

# Orloff threatens to sue Richland for censuring

By Mark W. Derewicz

Free Press Staff Writer

Richland Township Supervisor Richard Orloff has threatened to file a lawsuit against fellow supervisors Earl Kline and Thomas Glackin if the two officials do not publicly apologize for censuring the first-year supervisor and withdraw statements denouncing his actions.

According to a letter sent to Richland Township supervisors Earl Kline and Thomas Glackin, Orloff will "have no alternative but to seek a remedy in the courts for blatantly illegal and inappropriate conduct."

The correspondence, drafted by Jeffrey P. Garton of the law firm Begley, Carlin & Mandio, states that "neither the Second Class Township Code nor any other regulatory statutes authorize the Board of Supervisors to censure another supervisor on any basis."

Orloff was reprimanded at the Feb. 26 board meeting for releasing a Niessen, Dunlap and Pritchard P.C. audit report before the supervisors had the opportunity to review it, according to Glackin.

"We have the right to go over the report with the auditors in a private session," Glackin said. "They will share insight with us that they would never do in public if there is a personnel problem."

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## Glackin cites Orloff's party connections

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Glackin also said that any conversations about potential employee problems would be "washed out" after the audit was released.

In his letter, Garton pointed out that the information in the audit did not contain any information which should be discussed at an executive session because of the Sunshine Act. That provision states that elected officials must discuss matters in public unless they deal with the hiring, firing, evaluation or disciplining of a township employee.

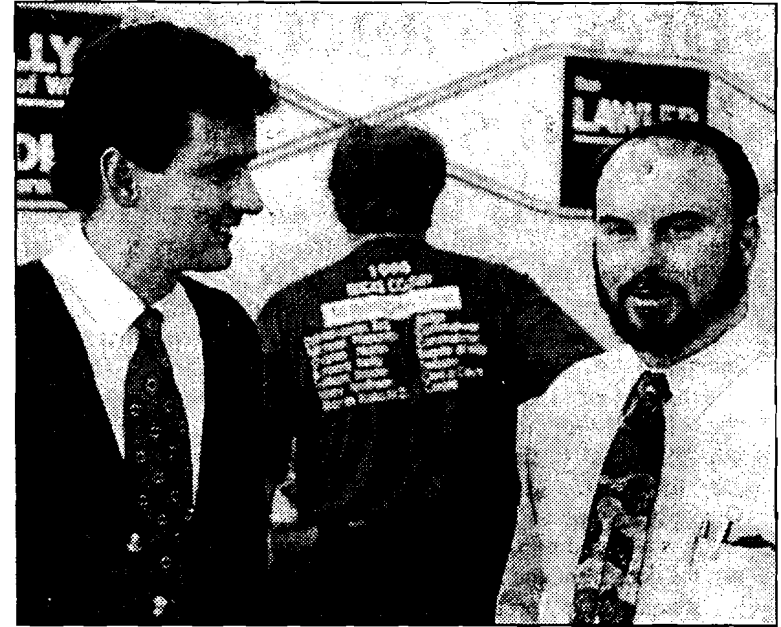
Glackin called the audit release by Orloff an "unauthorized leakage of confidential documents to the press."

Orloff said the supervisors had two meetings to act on the letter from Garton, a Langhorne attorney working on behalf of Orloff.

"I'll do what I have to do," Orloff said. "I thought this matter could be resolved without making a big stink."

Just at last Monday's supervisors meeting, Orloff said he couldn't afford a lawsuit after developers of Richland Crossing threatened to sue him because he signed a petition against the proposed retail center which will include a Wal-Mart store.

Garton's letter states that Orloff will take legal action if the censure is not lifted and no apology



Free Press file photo

**POSSIBLE LAWSUIT** - Richland Township supervisor Richard Orloff (right) is pictured with Bucks County Commissioner Michael Fitzpatrick at the opening of the Republican Party's Upper Bucks County headquarters. The first-year supervisor may sue his colleagues if they do not withdraw statements made at an earlier meeting.

is forthcoming before Tuesday.

The board meets Monday and Glackin said he has no plans to apologize.

"We are firm in our belief that we were within our rights in censuring Mr. Orloff," Glackin said in a statement also signed by Kline.

Glackin, who called the release of the audit a political ploy, said Orloff has no history of releasing documents to the press from the Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority, of which Orloff is a board member.

Glackin speculated on who was paying the bill to Garton. Orloff would not comment on whether Garton received legal fees for his service. Garton was not available

for comment by press time.

Glackin pointed out the suit was politically motivated. He said Begley, Carlin and Mandio is the county GOP's law firm and that Garton was politically connected to Karen McIlhinney, the committee's vice chairwoman. She is also chairwoman of the water and sewer authority, Glackin pointed out in a statement.

Kline and Glackin have discussed plans to withdraw township facilities from the county agency's control and have created their own township water and sewer authority.

Glackin indicated he fears the county is counting on Orloff in a scheme to take over the local authority.