

The Westfield Leader

— Established 1890 —
The Official Newspaper of the Town of Westfield and the County of Union

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Leader, Times Invites Chairman Mirabella To Submit Column on S. Plains Ball Fields

Over the past few weeks a number of officials, both elected and full-time staff, have been critical of our coverage and/or lack of coverage of their news events. As a community newspaper, we strive to present a news-oriented publication with strong editorial content. Opinions presented by the editorial staff of *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood* are not intended to give everyone a pat on the back. They are intended to provoke thought and response from our readers. Judging from the number of letters to the editor we have been receiving (eight to 10 a week), we have succeeded in that goal.

Union County officials have contacted our editors over what they feel was unfair coverage of the decision by the Board of Chosen Freeholders to pull the plug on leasing a section of the Ashbrook Reservation to the Township of Scotch Plains for new ball fields. The County, Township, Borough of Fanwood and Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education recently announced a plan to work together to build new ball fields and improve existing ones at the Park Middle School.

In an effort to enable the board to present their views on this topic — both on why the Ashbrook deal was nixed over environmental concerns and on the Park Middle plan — we are offering Board Chairman

Alexander Mirabella the opportunity to submit a guest column for publication. We are always willing to cover county and/or municipal government news or sit down with officials who have a story they feel should be covered.

We also ask the Freeholders to promptly return calls to our reporters. On at least a few occasions we have had to publish stories without freeholder comments because we did not receive a call back.

On another matter, *The Leader* and *The Times* began publishing columns on recreation news from Westfield and Scotch Plains earlier this year. When a column is not published, we are questioned, "why not?" These columns are published when there is sufficient space in the newspaper. Westfield has asked that the column be run on page 2 exclusively along with the Scotch Plains column. We are happy to publish these columns, but cannot and will not make a promise that they will appear on "the inside cover" each week. In fact, pages 2 and 3 are reserved for news articles not published on the front page as well as for Mountaintop and Union County news.

If a column has to be published in a particular spot, it is called a paid advertisement. We would be more than happy to have our advertising director discuss rates with the Recreation Department.

Bagger Recommends Eight Changes to Reform Trenton

By RICHARD H. BAGGER

During this year's election campaign, you heard from candidates who try to convince you that they have a better idea for the future. Some of the ideas will be good. A lot them won't be.

A lot will be obvious. Who, after all, is against better schools, and safer streets? The deeper question is how we are going to get these results. The real question we have to ask is, as configured, is our current state government up for the job? This is not an idle question.

Let me put the question in context. We operate under a Constitution written in 1791. It gives us a strong executive, a strong legislature and a very independent judiciary. We have this set up because the one before it, from the 1844 Constitution, did not work for the 20th Century.

Lincoln once said, "Whenever the people grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it." That's what we did in 1844 and 1947. Should it happen in 2001? I say no, but standing pat is not the answer, either.

A generation ago, we did a better job of keeping up with the times. In the 1970s, New Jersey embarked on its last major wave of reforms, fighting environmental destruction by creating the Department of Environmental Protection, put crime fighting efforts under one roof by creating the Division of Criminal Justice, and consumer fraud by creating a Division of Consumer Affairs.

The last time New Jersey took a serious look at the way it organized its government, James Gandolfini wasn't in high school yet and "The Sopranos" were still only a section in the church choir. There have been profound changes in the last 30 years.

And more changes are on the way. One is a tsunami of demographics: every eight seconds a baby boomer turns 50. Within 20 years, the number of New Jersey's elderly will double or better.

Here's another. Since the 1947 Constitution, the state's population has doubled. Where are we going to put these people, since our popularity as a place to live is not slackening? One more demographic reality to ponder. Not only are there a lot more of us, there's a lot more diversity among who we are.

What's the government doing to keep pace? Not much. The hot book in American business is "Who Moved My Cheese?" The silly title reflects a great truth: we do not like change; we fear and often hate it. This is why we've had only three constitutions in 225 years, why we have spent the last 30 years nibbling at the edges. We've moved Banking out then back into the Department of Insurance a few years later. We renamed the P.U.C. the B.P.U.

We created a Department of Energy, moved it into the D.E.P., then made it a D.O.A.

