurance claim. Under a settlement agreement, Platzek was to receive \$8,000 for his services. Put in charge of the trust fund, **Anastasio** turned over the settlement check to the patient, Howard Turner, who according to court records forged the required signatures and absconded with all but \$1,000 of the award.

Anastasio has had other trouble with the Bar over his professional conduct. In 1995, he was reprimanded and placed on a year's probation for "negligent and inadequate communication" in a criminal defense representation. During the same year, he was reprimanded again for threatening criminal prosecution in a civil matter. **Anastasio** will appear before the Florida Bar Board of Governors at its February meeting, said Florida Bar legal assistant Michelle Courtemanche. As part of his reprimand, **Anastasio** will be brought before the board to be publicly censured. "Severity-wise, it's the most severe reprimand," Courtemanche said. "We're talking about 50 of your peers, plus their staff who usually sit in a big circle." **Anastasio**, who did not return phone messages left at his office Thursday afternoon, could not be reached for comment.

Ramos, who has been a member of the Bar since 1981, resigned his license Nov. 1, days before depositions were taken by a number of former clients who say Ramos bilked them of tens of thousands of dollars while handling their claims. Ramos, who had offices in Lake Worth and Indiantown, was charged with 19 counts misappropriation of funds, forgery, and charging excessive fees for a series of insurance settlements going back to May 1990, Florida Supreme Court records indicate. A call made to a telephone number listed for Ramos in the Florida Bar Journal was answered by a hostess for an Italian restaurant. Another call made to a different telephone number listed in the local directory went unanswered. A fellow tenant for another firm

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John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

in Ramos' office building at 900 E. Indiantown Road in Jupiter said the attorney's office was closed. Ramos, who often defended minors or clients who spoke little English, can apply for his license in 20 years. He was also ordered to pay nearly \$35,000 in fines.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Fort Pierce Tribune (FL)

February 11, 1997

Jailed Former FP Policeman Files Appeal, Lawless Charges Prosecution Misconduct

Author: Sherry Parmet

Mike Lawless' attorney filed an appeal Monday in the trial that sent the former policeman to jail for stealing \$80 from a state undercover agent posing as a drunk migrant worker. Port St. Lucie attorney **John Anastasio** cited errors in County Judge Dan Vaughn's rulings both before and during the trial last month. Vaughn sentenced Lawless to two months in jail on a misdemeanor petty theft charge on Jan. 10. **Anastasio** claims the judge erred by allowing the prosecutor during closing arguments to refer to his having personally visited the crime scene. "Attorneys aren't allowed to do that," **Anastasio** said. "They're not witnesses." **Anastasio** also claims the jury was not properly instructed before starting their deliberations. "Those are just some of the things that were done incorrectly," **Anastasio** said. "At issue is not whether the jury made factual mistakes, but whether legal errors were made."

Brevard County Assistant State Attorney Russ Bausch, who prosecuted the case in lieu of the local office to avoid the perception of bias, could not be reached for comment Monday. Lawless will complete his 60-day sentence in the St. Lucie County jail in less than a month -- likely before his appeal could be heard. But freedom is not what Lawless is fighting for, **Anastasio** said. Lawless is fighting for his livelihood, trying to keep his law enforcement certification, which he is at risk of losing if the conviction stands. "There's no down side to Mike getting another trial," **Anastasio** said. "Whether he wins or loses a second time, he walks out of the courtroom." But even if Lawless' conviction is overturned on appeal, he still could lose his law enforcement certification because he failed to take a required cultural diversity course this year, **Anastasio** said. "Of course, he can't take it while he's in jail and not working at the department," **Anastasio** said.

An 11-year veteran of the Fort Pierce Police Department, Lawless resigned just hours before being sentenced. **Anastasio** said he's not sure what chances Lawless has of winning a new trial, but is taking on the case for free to help his longtime friend. "I've known him for about 20 years, and in my opinion he's innocent," **Anastasio** said. "I don't know whether the undercover agent dropped the money or Mike was framed, but I know Mike didn't do anything wrong." A grand jury indicted Lawless and three other officers on July 8, the culmination of a two-year Florida Department of Law Enforcement investigation into corruption. Allegations included home-invasion robberies, theft of illegal poker game kitties and shake-downs on drunks, drug dealers and migrant workers.

In Lawless' case, FDLE agent **Ciro Dominguez** posed as a drunk migrant worker and testified the officer stopped him, took his wallet, and returned it with \$80 missing. Former officer **Ron Chabot** last month pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor petty theft charge and was sentenced to six months on probation and the loss of his law enforcement certification. Former officer **Stacy Moran** in December pleaded no contest to attempted official misconduct and lost his law

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John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

enforcement certification. In an unrelated case, he also pleaded no contest to a petty theft charge of shoplifting dental floss, cologne and other merchandise from a Fort Pierce Wal-Mart on Nov. 26, 1996. He was sentenced to 10 days in jail. Former officer Theresa Prussing will go to trial this month for lying in an unofficial proceeding to provide a false alibi to former officer John Brady. Brady was sentenced in 1994 to 15 years in prison on 14 counts of racketeering in a series of home-invasion robberies. His partner in crime, former officer Xavier Evans, was sentenced to 25 years.

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John J. Anastasio
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Fort Pierce Tribune (FL)
January 9, 1997

Court Hears of Cop's Alleged Shakedown, Mike Lawless
Author: Sherry Parmet

Dressed in old clothes and reeking of booze, **Ciro Dominguez** looked like an easy mark late at night as he paced a city street. Lawless But appearances can be deceiving. Dominguez, an agent with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, was working a sting operation to find out if Fort Pierce police Officer **Mike Lawless** was as corrupt as informants said. FDLE officers had been told Lawless routinely stole money from poor, Hispanic-speaking men. Dominguez testified Wednesday on the first day of Lawless' trial in St. Lucie County Court. Dominguez told jurors about an encounter he had with Lawless on the evening of Jan. 11, 1995. Dominguez, posing as a migrant worker, carried a wallet holding \$170 along with a \$20 bill in his pocket to create the impression of someone looking to buy drugs. "I was kind of walking back and forth playing the role of someone looking suspicious," Dominguez said. "I spoke in broken English."

It was after midnight when Lawless and former Officer **Linda Kirk**, who was working with FDLE, approached Dominguez on Seventh Street and began to question him. Another FDLE agent was in a nearby car videotaping the exchange. Dominguez testified Lawless removed the wallet from his pocket, walked out of sight for a moment and then returned, placing the wallet back in Dominguez' pocket. "He said, 'Go on home,'" Dominguez said. At that point Dominguez met with FDLE agent **Mike Driscoll**, and they returned to the FDLE office where they determined \$80 had been taken from the wallet. Nobody besides Dominguez and Lawless had touched the wallet, Dominguez testified. Despite their belief that Lawless had taken the money, FDLE refrained from searching him and bringing him in on theft charges at the time because they didn't want to alert other officers to their ongoing probe into corruption in the Fort Pierce Police Department, Driscoll said.

A two-year probe resulted in the July 8 indictments of Lawless and three other current and former officers on mostly theft-related charges. Lawless was indicted for petty theft. He was fired from the department as a result of FDLE's probe. "Mike Lawless, the man sworn to uphold our trust, violated that trust," Assistant State Attorney **Russ Bausch** told jurors during opening arguments. But defense attorney **John Anastasio** countered that nobody -- not Kirk, nor Driscoll nor Dominguez actually saw Lawless steal the money. When Lawless walked away with the wallet he disappeared from view. MDUL "Officer Lawless did pat down the individual, and he looked in his wallet because often in high crime areas you find rock cocaine in the wallet," **Anastasio** said. He then returned the wallet. "You will not hear a single witness from the state come and say, 'I saw Officer Mike Lawless take money from that wallet,'" **Anastasio** said. "You're not going to see Officer Lawless on the video camera taking money. You're gonna hear guesses, hear assumptions . . . but you're not going to hear any direct evidence that Officer Mike Lawless took some money."

