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Body

THE ouster of John T. Gregorio of Linden from the State Senate cuts the Democratic margin there to 20 votes, one shy of the number needed for passage of legislation. As a result, the Democrats will have to turn to the Republicans, who control 19 votes in the 40-member chamber, to have anything of a controversial nature adopted. Or they can wait until new elections are held in Mr. Gregorio's 20th Legislative District, which includes parts of Middlesex and Union Counties. Once a vacancy has been declared by the Senate, an election to fill the seat must be held within 37 to 45 days.

Mr. Gregorio, who also lost his position as Mayor of Linden, had served in the Legislature since 1974, first as an Assemblyman and, since 1978, as a Senator. He was ousted last week after a threejudge Appellate Court denied, without comment, a motion calling for a stay of Mr. Gregorio's forfeiture of his two public offices pending the outcome of his appeal of a conspiracy conviction.

The appellate panel also denied a motion asking that the case be remanded to the trial court so that a more-thorough investigation could be made of allegations that some members of the jury had expressed a bias against politicians. The Appellate Court, in effect, upheld a decision by Judge Davis S. Baime of Superior Court that Mr. Gregorio immediately forfeit his Senate and mayoral posts.

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Two weeks ago, Judge Baime had ruled that Mr. Gregorio's conviction last December on charges of conspiring to hold a hidden interest in two Linden go-go bars was valid, despite a contention by a juror that she had been subjected to "undue pressure" to go along with the guilty verdict.

After questioning the juror, whom he did not identify, Judge Baime said he could "find no reason to vacate the jury's verdict or to compel further investigation." He said that the juror had complained that other members of the panel had been eager to finish the lengthy trial so that they could go about their holiday business, and that some had made derogatory comments about corruption among politicians.

The 56-year-old Mr. Gregorio was sentenced on Feb. 10 to two years' probation, fined \$10,000 and ordered stripped of his public offices. However, Judge Baime had stayed execution of the sentence pending the outcome of his investigation into the juror's charges. Attorneys for Mr. Gregorio said they would appeal the Appellate Court ruling.

As for the mayoral seat, the Democratic Committee in Linden will meet Tuesday to select the names of three Democrats to put before the City Council, which will make the final decision. The Council comprises nine Democrats and two Republicans.

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The state's Poison Treatment Hot Line, officially started 10 days ago to ease the fears of parents whose children have swallowed something potentially toxic or to provide immediate help to the victim, has been receiving about 100 calls a day.

The Hot Line, part of the New Jersey Poison Information and Education System begun at Beth Israel Medical Center in Newark, is expected to handle about 80,000 calls a year, 80 percent of them from concerned parents.

The system, which has a \$400,000 budget, is operated 24 hours a day. It provides instructions over the phone on how to treat suspected poison victims.

Dr. Steven Marcus, assistant director of pediatrics at Beth Israel, is director of the poison information system, which contains a sophisticated computer network that is tied into the National Library of Medicine in Washington. The library can provide almost instantaneous information about the contents, symptoms and treatment of a variety of toxic substances that may be found in and around the home.

The Hot Line number is (800) 962-1253.

To offset a heavyweight summer season encompassing Shakespeare's "The War of the Roses," "Henry VI: Parts I, II and III" and "Richard III," the New Jersey Shakespeare Festival at Drew University in Madison will have an all-comedy fall repertory: "Let's Get a Divorce," "Born Yesterday" and "Beyond the Fringe."

To celebrate the Shakespearean event - and it is an event, for the plays have been professionally produced in tandem only twice previously in this century, according to Douglas S. Eakeley, president of the festival's board of trustees - Governor Kean has proclaimed June 28 to July 3 "New Jersey Shakespeare Festival Week."

Assemblywoman Maureen B. Ogden, Republican of Millburn; State Senator John H. Dorsey, Republican of Denville, and Clement Price, head of the State Council on the Arts, were among those at a recent reception at Drew at which the Governor's proclamation was heard and the fall repertory announced.