Some things haven't changed. We still want the Department of Corrections to keep bad guys in jail. We still want the DEP to ensure our drinking water is clean. We still want the Department of Agriculture to keep the garden in the Garden State. But with so many changes that have happened and will continue to happen, that's not enough. We do not need to rewrite our constitution. We do need to renovate the government we have.

I suggest the following eight structural changes, which make function the key and form irrelevant to the way we meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

1. Create a Department of Senior Affairs — With 40 percent of our population projected to be seniors in the next 20 years, we should deal with uniquely senior issues in one place under one roof.
2. Create a Department of Youth Services — We ask the Department of Education to teach, the Department of Human Services to parent, and the Department of Health to play doctor. It is an open question how well we serve our children.

Acting Gov. DiFrancesco Needs to Clear Record

I have talked to many people who are disheartened by the fact that we won't be able to cast a meaningful vote for our acting governor, Donald T. DiFrancesco, in this year's governor's race. Because of allegations leveled against him, by others, he was forced to remove himself from the race.

It is evident to me, that in the short time he has been our acting governor, he would have been a governor for all the people of our great state.

I hope that once he leaves office he will take the time to clear the record of all the allegations, and stay politically active, so one day his name will be on the ballot, and then we can cast a meaningful vote for him.

Joe Scalzadonna
Garwood

More Letters on Page 5

Editorial on Cacciola Redistricting In Westfield Was 'Right on Target'

Your November 2 editorial, "Process of Dividing of Westfield's Wards Needs to be Significantly Enhanced by 2011," is right on the mark.

You pointed out that our leaders spend more time preparing the annual leaf pickup schedule than they spent on considering the redistricting of the Cacciola neighborhood. How true! Perhaps your reminder will cause our leaders to consider the relative importance of all issues that they must confront and give major thought to major issues and deal with lesser ones accordingly. Once our citizens realize the pressing need for leadership in deeper issues they will insist on more accountability.

I disagree with one point. We cannot wait until 2011 to correct the injustice done to the Cacciola neighborhood! An injustice done to part of our community is an injustice done to us all and we cannot wait another 10 years to correct it. We fully expect that our governing body should lead us in the effort to make

dren, particularly those at greatest risk, when we spread children's services from pillar to post.

3. Convert Community Affairs into an exclusively housing development and community-planning agency. Part of the problem with sprawl in our state is that no one is really in charge.

4. Give the Department of State the exclusive and sole job of preserving, protecting and capitalizing on our historical and cultural resources. Put the Division of Travel and Tourism in the Department of State since the places we want people to go are, generally, our historical and cultural sites.

5. Give the Attorney General jurisdiction over all public safety issues. Put the Division of Motor Vehicles back there as well. Convert to digitized photo driver's licenses so New Jersey ceases to be known as the home of the fake driver's license.

6. Merge the Divisions of Criminal Justice and State Police. Both agencies are supposed to fight crime; both fight over turf.

7. Merge the Ratepayer Advocate, Insurance Ombudsman and the Division of Consumer Affairs. All of these agencies have been created to ensure fairness in the commercial marketplace. It makes no sense to scatter them in three different agencies.

8. Privatize the New Jersey Broadcast Authority. The Eastern bloc countries have gotten out of the state controlled media; why do we still have state-run TV?

For a generation, we have tinkered while the world has gone whizzing by. We can do more of the same — but that would be a huge mistake.

Richard H. Bagger of Westfield has served in the State Assembly for 10 years.

Letters to the Editor

'Identity Theft' Of Uppermost Concern After September 11th

The investigation by federal, state and local law enforcement agencies which occurred subsequent to the events of September 11 have revealed that the terrorists were able to carry out their plans by obtaining documents necessary to hide their identities so as to avoid detection by law enforcement and immigration officials.

For several years, law enforcement has alerted the public to the rampancy of "Identity Theft" and the ease with which criminals have been able to steal the identities of others and or create false "identity theft." The focus of the alert has been principally about the impact upon the consumer victim.

While the harm caused by this criminal activity to a consumer is real, it pales in comparison, given the events of September 11, to the harm that such activity poses to our national security. Remediating deficiencies in airport security, meeting the threat of bio-terrorism and protecting our borders are essential elements of any plan to combat terrorism.