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John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

FDLE can't even prove any money was taken because no photocopies were made of the original bills, **Anastasio** argued. "If nobody saw him do it, how are they going to establish that Officer Mike Lawless took the money?" **Anastasio** asked. "If they stopped and searched him maybe jurors would have the answers they want," he added. "Mike doesn't have to prove his innocence even though he is." **Anastasio** said FDLE came down hard on Lawless in order to justify a two-year investigation that generated embarrassingly little. The state rested its case against Lawless Wednesday afternoon. Kirk, who was listed as a possible witness, was not called to testify. **Anastasio** rushed out to issue Kirk a subpoena to appear in court today as a witness for the defense.

In his opening arguments, Bausch said former Fort Pierce Officer John Brady provided FDLE agents with information about Fort Pierce officers shaking down migrant workers. Brady was sentenced to 15 years in prison for a series of home invasion robberies. Kirk, who was among those implicated, agreed to cooperate with the FDLE in their effort to nail Lawless. She confessed to stealing money from Mexican migrants, but was granted immunity from prosecution in exchange for her grand jury testimony against other officers. Last week, former officer Stacy Moran pleaded no contest to a charge of attempted official misconduct and had his law enforcement certification revoked. FDLE said Moran falsified a traffic ticket and arrest affidavit he issued to a migrant worker. Another officer, Ron Chabot, was indicted on theft-related charges last summer but has yet to stand trial. And Officer Theresa Prussing faces a charge of lying in an unofficial proceeding.

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John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Stuart News (FL)

December 30, 1995

Bar Looking into Other Cases against Attorney

Author: Jennifer Maddox

An ethics complaint filed by the St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office against **John Anastasio** is not the only complaint lodged with the Florida Bar against the Port St. Lucie attorney. Investigators with the Florida Bar also are looking into a case where **Anastasio** is accused of mishandling the disbursement of a legal settlement check. Dr. Bruce Platzek of Port St. Lucie filed the complaint this summer, which alleged **Anastasio** did not deposit a \$40,000 settlement check in an escrow account for disbursement to four parties who had claims to the money. Instead, **Anastasio** gave the money to his client, Howard Turner of Port St. Lucie, who cashed the check himself and left town with all the money, said St. Lucie County sheriff's Detective Don Spivey, who investigated the case. Turner was arrested in May and charged with forgery. His case has not yet been tried. The settlement was the result of a suit Turner filed against the Martin County Sheriff's Office in 1990 after a sheriff's deputy hit his car. Turner's doctor, Platzek, and other attorneys in the case had claims to the settlement because of medical and legal bills Turner incurred.

In the most recent complaint lodged by the St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office, a grievance committee should decide within four months whether **Anastasio** unethically handled client Dennis Bernas' case against the department, Bar counsel James Keeter said. Bernas hired **Anastasio** in February 1993 after he was demoted from sergeant to deputy. Sheriff's officials allege **Anastasio** abused the legal system with Bernas' three separate lawsuits against the department. He also filed a slander suit against the person whose complaint about Bernas led to the sergeant's demotion. The sheriff's complaint also alleges **Anastasio** threatened the department by saying he would turn the department in to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the governor's office if they didn't settle the case and pay his client \$51,000.

When the Bar ponders the various complaints against **Anastasio**, his discipline record also could be considered, Bar officials said Friday. **Anastasio** has been reprimanded and fined twice this year for his handling of cases. He was placed on one year's probation in May and has paid more than \$2,000 in fines. "If there's any determination by the grievance system that **Mr. Anastasio** behaved unethically, then prior discipline would be considered by the Supreme Court," Keeter said. **Anastasio** filed complaints with the Bar earlier this month against the four attorneys who helped prepare the sheriff's complaint against him, saying their complaint was "a whole bunch of nonsense." He also said Thursday that he will file a lawsuit against the sheriff's office in response to its complaint, charging malicious prosecution and violation of civil rights. Bernas said he was happy with the work **Anastasio** did for him in his fight against the sheriff's office. On Wednesday, a career service board decided Bernas should get his sergeant's stripes back, along with more than \$7,000 in back pay. "I don't have a problem with what he did. That's his job," Bernas said. "(The sheriff's office) couldn't do much with me so now they're going to attack my attorney - that's how I feel."

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John J. Anastasio
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Stuart News (FL)
December 29, 1995

Sergeant's Dispute Leads to Conflict with Attorney

Author: Jennifer Maddox

The St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office has settled its dispute with Sgt. Dennis Bernas, but its fight with his attorney is far from over. Undersheriff Dennis Williams has filed a complaint with the Florida Bar against Port St. Lucie attorney **John Anastasio**, who handled Bernas' three lawsuits against the sheriff's office after Bernas was demoted from sergeant to deputy in February 1993. Bernas was reinstated as sergeant after a sheriff's service board hearing Wednesday. The sheriff's office already had agreed to settle the lawsuits for an undisclosed sum of less than \$25,000. The complaint, filed Sept. 25 with the Florida Bar, was referred last week to a grievance committee that hears cases against Treasure Coast attorneys. Sheriff's officials say they filed the complaint because **Anastasio** abused the legal system and threatened the sheriff's office.

In February 1993, **Anastasio** filed the first suit after Bernas was denied a hearing before his peers on his demotion. At issue was an incident in December 1992 in which Bernas cited a motorist for traffic violations while off-duty. The motorist later complained, saying Bernas pushed him against his car and restrained him "in an aggressive manner." In March 1993, the sheriff's office offered Bernas the hearing he requested in the suit, but **Anastasio** filed a second lawsuit in April to block the hearing. In the meantime, **Anastasio** had filed a separate slander suit against Daniel Jouver of Port St. Lucie for complaining to the sheriff's office about Bernas. In March 1995, **Anastasio** filed a federal lawsuit against the sheriff's office, accusing the department of violating his client's due process rights. **Anastasio** had threatened such a suit in a September 1994 letter to the sheriff's attorney. **Anastasio's** letter suggested the sheriff's office could not win against Bernas because of a legal settlement **Anastasio** had reached with Jouver in exchange for dropping the slander suit. As part of the settlement, Jouver gave **Anastasio** and Bernas the right to sue the sheriff's office on his behalf and collect any monetary damages rewarded.

Anastasio told sheriff's office attorney Joseph Mancini the matter could be dropped if the sheriff's office paid Bernas \$51,000 and reinstated him as sergeant without a hearing. "Dennis simply desires to be compensated and to have this matter quietly go away for the benefit of all. Please review the (settlement proposal) and call me before the end of next week, to avoid the necessity of commencing federal litigation and a review of the circumstances surrounding this matter by the governor's office and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement," **Anastasio** wrote. Williams asked the Bar to review **Anastasio's** actions. "Under normal circumstances, such an issue could be investigated as criminal extortion," Williams said. "However, because this action has been taken under the guise of an attorney representing his client, it now raised the question of whether it's ethical vs. criminal."

In a Dec. 5 letter to the Bar responding to the complaint, **Anastasio** called his letter to Mancini "nothing more than the result of ordinary, everyday, garden variety settlement negotiations."

