

# The Westfield Leader

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# THE TIMES of Scotch Plains - Fanwood

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## Stocking Up On Supplies For What Monster Storm?

**By DEBORAH MADISON**  
 Once again, townsfolk found themselves the unwitting victims of that classic fable, "The Forecasters Who Cried Snow." We heard their magical Doppler predictions, calculated by some mysterious scientific formula that only the secret society of weathermen can decipher, and we dutifully abandoned with as many storm supplies as our SUVs could cart away.  
 By Sunday morning, the store shelves were bare of all basic necessities. The only bread left on the store shelves was some healthy multigrain stuff the color and texture of sidewalk cement and the only meat left in the refrigerated case was some grayish blob, which I think was liver. Eyeing the gray blob, contemplating ways to make it edible, my kids desperately whisked me toward the frozen pizza case.

We stocked up on batteries, in case the predicted 35-mile per hour winds caused the power to fail. We bought extra shovels, certain that our old shovels would crack under the weighty yolk of the predicted two feet of wet snow. We grabbed every last bottle of Tylenol, certain that our men folk would be sore from heaving those 25-pound bags of salt.

But alas, as it turned out, only our egos and our wallets were bruised. Now, what to do with all those candles? Storms like this make me fondly reminisce about my Great Grandma Rosie. She was not very well educated and only spoke broken English. She

hadn't progressed passed the third or fourth grade in her native city of Ludz, Poland. But, she was uncanny in predicting the weather. Great Grandma Rosie had these mysterious, but somehow scientifically accurate knees. She could tell you not only exactly what hour a storm would hit, but whether it was going to rain, sleet, snow or hail or any combination thereof.

And judging from how many aspirin she popped, Grandpa Max could tell you how many inches we were in for. When are these network news shows going to wise up and draft themselves an authentic weather predicting machine like Great Grandma Rosie's rheumatic knees? Even if their "weather-granny" was wrong 50 percent of the time, which is what I figure Doppler's average to be, her salary wouldn't be half of what they spent on all those balloons and radar devices. Betting the weather-granny against Doppler could become another state-funded lottery game.

There are not many things about growing old that seem appealing to me, except one. Someday, I will be able to sit back on my old, wise arthritic knees, while all the young fools rush to the hardware store for more salt.

*\*\*\*\*\*  
 Debbie Madison covers the Westfield Recreation Commission, Scotch Plains Planning Board and Scotch Plains Board of Adjustment as well as other general news assignments.*



## DEFENESTRATION

**defenestration** - the act of throwing a person or thing from a window. A trip to Prague, Czechoslovakia several years ago inspired us to bring our focus word, defenestration to the window sill of our Word Sleuth column.

The forcible exit from a window of two Roman Catholic members of the national council in Prague by opposing members in 1614 triggered the Thirty Years War (1614-1648). The event alas inspired a word coinage that entered the English language as defenestration, a word that combines Latin elements, **de** - meaning out of, and **fenestra**, the window.

"Defenestration reached an all time high," during the stock market crash of 1929, according to one wry commentator. At that terrible time, investors, facing certain financial ruin resulting from the steep decline in stock values, occasionally preferred to jump from windows to their certain deaths rather than face a life of poverty.

There have been alleged instances of forcible defenestration attributed to gangland and international political factions throughout the years. We recently witnessed the defenestration of books from the third floor reference department of a local library by students who would then run down to the street level to retrieve the books that they were otherwise unable to take out legitimately.

## Small BOE Candidate Fields Seem To Follow Trend of Low Voter Turnouts

This year's relatively slim candidate fields in local school board races seem to follow a common trend of low voter turnout for school board elections held annually in April.

This year in Westfield, four candidates, including Lisa Alter, Virginia (Ginny) Leiz, Marcee Rogers and Richard Solomon, filed nominating petitions for the seats being vacated by incumbents Danielle Walsh, Board President; Michael J. Kessler and Eileen Satkin. However, Ms. Rogers dropped out earlier this week, thus eliminating a school board race in Westfield.

As for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education, three persons — including one incumbent — are seeking two seats representing Scotch Plains. One other person, Pat Hoynes-O'Connor, is unopposed for the Fanwood seat that is being vacated by incumbent Richard Meade. Jean McAllister of Scotch Plains also chose not to seek reelection after just one term.

Incumbent Lance Porter, Craig Nowlin and Peter C. Triplet are running for the Scotch Plains seats.

Back in the mid-1990s, school board races were hopping in Westfield and Scotch Plains-Fanwood, despite the low turnout at the polls.

Yet when it comes down to it, school board mem-

bers have a huge weight of responsibility on their shoulders: they make decisions impacting the education (including the curriculum) for our kids, along with approving the school budget and tax levy — the largest segment of property tax bills.

Is the lack of candidates simply due to lack of available time, as witnessed by other volunteer organizations such as rescue squad memberships? Or is there literally a lack of interest in serving on school boards? Maybe running in a school board race itself is the problem.

Whatever the reason, we sincerely hope to see more of our local residents come forward in future years for school board seats.