To make matters more felicitous, a \$30,000 Dodge Foundation grant to underwrite the festival's internship program was announced, and eight of the 12 "festival madrigals" (strolling singers from the internship program who perform before the summer Shakespearean offerings) sang.

In his statement, Mr. Kean stressed the importance of the arts for business and the soul, called the festival one of the state's "cultural treasures" and remarked that American actors, not just British, were well-equipped to perform the classics.

The festival's artistic director, Paul Barry, read the King's soliloquy from Act II of "King Henry VI, Part III," in which the King ponders the shepherd's sweet, simple life ("O God! Methinks it were a happy life/ to be no better than a homely swain") in contrast to the weight of the monarchy ("When mistrust and treason waits on him").

"This reminds me," the Governor said, "of the times my staff tells me to stay out of things."

Four former employees of the Xerox Corporation have filed a classaction suit charging that the company engaged in age discrimination in laying off thousands of workers over the last 18 months.

In papers filed in Federal District Court in Newark, Robert H. Jaffe, a Springfield lawyer representing the plaintiffs, charged that the men, and perhaps thousands of others, were terminated from their jobs as Xerox sales representatives because they were more than 40 years old.

According to the court papers, the men received termination notices in November, 1981 because of "age-biased corporate policies developed by Xerox that were deliberately designed and implemented to impact on persons over 40 so as to exclude them from being hired, promoted or retained for available openings."

The suit also alleges that Xerox, in advertisements placed in some newspapers last spring, sought sales representatives for its Office Products and Computer Services divisions, positions from which many people were terminated.

The men decided to file the law suit after failing to adjudicate the matter through the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. A spokesman for Xerox said that the complaint "is without merit." About 12,200 employees have been terminated by Xerox since mid-1981.

For 10 years, the Ling, a World War II submarine, has been a memorial to naval crews. However, the vessel, which is 75 percent operational, according to the nonprofit association that keeps her on the Hackensack River in Hackensack, may fall victim to hard times.

"The bills to run the operation just keep going up and up, and our donations aren't keeping pace," said Herbert Georgius, director of the Ling Submarine Memorial Association, which has a budget of about \$50,000 a year.

The Ling, commissioned in August 1945, was used for training after the war and is on permanent loan to the association as a memorial/museum.

"I've been told by the Navy that, if our memorial operation fails, they will reclaim the Ling and sell her for scrap value," said Mr. Georgius, explaining that the 312-foot-long vessel was turned into a memorial in 1972 to save her from the acetylene torch.

Funds come mostly from \$2 donations for tours of the vessel, revenue from a gift shop, donations from local business and the private sector.

"We've lasted 10 years, and I think we can survive for a few more," Mr. Georgius said, "But one thing's for sure, and that is that the memories of men who never returned from submarine patrols can't be sold for scrap."

ODDS & ENDS: This year's \$150-a-plate dinner-dance of the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation, to be held next Saturday at the Parsippany Hilton, will have as its theme "Positively New Jersey." It is the first of a series of events designed to restore a positive image to the state, according to Robert I. Smith, state chairman of the organization's fund-raising efforts. Mr. Smith, who is resigning from his post as board chairman and chief executive officer of the Public Service Electric and Gas Company, said that New Jersey was consistently used as a foil by comedians, and that an attempt will be made to counter that negative image ... The New Jersey Motion Picture and Television Commission reports that more than 200 television commercials, advertising a wide variety of products, were filmed in the state last year ... The Duke Ellington Orchestra will give a benefit concert next Sunday at 8 P.M. at Kean College in Union. Proceeds of the performance will enable the Hillside High School Marching Band to participate in a music festival in Canada ... The Y.M.H.A. of Perth Amboy is starting a "Singles Club" for the elderly. Any single person over 60 can join the group by calling (201) 442-0365 ... Senator Bill Bradley, Democrat of Denville, will hold "town meetings" tomorrow at the West New York Community Center at 9:30 A.M. and at Edison High School at 3 P.M.

Graphic

Illustrations: photo of a poster showing the hot-line number

Classification

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Company: STATE SENATE (61%)

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