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John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

"This boy (Williams) is so stupid and has wasted \$100,000 in taxpayer money (preparing the complaint)," **Anastasio** said Thursday. "They trumped this whole thing up." **Anastasio** filed complaints with the Bar this month against the four attorneys who helped prepare the complaint against him, claiming the complaint was "a whole bunch of nonsense" designed only as a leveraging tool in the Bernas litigation. He also promised Thursday that he would file another lawsuit against the sheriff's office in response to its complaint against him. Last month, the Bar fined and publicly reprimanded **Anastasio** for a threatening letter he wrote on behalf of a landlord who did not want to refund a tenant's \$500 security deposit. The attorney also is serving a one-year probation with the Bar for his conduct in two other cases.

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John J. Anastasio
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post (FL)
November 14, 1995

PSL Attorney Fine
Bar Fines Lawyer \$1,100 for a Threatening Letter
Author: Jose Patino Girona

A Port St. Lucie attorney was fined \$1,100 by the Florida Bar for writing a threatening letter intended to end a dispute over a \$500 security deposit. Florida Bar officials found **John Anastasio** guilty of a minor misconduct. **Anastasio** represented Paul Stier in a landlord-tenant dispute. Stier, the landlord, claimed that Guy Rubin had ruined the residence he rented from him. Before the trial, **Anastasio**, 40, wrote a letter to Rubin's attorney, Michael Mortell, explaining that if the case was dropped Stier would not tell the IRS that Rubin had claimed \$13,200 of the rent he paid as a business expense. "It appears that Mr. Rubin has deducted the full rental of \$13,200 as a business expense, when in fact, only 10 percent of the property was used for business purposes," **Anastasio** wrote in a letter dated July 1, 1994.

Mortell responded by calling **Anastasio's** letter extortion. "I am not used to practicing law in this manner," Mortell wrote in a letter a week later. Four days later, **Anastasio**, a Republican candidate for Congress against Mark Foley in 1994, wrote back saying it was a miscommunication. "Any comment about this reference in your July 8 letter regarding the IRS, was simply based upon my observations, regarding a lease on a residential property, signed in the name of a corporation," **Anastasio** wrote in a letter dated July 12, 1994. **Anastasio** said Stier had no input or knowledge of the first letter because he was on vacation. When he returned, he told **Anastasio** he had no intention of reporting Rubin's claim to the IRS. Yet Frank Pound the Florida Bar referee, said **Anastasio's** first letter was intended to gain an advantage against Rubin - a violation of attorney rules.

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John J. Anastasio
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Fort Pierce Tribune (FL)
November 10, 1995

Bar to Formally Rebuke Local Attorney, Anastasio

Author: Mark Schlueb

The Florida Bar will formally rebuke a Port St. Lucie attorney who was accused of extortion by an opponent in a civil suit, according to a state Supreme Court order handed down Thursday. Bar attorneys were unsure late Thursday whether the disciplinary action would affect attorney **John Anastasio's** probationary status. The state bar placed him on one year's probation in May in connection with a separate complaint. According to case files, **Anastasio** was representing a landlord being sued by one of his tenants, Stuart attorney Guy Rubin. **Anastasio** wrote a letter asking Rubin to drop his suit, otherwise the landlord would report to the Internal Revenue Service an illegal tax deduction Rubin allegedly made. Rubin said **Anastasio** was blackmailing him; he said the tax violation was a fabrication. He filed a complaint with the Florida Bar. "We have a responsibility to report ethics violations, so that people don't think attorneys are all crooks," Rubin said. "I had an obligation as an officer of the court to notify the bar of wrongdoing by one of its members."

Bar officials reviewed the complaint, and referred it to the state Supreme Court, which routinely decides such matters. "The grievance committee found the letter violated . . . the bar's rules of professional conduct," bar attorney James Keeter said. The court agreed, and directed the bar's board of governors to "admonish" **Anastasio**. The attorney also must pay \$1,125 in court costs. **Anastasio** called the disagreement "a minor annoyance" that was blown out of proportion. "It was easier to take an admonishment than to go through a lot of hearings and depositions," he said. Keeter wasn't sure if the bar would take further action because the admonishment came while **Anastasio** was on probation with the board. He was publicly reprimanded for his handling of a first-degree murder case in 1991 and a civil lawsuit a year later. In the civil case, one of **Anastasio's** clients said the attorney held settlement money for 13 months while he negotiated discounts on medical bills. Meanwhile, the client was besieged by collection agencies and refused medical treatment by his doctor.

In the other complaint, a court clerk notified the bar that **Anastasio** hadn't filed an appellate brief for William Stokes, who was accused of murder. **Anastasio** said the appeal was the responsibility of another of Stokes' attorneys. No stranger to controversy, **Anastasio** came under fire last year while running for the U.S. House of Representatives. The attorney accused his opponent of profiting from an improper land deal, questioned his opponent's sexual orientation and claimed his opponent promoted heroine use.

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John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Tampa Tribune (FL)

September 7, 1994

Candidate's Orientation Questioned

An Opponent is Circulating a Publication Insinuating that Mark Foley is Gay

Author: Kevin Bouffard

A candidate in Florida's Congressional District 16 race is trying to make an issue of front-running Republican Mark Foley's sexual orientation. Port St. Lucie lawyer **John Anastasio** says that Foley, a state senator from West Palm Beach, is a homosexual and that he supported a gay rights bill in 1993. **Anastasio** made the statements in a story in a four-page newspaper-style broadsheet, "The Inside Story," that circulated in the district last weekend. The article, titled: "Are we electing the first gay congressman in the history of District 16?" states that Foley is a middle-aged man who has no children and has never married. In a reply Tuesday, Foley did not comment on his sexuality. "**John Anastasio** has proven that he will do anything and say anything to trash someone's reputation and try to win an election," Foley said in a prepared statement. "The voters rejected his nasty attacks against [U.S. Rep.] Tom Lewis two years ago, and I am confident that they will do so again this year."

Lewis, a Palm Beach Gardens Republican, defeated **Anastasio** in 1992. Foley campaign manager Kirk Fordham refuted **Anastasio's** claim that the senator sponsored a bill to repeal a state regulation banning homosexuals from adopting children. State Rep. Suzanne Jacobs, D-Delray Beach, who sponsored such legislation in 1993 in the state House of Representatives, confirmed Tuesday Foley did not sponsor her measure in the Senate. **Anastasio's** circular reprints a Nov. 24, 1992, article from The Palm Beach Post indicating Foley and Jacobs intended to sponsor a repeal of the gay adoptions ban in the 1993 Legislative session. When told of the discrepancy, **Anastasio** said he never charged Foley "sponsored" the measure, only that he supported it. **Anastasio** charges Foley has repeatedly sidestepped the issue of his sexuality. **Anastasio's** article points to an April 6 column by Steven Biller, then editor of a Miami alternative newspaper, which refers to Foley as "a semi-openly-gay state representative." "Tactical considerations" delayed release of the circular until the final week of the campaign, **Anastasio** said.