In terms of turnout, generally speaking, 15 to 20 percent in a school board election is considered a good number. Turnout would likely be higher if board races were held in November, along with the General Election. Not only are school elections held in April, poll hours are 2 to 9 p.m. These hours are often inconvenient for the voters, which then leads to low turnout. Still, one would think that more of the voting population would turn out to make their voices heard when what's at stake is their children's education.

## Advance Forecasts on Storm of Century Turned Out to Be Major Bust In Towns

Someone once said that trying to predict the weather was like trying to predict a teenager's mood. Difficult, at best. Gut-wrenching, at worst.

But, despite the risks, weather prognosticators — government bureaucrats, television pretty faces and faceless radio forecasters — began warning us, starting a week ago, of the storm of the century that would wallop the area with a blizzard lasting two days and dumping one, two and three feet of snow. Last Friday, TV and radio newscasts began cranking up their vaunted "storm centers," while residents, expecting to be hunkered down in their homes from Sunday until Tuesday or Wednesday, began rushing to stores to stock up on food, snow shovels, rock salt, videos, candles, flashlight batteries and whatever else might be needed to survive what was being billed as the storm of the century, or of the millennium (let's remember that the new century or millennium is only two months or 14 months old, depending on when you think the 1900s actually ended).

On Sunday, we waited. The clouds thickened, the sky darkened. The winds picked up a bit and by mid-afternoon, the first flakes began to fall. In 48 hours, we wondered, how deep will the snow be? Work and school on Monday were already written off, and Tuesday's schedule appeared to be similarly doomed. When we turned in on Sunday night, with the ground looking as if it had been sprinkled with confectioner's sugar, we were assured that the heavy stuff would soon be here. Monday, we were promised, would bring blizzard conditions lasting well into Tuesday.

For many of us, this past Monday was certainly one of the weaker excuses for a day off from school and

work. A full day into the blizzard, we could still see blades of grass poking through the snow on our lawns. Not to worry, the weather experts told us. The storm would kick in late on Monday and last into the following day, and, darn it, blizzard conditions would prevail and leave six to 10 inches of snow on the ground. Tuesday morning, the snow finally arrived, although the conditions certainly weren't blizzard-like. The December 30 storm was more fierce than this week's rather mild snowfall.

In the annals of weather forecasting, this past weekend's five-star storm, predicted with the assistance of the latest in computer technology, was one of the biggest busts ever, lending credence to the view in some circles that, maybe, computers aren't the save-all and end-all of mankind. Predicting the weather is truly akin to trying to gauge a teen's mood, although we're confident that area teens were pretty glad to be out of school for two straight days this week.

Two weeks until spring arrives — this we are told, not by a state-of-the-art computer, but by a good old-fashioned wall calendar.

**Deadlines**  
 General News - Friday 4pm  
 Weekend Sports - Monday 12pm  
 Classifieds - Tuesday 2pm

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 Photos - B/W and Color  
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 Need name & daytime phone  
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## Letters to the Editor

### Service League Thanks Terrill Middle for Help With Girl Scout Week

The week off March 11 to 17th is Girl Scout Week. On behalf of the Service Team for the Fanwood-Scotch Plains Community of Girl Scouts, I would like to publicly thank Terrill Middle School for being so kind to our organization. They open their doors for us frequently and graciously, enabling the volunteer leaders to offer quality programming. This week alone, the administration of Terrill Middle School has allowed us to hold three separate "Girl Scout World Friendship Celebrations" in their cafeteria. We are extremely grateful to them, as well as the office staff and custodians that make these celebrations possible.

**Maura Berger**  
 Community Affairs Chairman  
 F-SP Girl Scouts

### Woman Seeking Information on Father Born In Morristown Children's Shelter

My father, Augustine William McCarthy, was separated from his siblings after they were all placed in the Morristown County Children's Shelter in Boonton in the 1920s. I am searching for information to help him find his family. He will be 80 years old in February. He moved to Idaho when he was a teen and so his ties to New Jersey have been lost, making my search more difficult. But, I am hoping that someone who reads his story will be familiar with some aspect of it and contact me. My grandparents, William McCarthy and Minnie Moore, were married in Perth Amboy on July 26, 1920. They lived in the Boonton/Morristown area. They had four children that I know of: Augustine William McCarthy (my father) born February 3, 1921; Dorothea May, born December 18, 1921 (she is believed to have died at the Children's Home just two weeks after her admittance), Patrick

### Any Notion That Town Is Unfriendly To Westfield Commuters Is 'Absurd'

I have read the letters regarding two-hour parking in residential areas in the recent edition.

It seems that one writer believes there is an entitlement for "lawyers, bankers and executives" to free convenient parking for their train commute at the expense of home owners, that due to a solid wall of cars and SUVs in front of their property, they cannot benefit from street cleaning and leaf pickup that is included in their property tax bill.

Not to mention hindered utility service, the sometimes accumulation of sidewalk trash and the safety aspect of pulling out of their driveway with very limited visibility. Another writer brings me to believe that people do more due diligence and research in the purchase

of a new computer than a residence. If you rely on the salesperson, as always, caveat emptor.

