

## Panelists bring unique perspectives to 'Us vs. Them' conversation

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The following have been named panelists for a public panel discussion on Thursday, Aug. 21, that will explore the divisions within the Poconos.

**BOB HILLMAN** moved to East Stroudsburg at age 11 and graduated from East Stroudsburg High School. He attended Allentown Electronics Center and Lincoln Technical Center before entering the U.S. Army. He served in Vietnam. On returning to the United States, he went to work for the Tobyhanna Army Depot, where he worked for 36 years, retiring as the depot's equal employment opportunity manager. Bob has received numerous awards for his community service. He helped found the Unity Coalition of Monroe County and serves as Monroe County advisor to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission.

**PETER PAPPALARDO** was born and raised in Shawnee-on-Delaware and has lived in the Poconos since graduating from Duke University in 1977. He is an educator, musician and author, having written two novels based upon northeastern Pennsylvania, "Bluegrass" and "The Compleat Dartshooter." He lives, he notes, with his "sainted" wife and youngest son in East Stroudsburg.

**WAYNE MEYERS** and family moved to the Poconos from Long Island more than nine years ago, looking for a better quality of life. After two years of commuting to Manhattan via Martz bus, Meyers obtained a transfer to his Scranton office and reduced his daily commute from five hours to a little over one. Thrilled to have more free time at hand, Meyers was determined to help commuters and new families moving into the Poconos by operating PoconoCommuter.com, a Web site providing a variety of online information. Several years later he formed Pocono Commuter Inc., a nonprofit corporation that is not shy about stepping out from behind the keyboard to reach out and help our community. In the five-and-a-half years to date, Wayne has interacted closely with Pocono residents — both local and transplants — and organizations such as the United Way and other local nonprofits and businesses. This has helped provide insight to a variety of the challenges everyone faces living or working in the Poconos. In addition to serving as president of the board of directors of Pocono Commuter today, Meyers also has served as vice-president to the board of directors of Pocono Farms Country Club and chair of the Coolbaugh Township Community Partnership.

**EBONY HARDIN**, 23, has been living in East Stroudsburg for 18 months. She is an honor student at Northampton Community College and is treasurer for the Pocono Chapter of The National Council for Negro Women. Her mother commutes daily to work in Parsippany, N.J., and her father is a retired chemist.

**MERLYN J. CLARKE** is professor emeritus of the department of political science at East Stroudsburg University, where he taught for 35 years. He served as department chair and graduate coordinator for 10 years. He began his career at ESU after completing his undergraduate studies at Utah State University in 1965 and graduate work at Pennsylvania State University in 1970. Clarke's interests as a political scientist include a focus on local government. He served on a Monroe 20/20 regional task force that prepared the county's long-range planning document and was a member of the Monroe 20/20 Legislative Committee. He has testified before committees of the Pennsylvania General Assembly numerous times regarding land-use reform and, most recently, property tax reform. In 2007,

he served on the Stroudsburg School District Tax Study Commission. Clarke is a member of the Monroe County Planning Commission and is president of the board of Pocono Lively Arts, an amateur, nonprofit theater group domiciled at the Sherman Theater.

DAGMARIS CABEZAS is the principal of Mares Consultants Nonprofit Services, her own business, and project director of Community Partners of the Poconos (CPOP). She provides training in various aspects of nonprofit management to nonprofit organizations in the Poconos and throughout the United States. CPOP is a nonprofit organization created to promote the involvement of newcomers in the civic life of the Poconos and in local government through partnerships that foster a joint approach to problem-solving. CPOP also provides capacity building assistance to nonprofit groups to increase local public and private funding support, and educates them to effectively and responsibly manage and govern their organizations. The partnership led to the creation in 2007 of a formal township commission of seven citizen representatives, appointed by the Coolbaugh Township board of supervisors, who reflect the diversity of the township and work to promote civic participation and unity. Coolbaugh Township is the only township in Monroe County to create such a partnership. Cabezas is also president and founder of the Latino Task Force of Monroe County. She has been a resident of Monroe County since 1996.