"He could have raised these on countless numbers of occasions previously," Fordham said. **Anastasio** said he raised the issue of Foley's sexuality because of the response he got from an earlier campaign circular that contained an issues survey. More than 70 percent responded "No," to the question, "Are you in favor of allowing gays in the military," he said. "To a good chunk of people in this district, sexual orientation and government service is important to them," **Anastasio** said. Foley, **Anastasio** and Highlands County Commissioner Audrey Vickers are vying for the GOP nomination for the seat in Thursday's primary. District 16 includes most of Highlands County, all of Glades and Hendry counties, and parts of Okeechobee, St. Lucie, Martin and Palm Beach counties.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. Anastasio
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Fort Pierce Tribune (FL)
September 3, 1994

Ad Attack Proves Bad News for GOP

Author: Mark Schlueb

The St. Lucie County Republican Executive Committee's chairman said congressional candidate **John Anastasio** may have violated the party's Code of Conduct with his smear campaign against opponent Mark Foley. **Anastasio**, 39, printed a four-page advertising publication accusing Foley, who also is seeking the District 16 seat, of profiting from an improper land deal and promoting heroin use, as well as questioning whether Foley is a homosexual. "When someone stoops to the level of doing anything to get into office, that may not be the candidate Republicans want to elect," Executive Committee Chairman Steve Knapp said Friday. "I think it definitely bears some investigation by the Executive Committee." Knapp said one of **Anastasio's** representatives recently signed the party's Code of Conduct, and state party officials have taken a hard line against negative campaigning during the 1994 elections.

Nowhere is **Anastasio's** circular labeled a political advertisement. Each article criticizes Foley, and **Anastasio's** name is cited only in a fine-print label on the third page that is required by federal election laws: "Pd. for by the Committee to Elect **John Anastasio**." **Anastasio's** representatives delivered 25,000 copies of the circular to MDUL Tribune offices Thursday, asking that it be included as an advertising insert in the paper's Tuesday editions. The MDUL Tribune declined to accept the advertisement, as did MDUL The Stuart News. **Anastasio** asked the MDUL Tribune not to publish a news article about the circular before it was expected to be distributed, two days before Thursday's Republican primary. "A political campaign is a lot like a wartime campaign -- timing is everything," he said.

The publication, called MDUL "The Inside Story," looks like a newspaper, with stories, headlines and photographs. The lead article -- under the headline "Introducing the best congressman money can buy" -- condemns Foley for accepting dozens of campaign contributions from political action committees and special interest groups. The article, which claims Foley has been "bought and sold," ran alongside a photograph of a shadowy figure clutching a briefcase overflowing with cash. Foley has collected about \$316,000 in campaign funds; **Anastasio** a fraction of that amount. Another article raised questions about whether Foley is gay. **Anastasio** also reprinted a 1992 MDUL Palm Beach Post article that indicated Foley would back a gay rights issue in an upcoming legislative session. In fact, Foley never sponsored or supported such legislation.

Foley also was criticized in the **Anastasio** publication for sponsoring a bill that would provide free hypodermic needles to drug addicts in an effort to reduce the spread of AIDS, a measure that **Anastasio** said would promote heroin addiction. The publication also faults Foley for his 1986 purchase of a parcel of land in Palm Beach County that was sold later the same day to the School Board at a substantial profit. Although **Anastasio** states the matter was investigated by the Palm Beach County State Attorney's Office, he did not report the outcome of the investigation, which

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

found no criminal wrongdoing. Foley, a state senator from West Palm Beach, is considered the front-runner to succeed the retiring Rep. Tom Lewis, R-North Palm Beach. Foley answered **Anastasio's** allegations in a brief written statement. "I'm not going to respond to outrageous, last-minute charges from someone who has no credibility," the statement said. "Once again, he has proven that he will do anything and say anything to trash someone's reputation and try to win an election."

Anastasio said the allegations about his opponent are legitimate questions, and that he has distributed other circulars detailing his own stance on the issues. "I've been handing out facts about my campaign since May," he said. The negative campaigning isn't a first for **Anastasio**. The Port St. Lucie attorney was criticized for mudslinging during the 1992 campaign as well, when he was defeated by Lewis. Prior to the 1992 Republican primary, **Anastasio** called Lewis "the lying, check-bouncing, 27-year career politician." Although he accused Lewis of bouncing checks at the House bank, he ignored the fact that the eight checks in question were the result of a change in the timing of automatic payroll deposits. The circular comes less than two weeks after **Anastasio** admitted removing two of Foley's campaign signs from along a Port St. Lucie street. **Anastasio** said he planned to place the signs in his campaign headquarters, but later returned them. Audrey Vickers, the third Republican seeking the District 16 seat, declined to comment on **Anastasio's** actions, but said Foley also is guilty of negative campaigning. She pledged to "continue campaigning on the issues that are of concern and importance to the voters."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. Anastasio
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Fort Pierce Tribune (FL)
August 30, 1994

Elections 1994, U.S. House, Anastasio
Author: Steve Quinn

Undaunted by failure two years ago, **John Anastasio** still wants to go to Washington, D.C. **Anastasio**, 39, a Port St. Lucie attorney, lost his first bid for the 16th District congressional seat in 1992, but wants another crack at the position held by retiring congressman Tom Lewis for 10 years. A passionate speaker who enjoys quoting former political leaders, **Anastasio** is proclaiming a fresh approach to government. "It is going to be grassroots government," he said. "All politicians look to grassroots campaigns, then the day after being elected they forget about you. The most important part of citizen participation is not just winning the election, but after the election." Despite losing to Lewis two years ago, **Anastasio** believes the timing is still right to hold political office. "America is at a crossroads," he said. "I think that now is the time that is going to determine what the future of this country and what the future of this world is."

What is your approach to solving the crime problem? Seven percent of the people commit 70 percent of the crime. They need to be locked up on a long-term basis. That is the only way we are going to get some long-term relief. Then put them on a 24-hour system. You sleep for eight hours, work for eight hours and go to school for eight hours. Over a period of several years, that can reform all but the helpless. How do you think the federal government should be handling immigration, especially the refugees from Haiti and Cuba? I don't blame the immigrants for coming here, but there are no guiding principles right now. We need to stand up and have a cohesive policy. We should not give federal or state benefits to anyone who is not a United States citizen. You must go through citizenship process and that includes learning English. They are starting to swear in people (as citizens) in foreign languages. That's bizarre. What style of universal health care coverage do you support? It should be completely out of the government's hands except for regulations concerning how medical insurance is provided. I'm tired of hearing the government has to do something because the people don't know any better. I believe the people do know better. We've got to find a way to restore the relationship between the physician and patient. Right now, it's half gone because the physician basically negotiates with the insurance company what care you need.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Fort Pierce Tribune (FL)

August 23, 1994

Candidate Caught Removing Opponent's Campaign Signs, Johnny Anastasio

Author: Steve Quinn

A Port St. Lucie attorney running for U.S. Congress admits taking two campaign signs belonging to his opponent, but said he later returned them to their original spot on Sunday night. **John Anastasio**, 39, a candidate for the District 16 congressional seat, said taking signs that belonged to his Republican primary opponent Mark Foley was not meant to be malicious. "We were going to put them on the campaign wall in the office," **Anastasio** said. "It perks up the campaign wall to point out the enemy. I don't think there are any campaign headquarters that would not have the opposition. It's sort of traditional." **Anastasio** said he returned the signs to a wooded area along Bayshore Boulevard and Eyerly Avenue shortly after eating chicken wings at a nearby restaurant. "I went back and stuck them back in the ground," said **Anastasio**. "I didn't like the way they looked and I told my campaign manager that I'm not going home until I put those two signs back. The signs were gone the length of time it took to eat 18 chicken wings."

Foley called **Anastasio's** act "reprehensible." **Anastasio** "The man is running for congress," said Foley, a state senator from West Palm Beach. "There is enough embarrassment in Washington. I'm shocked. He has his own campaign and I know he tends to be negative, but I wouldn't think he would resort to this type of thing. Nothing is beyond him." Foley said his office had noticed a number of campaign signs missing in the Port St. Lucie area. Port St. Lucie Police Spokeswoman Theresa Woodson said the case involving **Anastasio** remains under investigation and would be referred to the State Attorney's Office today. Foley said he would not pursue criminal charges because the judicial system is jammed up enough. "I think he should step down from the ballot," Foley said. "But he has to make that decision. What he did is demeaning to the process. If he's shooting himself in the foot, he's loaded his leg with a number of bullets."