Let's be fair, commuters comprise less than 5 percent of Westfield's population.

As it currently stands, any parking deck will add \$150-200 per year to all home owner's taxes (depending on downtown business levies, parking fees, operation costs and other unforeseeables), which is about one-third of what a commuter would pay yearly for a spot in this facility. With such a generous subsidy, any notion that Westfield is not friendly to commuters is absurd.

I would like to point out that home owners this year are facing average tax increases of \$295 for schools, \$98 from the county, and \$90 from the town (subject to change). This additional tax burden should be placed for general vote at a later date, since due to economic situations and work place changes, the commuter problem may mitigate by itself.

Or, maybe, is the answer to allow home owners to paint parking stalls in front of their curbs and auction them off on eBay?

**Charles Holata**  
 Westfield

### Town Council, Voters Thanked for Supporting LOSAP for Rescue Squad

On behalf of the members of the Westfield Volunteer Rescue Squad, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Westfield Town Council and the voters of Westfield for approving the Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) Ordinance. This ordinance will help us to attract and retain members.

As we begin our 50th year of service to the community, our commitment and dedication to the people of Westfield is as strong and sincere now as it was when our squad was founded in 1951. We thank you for your continued support.

**Reid S. Edles**  
 President  
 Westfield Volunteer Rescue Squad

### More Letters on Page 5

### Stranded Motorist In Storm Thankful To Good Samaritans

On Thursday, February 23, during the heavy snow storm, my car skidded and I went into the Belgium curb cutting, which put a hole in my right front tire. It happened at Estelle Lane and Oakwood Court.

One neighbor invited me in to use her phone and did offer her house until the AAA truck arrived. I thought I should stay in my car.

I had at least 10 people, both men and women, stop and ask if they could do anything for me. One lady came by twice and the last time I gave her my AAA card to call and see if they were coming as I was there over 1 1/2 hours.

The AAA came soon after she left. It made me realize how wonderful people are when you are in trouble.

I want to thank all who stopped and my good neighbors, as I live just around the corner on Woodland Avenue.

**Gloria Stankus**  
 Fanwood

### Carleton Road Residents Can Now Enjoy Services Their Taxes Support

Congratulations to the residents of Carleton Road. They now can enjoy the same services their tax money provides for other Westfield homeowners. Namely leaf removal, street cleaning and curb to curb snow plowing. Most importantly, they can now safely exit their driveways with increased visibility.

Perhaps next we'll hear from commuters living in Scotch Plains, Clark, Fanwood, Mountainside and Cranford registering complaints about not being able to park free for 10 to 12 hours a day on the streets near the train station in Westfield.

On my street, which is close to the train station, prior to restricted parking we "enjoyed" an RV parked for weeks on end; cars parked inches from our driveways during long weekends, and one commuter who would change his clothes in his car to get his jog in at the end of the day.

My personal favorite was the thoughtful fellow who would arrive 5:30 a.m. each workday equipped with a shovel and rake so he could dig out a parking space in the leaf's piled in the street.

**Robert J. Katz**  
 Westfield

### Doesn't Constitution Guarantee We Can Park Wherever We Want?

I would like to take the opportunity to thank James A. Abate for his informative March 1st letter to the editor concerning the new limitation on parking on Carleton Road. I had no idea that lawyers, bankers and executives were...oh my gosh, expected to wait their turn.

The town should do its rightful duty and address the inconvenience that lawyers, bankers and executives (oh my) are being subjected to. Perhaps membership in one of these noble professions should guarantee an automatic parking permit.

The sophisticated financial analysis of the relationship between property values and parking permits and the understanding of the legal powers of the Town Council were equally informative. Perhaps we were hearing from an executive banking lawyer.

Mr. Abate provides a persuasive argument on how the Town Council has abused its legislative authority by this outrageous power-grabbing scheme. I am amazed that the Town Council actually thinks it has the authority to pass parking ordinances.

Also a special thanks to Anne Johnson Endy for uncovering Westfield's "dirty

little secret." To think that there are commuter bigots amongst us has saddened me. Doesn't our Constitution guarantee that we can park wherever and whenever we want without being ostracized.

To the narrow-minded Westfielders who do not recognize this basic human right, shame on you.

Never underestimate the power of self-interest to cloud objectivity.

**Thomas Kelly**  
 Westfield

### Westfield Rescue Squad Thanked For Helping Fainting Victim

**Editor's Note:** The following is a copy of a letter sent to the Westfield Volunteer Rescue Squad.

I can't express my thanks enough for the work that you did for me on Wednesday, February 21, when you took me from my home to Overlook Hospital.

I had fainted at home, and it was later determined that I was bleeding internally and had lost half my blood. I

needed three units of blood and five days in Overlook before I was diagnosed, stabilized and discharged.

I feel that the volunteer work that you do is inspired by the angels, and can't thank you enough for your civic commitment.

I am enclosing a check as a donation for any of your needs.

**Ina Herman**  
 Westfield