According to police reports, Port St. Lucie Police Officer Charles Ward spotted **Anastasio** coming out of woods and carrying the signs about 11:12 p.m. **Anastasio** got into his Mercedes and drove off. Ward followed him and pulled him over four blocks south of the area at Bayshore and Grove Street. **Anastasio** told Ward he entered the woods to urinate and "wanted some souvenirs," reports said. Ward also wrote: "Mr. **Anastasio** made it verbally clear that he wrote my paycheck, however (he said he) would comply and not touch any additional signs." Ward was off duty Monday, but supervisor Sgt. Don Kryak said there was nothing confrontational about Ward's discussion with **Anastasio**, who also called the meeting "cordial." St. Lucie County Supervisor of Elections Gertrude Walker said she spoke with Mike Cochoran, a Tallahassee-based attorney for the Florida Division of Elections, and learned **Anastasio** did not violate election laws.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post (FL)

August 14, 1994

Election Vote Candidate Article House Campaign Series

Challengers Scramble to Catch Foley

Author: Bill Douthat

As four Congressional candidates jockeyed for position in front of news cameras, the shortest, Republican **John Anastasio**, found himself blocked out by the wide girth of Democrat John Comerford. "I refuse to stand behind you," said **Anastasio**, elbowing his way into the range of the camera lens. But even standing side by side, the candidates can't steal the political scene from the candidate who was not there, front-runner Mark Foley. Foley, blessed with loads of endorsements and cash contributions, is the target of both Republicans and Democrats as the Sept. 8 primary for the District 16 race nears. The four candidates at the Stuart news conference, two Republicans and two Democrats, gathered to make a belated appeal to put a cap on campaign spending. But by the time they held the news conference, Foley had raised \$250,000, well beyond the \$100,000 others suggested as the limit for the primary. The others struggle for money and attention. On the Republican side, Foley faces **Anastasio** and Audrey Vickers. "You could never find any three that were more diverse," said Vickers, the only candidate from the rural reaches of the district. All of the Democrats are from Palm Beach County, which makes up 45 percent of the population of the seven-county district. They are investment manager John Comerford, attorney Jim Stuber and teacher and former County Commissioner Ron Howard.

'ATTACK CAMPAIGN' FEARED

Anastasio is Foley's immediate concern. Foley wrote to supporters a week ago that **Anastasio** is preparing an "attack campaign" in the final days of the campaign. Foley said **Anastasio** did the same when he ran against U.S. Rep. Tom Lewis, the incumbent, two years ago. **Anastasio** says he is preparing a newsletter for Republican voters but declined to disclose its contents. An earlier eight-page campaign tabloid portrayed **Anastasio** as a reformer who advocates a "second American revolution" to restore values. His platform, he says, is to "provide the kind of hell-raising that is necessary to move that monolith known as the federal government." Among **Anastasio's** ideas is to turn closed military bases into prisons, to end busing to integrate schools, and to stop any government-run health-care plan. "I'm for getting the government out of as many things as possible," **Anastasio** said. The attorney, who wears cuff links and monogrammed shirts, says his strength is personal advocacy. "I'm in the courtroom a lot," he said. "That's why there is an edge in my voice. I'm a type-A personality."

Vickers, a mother of six, commands the other end of the scale in personality and issues. She says her four years' experience as a county commissioner in Highlands County in the northwest edge of the district has shown her which programs work and which don't. The best health care, she said, is from the clinics that offer free preventive care, which reduces the higher costs of emergency room treatment. Vickers says she has contacts in many parts of the district because of her career as a newspaper reporter and magazine editor. She's known to voters in Highlands County, but that county makes up only 9 percent of the district's population. On the issue of what

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Congress should do with Haiti, Vickers says she's against an armed invasion to restore democracy and thinks the embargo should be tightened. She says she doesn't believe the suffering caused by the embargo is as bad as many people believe.

FOLEY'S ADVANTAGE UNFAIR?

She says Foley has an unfair advantage in the primary, given his campaign contributions. Foley has raised more than \$250,000, more than the other five candidates combined. "I thought we would all be starting out on a level playing field," Vickers said. Foley dominates the field. He represented portions of the district during the past four years in the Legislature and enjoys strong support from the region's agricultural and business groups. Foley's campaign literature lists more than 200 associations, political committees and businesses that are supporting his campaign, including the largest corporate employers in the district. Among them are Florida Power & Light Co. and Pratt & Whitney. Foley has won the endorsement of a number of elected officials, including Lewis. When Foley was endorsed last month by the Palm Beach County Republican Party, Vickers called the scene an "out-of-control bandwagon."

Last week in Port St. Lucie, **Anastasio's** hometown, Foley drew about 30 people to a luncheon put together by his supporters. The organizer, Cody Bailey, said **Anastasio** has no political record, and his views are not well known. "All I care about is my county getting good representation," Bailey said. "Tom Lewis was not from here, but he did a good job." At the luncheon, Foley presented himself as the advocate for agriculture in a county that relies on citrus and farming as a major income producer. "People are ragging on agriculture as a destroyer of the environment, but we have to put it into perspective," Foley said. "What we need are people who are willing to stand up for the industry." Foley addressed government misspending, illegal immigration, welfare fraud, rising crime and tolerant policies toward juvenile delinquency. He said President Clinton's protest of the caning of an American teenager in Singapore sent a message that America tolerates vandalism. He said he supports bringing back paddling in public schools. While he supports stronger controls on immigration, he admits he hasn't thought out how the United States should resolve the turmoil in Haiti. He says he probably would oppose an invasion and support a relaxation of the trade embargo because "we are starving people over there, and it's not working."

CONTRIBUTIONS DEFENDED

Foley defends his acceptance of money from business interests and political action committees, saying it shows his aggressiveness and does not compromise his positions. "The PACs want good government," he said, adding the committees give contributions in order to have access to elected officials. "They want their phone calls returned." Among the Democrats, Jim Stuber has raised the most contributions but says he doesn't accept money from PACs. "It does no good to limit spending and not change the source of the funds," Stuber said. "Congress would remain for sale to the special interests, just for a lower price." Stuber takes a conservative view toward the federal budget, saying he supports a law requiring a balanced budget, a line-item veto power by the president and a review of entitlement programs, including Social Security. Congress should consider Social Security reforms, including raising the eligibility age and reviewing cost-of-

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John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

living adjustments and Medicare benefits to the wealthy. "All of that needs to be on the table," Stuber said. "We are shifting a lot of the costs to the younger generation."

CRIME CALLED TOP ISSUE

Comerford - who challenged Lewis in 1992, saying the Republican was out of touch with the district - says the major issue this year is controlling crime. He says he favors capital punishment for offenders convicted three times for trafficking. "At that point they are killing thousands of people," Comerford said. Comerford opposes an invasion of Haiti, saying it would require several years of U.S. military occupation. He supports universal health-insurance coverage and putting Social Security on a balanced budget. "Social Security should be actuarially sound," he said. "It should stand on its own two feet." Comerford also supports diplomatic relations with Cuba, even with Fidel Castro in power. "We need more behind-the-scenes diplomacy to prepare for the day that Fidel won't be there," he said. The third Democrat in the race is Ron Howard, who has run for local and state offices as a Republican. He says the Republicans have become more dogmatic since he last ran for office, as a candidate for state agriculture commissioner in 1990. Democrats are more open in philosophy, he says. Howard talks of "reprioritizing" federal spending and would support a budget deficit if necessary to keep the economy strong. He also supports universal health care, including a requirement that employers help pay for insurance premiums. He opposes an invasion of Haiti to restore democracy and says the embargo should accomplish the same goal. "It's painful, but in the end it will be successful," Howard said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Fort Pierce Tribune (FL)

March 18, 1994

Attorney's Practice Helps Students

Author: Jeff Ostrowski

Antoinette Lee is interrogating a witness in the mock trial of a police officer who shot an alleged gang member. The high school student says "Thank you" after one question, a beginner's slip that sets off her coach. "Never say 'OK,' never say 'Thank you,' never say 'All right,'" says **John Anastasio**, a high-strung Port St. Lucie trial attorney and Republican candidate for Congress. **Anastasio** is coaching Port St. Lucie High law students for a statewide mock trial competition next month in Tallahassee. His high-energy approach sometimes leaves students exasperated. "You keep busting on me," Lee says. "I hate when he busts on my questions." But, Lee says later, she's grateful for the help. "He's a really excellent attorney," says Lee, a junior who hopes to become a lawyer. "I look at him as a mentor. He respects us and we respect him."

Anastasio spends several hours a week with students in John Leonard's law class. Eight students are scheduled to make the trip to Tallahassee, where they will compete against other high schoolers from around the state. Their case pits the word of a cop against that of the high school student he shot in the knee after a prep football game. During Thursday afternoon's session, **Anastasio** tells kids to make their questions more pointed, and he interrupts them constantly. When Lee asks him to be more polite, **Anastasio** tells her she needs to be able to deal with rudeness. "I want you used to being interrupted constantly," **Anastasio** says. Senior Patrick Collins says **Anastasio's** coaching has helped to refine his team. "This guy's pretty smooth," Collins says. "He's into the dramatics and stuff."

In addition to their preparations for the April contest, students also are trying to raise funds. The team still needs about \$1,400 for the trip. Leonard and a few students attended Monday's Port St. Lucie City Council meeting to solicit donations. That trip yielded \$200 from Councilman Ray Ankrom and donations from the Police Athletic League, the Fraternal Order of Police and Planning Director Patricia Tobin. The group is still seeking money. To donate, contact Leonard at 340-4777, extension 136.

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John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Fort Pierce Tribune (FL)

January 29, 1994

Lawyer First entrant in Congressional Race

Attorney **John Anastasio** recently became the first formal candidate for the Treasure Coast's congressional seat. **Anastasio**, 38, has opened a campaign account and declared his candidacy to the Florida Secretary of State's Division of Elections. He lost the 1992 Republican primary to incumbent Rep. Tom Lewis, R-North Palm Beach. Lewis recently announced his plans to retire, and **Anastasio** announced his candidacy for the September primary. **Anastasio** said his campaign will focus on crime. He calls for converting closed military bases into prisons, where inmates would work in a factory and attend classes. He also supports treating drug smuggling as ``a national security issue" and implementing congressional term limits. State Rep. Ken Pruitt, R-Port St. Lucie, and state Sen. Mark Foley, R-West Palm Beach, also have expressed an interest in the seat.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. Anastasio
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Fort Pierce Tribune (FL)
August 13, 1993

Utility Chief Says He Hasn't Quit

Author: Duane Marsteller

The county's top utility official on Thursday denied published reports that he had resigned and accused his boss of lying to the media. But County Administrator Tom Kindred disputed Utility Services Administrator Richard Howell's charge, saying he never told reporters that Howell had agreed to quit from his \$54,600-a-year post as head of St. Lucie County Utilities. In a statement released Thursday, Howell said Kindred lied last week when he told reporters from /The Palm Beach Post/ and /The Stuart/Port St. Lucie News/ that Howell had resigned. "At the present time I can only say that the county administrator is apparently confused," Howell said in his statement. "Although I would hope that someone in his position would not intentionally lie about such a serious matter, the fact is that I have not tendered my resignation."

Howell, who returned from vacation Thursday, said he would not comment beyond his statement. Kindred, who returned Thursday from an out-of-town conference, would not directly respond to Howell's letter. But he said the newspaper articles, which were published Saturday, were inaccurate. "I did not say I had his resignation," he said. "I did say that I had asked for his resignation." In his statement, Howell said he only requested a meeting on his employment status with Kindred through Port St. Lucie attorney **John Anastasio**. The meeting has not been set, but Kindred said he intends to do that today. **Anastasio** could not be reached for comment Thursday. He also represents a former county official who is suing the county for severance pay. Cliff Crawford, who was forced to resign as Leisure Services administrator in February, contends in his lawsuit he is entitled to severance pay under an agreement he had with former County Administrator James Chisholm.

Crawford filed the lawsuit, which seeks more than \$15,000 in severance pay and damages, after commissioners denied his severance request in March. Howell also had a similar agreement with Chisholm, who hired him in May 1990 at a starting salary of \$50,000. Howell has been on the firing line since May 1992, when the utility, which serves 16,800 residences and businesses in and around Port St. Lucie, cut off water to 5,000 customers. Utility officials later blamed three opened fire hydrants and hot, dry weather for the shutdown. Several county commissioners and Port St. Lucie Council members called then for Howell to be disciplined or fired because they contend he did not act quickly enough, but he was not. Instead, Chisholm was forced to resign. Howell's working relationship with Kindred has been strained, observers said. According to Howell's personnel file, Kindred reprimanded him in April for his handling of an employee's promotion. County officials later discovered that the employee, Charles Brigham, did not graduate from college as he indicated on his application form, so they blocked the promotion. Brigham, now 55, since has filed an age discrimination complaint against the county. Port St. Lucie officials also have publicly criticized Howell for what they said is the slow pace of utility expansion. They also questioned his leadership abilities and the utility's ability to provide enough water for future expansion.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Fort Pierce Tribune (FL)

April 3, 1993

Men Want Judge Removed from Case, John Anastasio

Four St. Lucie County men sued a county judge Friday to have him removed from their cases, claiming he is biased against their attorney. David Adolfson, David Poling, Russell Williams and Michael Polito – all represented by **John Anastasio** -- filed the suit against County Judge Tom Walsh. The four men, who have pending misdemeanor cases, filed motions last month asking Walsh to disqualify himself because of the alleged conflict with **Anastasio**. Although Walsh disqualified himself on at least five other cases handled by **Anastasio**, the suit indicated, he refused for these cases. Walsh said Friday he could not comment on the suit.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. Anastasio
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post (FL)
November 6, 1992

Reinstated Officer, City Clash on Job Assignment

Author: Sarah K. Duran

City police officer Rod Dobler, who was fired and then reinstated after a 21/2-year legal battle, has now clashed with city officials over his latest assignment: guarding the city's annex building that was temporarily closed due to odors. On Thursday, Dobler's attorney, **John Anastasio**, called a press conference to point out that Dobler was assigned to sit in front of the building. Workers moved out Monday after complaining of unpleasant odors caused by the hair salon next door and sewer lines under the air conditioning system. **Anastasio** said Dobler's assignment is retaliation for the lawsuits he has filed. Dobler was fired in 1990. He fought it, and in March, the appeals court ruled that the city was bound to an April 1991 settlement that it had reached with Dobler but tried to back out of. Dobler returned to work June 8. Since then Dobler has filed two civil suits charging that the city has violated the terms of the agreement.

"They're using a \$30,000-a-year police officer to sit in this building while it's being ventilated," **Anastasio** said. But city officials said someone had to be there to watch the equipment and files inside the building while it was being ventilated. "Mr. Dobler doesn't like a one-day assignment so he notifies his attorney and his attorney calls a press conference," said Personnel Director Victor Granello. The two sides differ on how long Dobler has this assignment-- Dobler said a couple days; the city said one day. They also conflict on whether he was told to sit inside or outside. The assignment ended Thursday because the building will re-open this morning. Air tests showed that there were no toxins or noxious gases in the building although the building was fixed to prevent the odor problems.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. Anastasio
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post (FL)
October 21, 1992

Judge Won't Remove Election-Delay Issue from Ballot

Author: Pat Moore

A judge rejected a Martin County voter's request Tuesday to remove a proposed amendment from the Nov. 3 ballot that would allow Florida's governor to suspend or delay general elections in an emergency. Once Circuit Judge Robert Makemson refused to remove the proposed amendment from the ballot, Stuart resident Robert Yamin and his attorney, **John Anastasio**, asked the 4th District Court of Appeal to forward the issue to the Florida Supreme Court. **Anastasio** hopes to argue the case before the Supreme Court next week. The appeals court is expected to rule quickly on their request. "It is a frightful power that is being delegated to the government by the people, if this passes, and it's not being explained," **Anastasio** told the judge. Makemson ruled Amendment One is clear enough for people to understand. **Anastasio** and Assistant Attorney General George Waas, who wants the case settled, said they will jointly ask the Supreme Court to hear the question before the election. "I will do everything I can to get this before the Florida Supreme Court quickly," Waas said. "Election cases are among the fastest moving cases to get through the system, especially when the election is just around the corner." Yamin, who also served as the Martin County coordinator for the statewide "Eight is Enough" term limitation amendment, is the only one in Florida to challenge the proposal to delay or suspend elections in an emergency, Waas said.

The Florida House voted 113-1 and the Senate voted 38-0 to put the proposed amendment on the ballot. **Anastasio**, who was unsuccessful in his bid to defeat U.S. Congressman Tom Lewis in the Sept. 1 Republican primary, argued the proposed amendment is ambiguous and the average voter won't understand the power they would be delegating to the governor. The proposed amendment would allow the Legislature, or anyone it delegates, to define the type of emergency that could require suspending or delaying elections, he said. "Without sounding paranoid, but to take it to its logical conclusion, if one party controlled both houses and the governor's office and decided the emergency was that their party was losing in the polls, they could define that as an emergency," he said. Assistant Attorney General Saralyn Nemser argued the proposal was not misleading. But Yamin isn't so sure. "Everyone assumes it's going to take care of hurricanes and that isn't the issue at all," Yamin said after court. "The danger here is very real," he said. "If you're a student of history, you'll know that in any country around the world if one man gets the power to suspend elections, he controls."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Tampa Tribune (FL)

August 28, 1992

GOP Challenger for Lewis' Seat Relies on Anti-Incumbent Fervor

Author: Kevin Bouffard

Five-term incumbent U.S. Rep. Tom Lewis is facing a bruising primary challenge from Fort Pierce lawyer and political novice **John Anastasio**. Both men are vying for the Republican nomination for the 16th Congressional District, which covers most of Highlands County and runs across Okeechobee, Hendry, Glades, Palm Beach, St. Lucie and Martin counties. The primary election is Tuesday. **Anastasio**, 37, making his first run at national political office, is hoping to capitalize on the state and national anti-incumbent backlash to carry him over the popular incumbent. His campaign strategy is to link Lewis, 67, to the popular frustrations about current elected officials, namely that they are ineffective in solving problems and out of touch with voters. ""That man is so far out of touch," **Anastasio** said. ""The man is a ghost. He doesn't stand up for anything. He doesn't fight. I'm a fighter." **Anastasio** said Lewis is rarely seen in the sprawling District 16 because he spends his time in Washington and on ""junkets" to foreign countries.

The challenger pledged to hold at least 26 town meetings in all parts of the district to solicit voters' opinions and educate them about Washington dealings. ""I return to the district almost every weekend," countered Lewis. ""I'm in Washington about five weekends a year." Lewis sent The Tampa Tribune a copy of his office expense account to support his contention. The account shows Lewis has made 31 round-trip flights between Washington and his West Palm Beach home during the past year. Lewis holds regular office hours at his two district offices in West Palm Beach and Port St. Lucie so voters can talk to him directly, he said, and an aide regularly visits other parts of the district, including Highlands, to keep in touch with those voters. **Anastasio** said he supports the proposed eight-year limit on the time a person may serve in Congress. Lewis opposes any limits.

On other issues, **Anastasio** said the federal budget deficit is the nation's top problem and eliminating it would be his first priority. To tame the deficit, **Anastasio** proposed a 15 percent cut in every federal department. He also wants to eliminate several federal departments. **Anastasio** also proposed defense cuts that President George Bush has opposed, including elimination of the Strategic Defense Initiative. The Republican challenger has also promised to eliminate any ""pork barrel," or federal projects designed to help one or a handful of congressional districts. That includes Florida's District 16, he added. As the budget deficit goes, Lewis said, he has been part of the solution, not the problem.

He supported the recent attempt to pass a balanced-budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the incumbent said. Lewis added he supports an across-the-board freeze in federal spending - both in defense and ""entitlement" programs such as Social Security and Medicaid - until the budget is balanced. The incumbent dismissed **Anastasio's** proposals as unworkable because he could not get them passed in Congress. ""We [Republican congressman] can't get a 2 percent

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

across-the-board cut," Lewis said. "I don't know how he can get 15 percent. All his proposals are worthy, but when you get here, you find these things are very difficult to do." Lewis was first elected to Congress in 1982 and has faced no serious challenge since then. **Anastasio's** only other attempt at elective office came at age 18, when he lost a race for a New Jersey township commission seat. He is a native of New Jersey who moved to Florida in 1989 to establish his own law practice. The Republican nominee in congressional District 16 will face Democratic challenger John Comerford, who is unopposed for his party's nomination.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

John J. Anastasio

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post (FL)

August 15, 1992

U.S. House Candidate Says Firm is Strong-Arming Him

Author: Teresa Lane

A lawyer seeking to oust U.S. Rep. Tom Lewis in the Sept. 1 Republican primary complained to sheriff's authorities Thursday that a computer salesman threatened to sink his campaign if he didn't pay for a \$2,500 computer program. **John Anastasio** of Port St. Lucie said he bought the software several months ago from a Colorado firm called Ace Computer Solutions and tried to return it after learning it wouldn't work on his computer. The salesman refused to accept the program and demanded that he pay the \$2,000 balance, **Anastasio** said. The salesman called Thursday and threatened to "disgrace" **Anastasio** if he did not pay the balance by 5 p.m. Friday. St. Lucie County Sheriff's deputy Tom Puglis, who listened to a phone conversation between **Anastasio** and the store owner on a speaker phone Thursday, wrote in his report that when **Anastasio** asked what would be said to the news media, the man replied, "Use your imagination." **Anastasio**, who declined to discuss the complaint because it is under investigation by sheriff's officials, said the software would have enabled him to print out schedules for the Federal Elections Commission and keep track of campaign contributions.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
John J. Anastasio
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post (FL)
August 9, 1992

‘Lightning-Strike’ Foe Seeks to Beat Lewis

Author: Brian E. Crowley

Feisty political newcomer **John Anastasio** keeps bugging U.S. Rep. Tom Lewis, but Lewis, who hasn't lost a race in nearly three decades, confidently treats his opponent like little more than an annoying gnat. While **Anastasio** believes Lewis is in for the surprise of his political life, there is little indication that voters in this South Florida district are ready to abandon the five-term congressman. Lewis' Republican primary challenger promises an intense campaign that will feature "attack pieces" sharply criticizing Lewis, who **Anastasio** says "lacks vision and direction." Lewis' campaign tactic is a simple one-- ignore the opponent. It worked well in 1990 when he was challenged in the Republican primary by lawyer Kevan Boyles. Lewis refused to debate Boyles, avoided joint appearances-- and won 75 percent of the vote.

Lewis had no Democratic opponent that year. This year, the Republican primary winner will face Democrat John Comerford of Palm Beach, who has no primary opposition in the District 16 race. Lewis is 67; **Anastasio** is 36. Lewis has lived in Palm Beach County for 35 years. **Anastasio** moved to the Treasure Coast from New Jersey in 1989. Where **Anastasio** is a bundle of nervous energy, Lewis is quieter and statesmanlike. **Anastasio** is among this year's "lightning-strike" candidates-- sincere, well-meaning candidates who take on tough races in the belief that a storm of angry voters will strike down incumbents. "When I'm out meeting people, they come up to me and ask if I'm an incumbent," **Anastasio** said. "When I tell them no, they say, 'In that case I'll vote for you.' It's really been amazing." Lewis admits many voters are unhappy with incumbents. "This has been the most traumatic political year in recent memory. But I believe Congress can work, and I want to help make it work."

A former aircraft testing specialist at Pratt & Whitney, Lewis has been in the forefront of passing legislation to improve aircraft safety. He also is a strong advocate of the space plane and agricultural interests. **Anastasio** is running hard on the notion that Congress is a mess and that Lewis is part of that mess. **Anastasio** said he would end congressional pay raises, get rid of congressional perks and cut committee staffs in half. He zeros in on the check-writing scandal, accusing Lewis of bouncing checks. That's not entirely accurate. It was found that Lewis' salary deposits were not properly recorded by the now-closed House bank, resulting in problems with eight checks worth a total of \$3,684. The most notable issue that separates the two men is abortion. **Anastasio** supports abortion rights. Lewis does not. Beyond that, **Anastasio** said, "I don't have a great disagreement with his voting record, but I have a problem with the fact that he doesn't fight."

Anastasio would like to make that case in a series of debates with Lewis. Lewis refuses. "As I have stated on many past occasions," Lewis said in a letter to **Anastasio**, "my first priority is to serve the constituents of my district -- campaigning is secondary. Given my pending congressional responsibilities and the current legislative agenda in Washington, I am unable to

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commit to a debate." That is the standard reply of incumbents. **Anastasio** has read the challengers handbook, which calls for hammering an incumbent who refuses to debate. "Lewis has avoided debate in the past, and it appears he will continue to do so," **Anastasio** said. "His lack of a record and lies about his check bouncing leave him no choice." In a year when voters seem determined to change the system by replacing many incumbents, the question in District 16 is whether voters believe Lewis is one of those who must go.

HOUSE DISTRICT 16

JOHN ANASTASIO

- * PARTY: Republican
- * AGE: 36
- * HOMETOWN: Port St. Lucie
- * OCCUPATION: lawyer
- * EDUCATION: B.A., J.D. Seton Hall University
- * POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: None
- * QUOTE: `My first priority is to stop spending more than we take in.'

TOM LEWIS

- * PARTY: Republican
- * AGE: 67
- * HOMETOWN: North Palm Beach
- * OCCUPATION: real estate broker, aircraft testing specialist.
- * EDUCATION: attended Palm Beach Junior College and University of Florida
- * POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: North Palm Beach Village Council/mayor, 1964-71, state House, 1972-80, state Senate, 1980-1982, U.S. House, 1982-present
- * QUOTE: `I consider myself part of the solution, not part of the problem.'

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The Tampa Tribune (FL)

July 11, 1992

House Challengers Say Incumbent Out of Touch

Author: Kevin Bouffard

Both the Republican and Democratic challengers to U.S. Rep. Tom Lewis, R-North Palm Beach, charged on Friday the five-term incumbent is out of touch with the voters at home. "Mr. Lewis has been asleep at the switch for the last decade," said Port St. Lucie attorney **John Anastasio**, 37, who is challenging for the nomination in the Sept. 1 Republican primary. The Republican winner will face John P. Comerford, 43, of Palm Beach, an investment manager. Comerford was equally critical of Lewis' access to voters. "He's just been there - he's been a slug," Comerford said. "He's pretty much voted the Reagan/Bush line. He has no creative programs." Lewis was unavailable for comment, but his press secretary, Karen Hogan, said Lewis returns to Florida almost every weekend, even when Congress is in session. "Obviously **Mr. Anastasio** ought to check with the people," Hogan said. "He just doesn't have his facts straight." All three men are seeking the seat in Florida's Congressional District 16, which covers Highlands, Okeechobee, Glades, Hendry, St. Lucie, Palm Beach and Martin counties. **Anastasio** said he'll run on a campaign that stresses cutting federal government spending to balance the national budget. That means cutting back on wasteful "pork barrel" spending that incumbent congressmen use as a means for holding onto their seats. There will be no pork barrel for District 16 if he is elected, even if that hurts him politically, **Anastasio** said. In the long run, a balanced federal budget will stimulate economic growth and help his district more than pork barrel projects, he added. "If the voters are looking for somebody to get big money for the district, don't vote for me," **Anastasio** said.

Comerford said he will campaign on a platform of tax reform and universal health coverage. The reform would concentrate on eliminating special interest tax breaks and would not affect middle-class families, he added. "I believe firmly we can squeeze \$50 billion to \$100 billion [in additional tax revenue] out of special interests," Comerford said. Comerford said he would look particularly closely at reforming tax preferences for charitable trusts and contributions. He also proposed a universal health care system that would have private insurance companies providing basic coverage for all Americans with the federal government picking up the tab for catastrophic care. A native of New Jersey, **Anastasio** moved to Florida in 1989 to start his law practice. He and his family had come to the state regularly for 20 years beforehand, **Anastasio** said. He received a bachelor's degree in government and his law degree from Seton Hall University in New Jersey. This is **Anastasio's** first try at political office.

Comerford is a native of Boston who moved to Florida in 1984. He and his family also visited the state frequently since the 1960s, Comerford said. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Massachusetts and a master's degree in international relations from Harvard University. Comerford served in four banking and financial positions in the Carter administration and was town commissioner in South Palm Beach for a two-year term ending in 1991. Friday was the last day to file a petition for congressional seats.

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The Palm Beach Post (FL)
March 20, 1992

Port St. Lucie Man Challenges GOP Rep. Lewis

Chastising Rep. Tom Lewis for falling "asleep at the switch," lawyer **John Anastasio** announced his congressional campaign Thursday, a day after Lewis admitted bouncing checks drawn on the House bank. **Anastasio**, 36, said the check-bouncing incident is only a symptom of Congress' woes. Career politicians are relying too heavily on perks and privileges, he said. Voters should limit terms to eight years, **Anastasio** said. Lewis is one of several politicians to come forward in the past week and admit bouncing checks on the House checking account. He bounced eight checks in 1988 and 1989 for \$3,684. **Anastasio**, who has lived in Port St. Lucie for three years after moving from New Jersey, has never held public office. He will face Lewis in the Republican primary in the fall. **Anastasio**, who filed his campaign papers in January, had been delaying his formal announcement because the Legislature is still drawing up new districts. Though there is a chance that the new political map might place **Anastasio** outside of Lewis' district, **Anastasio** said he will run anyway.

Research Compiled by: Amanda Beyer
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