It is critical, as well, that those charged with determining appropriate security measures not overlook the manner in which the terrorists obtained documents of identity.

Approximately a year and a half ago, this office conducted an investigation involving counterfeit driver's licenses, which were utilized to commit wide scale fraud. Disturbingly, those counterfeit licenses contained laminates which were illegally obtained from an official



Below are four arcane words, each with four definitions — only one is correct. The others are made up. Are you sharp enough to discern this deception of diction?

If you can guess one correctly — good guess. If you get two — well-read individual. If you get three — word expert. If you get all four — You must have a lot of free time!

All words and correct definitions come from the board game **Diction Deception**.

Answers to last week's arcane words.

1. Arbalest — A crossbow of the middle ages
2. Catarrh — Runny nose or post nasal drip
3. Aurochs — The European bison
4. The female of the falcon family

SEJUGOUS

1. Very juicy
2. Vicious, argumentative
3. In botany, having six pairs of leaflets
4. Belong to or having the nature of oats

WINKLE

1. An edible sea snail
2. A tic or nervous twitch
3. Cringing from fear; intimidated
4. To infatuate

CREBROUS

1. Truthful; virtuous
2. Tongue-tied; indistinct utterance
3. Frequent
4. Bald

OLIGIDRIA

1. Deficiency in the secretion of sweat
2. Awkwardness or clumsiness due to an ear infection
3. The protective fatty tissue surrounding the internal organs
4. Excessive fluid in the lungs

Letters to the Editor

Newspaper Failed to Contact Libraries On Why They Didn't Apply for Funding

As Director of the Fanwood Memorial Library I'd like to respond to your recent editorial (Oct. 25). We commend the paper for looking out for the interests and health of their local libraries. Unfortunately, they didn't feel the need, or bother to take the time to contact any of the local library Directors to find the answers the editorial purports to want prior to printing the strongly worded opinion.

In Fanwood, over the past four years, we have secured over \$90,000 in local, state and federal grant funds, often administered through the New Jersey State Library, to supplement the budget the Borough allots. These funds have provided an automated library catalog, public Internet computers, improvements to our physical plant both inside and out, a complete interior renovation, new outdoor lighting and landscaping, funds for increased collection development including a video collection that now numbers over 150 titles, programming for adults, teenagers and children, directional signs all around the Borough leading people to the library and more. All of this was done without putting any additional burden on local taxpayers.

We would like to point out that Fanwood had finished with all the projects noted above, some just recently, and was in fact not in need of an expansion or physical plant improvement at the time the funds were becoming available. The editorial also ignored the fact that this was a 3 to 1 matching grant, (their 1 to your 3). This meant that even libraries who successfully got funded only got 25 percent of their total project costs at best, leaving local taxpayers and

communities to foot the bill for the remaining 75 percent.

The editorial does acknowledge that "public libraries are one of the real treasures in a town," a statement I couldn't agree with more. The local library community strongly supports reciprocity and cooperation so that all citizens benefit on a broader scope than just from what's going on in their own town.

Improvements or expansion may well be in store for Fanwood's future. However, in the meantime we will continue to make great strides towards better fulfilling our mission of providing the highest level of professional service to everyone who visits us. We pride ourselves on the service we provide and have consistently accomplished this with a relatively small staff of dedicated employees. As always, we focus on increased access to traditional library services and materials, literacy initiatives and programming as well as offering free and open access to all of the most current technologies.

It's too bad the editorial couldn't celebrate the wonderful things these funds will do for the communities (and citizens of Union county) that did receive funding where the need was greatest. We invite the paper, and everyone else, to stop by anytime to see and to take advantage of all that the library has to offer.

Dan Weiss, Director
Fanwood Memorial Library

See it all on the Web!
www.goleader.com

Victoria's Secret Window Display Should Not Have Been Placed on Page 1

I am amazed that your newspaper considered the opinion of local "taste police" to be front-page material. You have given them an importance they neither deserve nor could get on their own.

I am equally amazed that our mayor panders to such a minority by writing to corporate officers over matters that are well outside the powers of a municipality to control.

Lastly, I do wish to note that obscenity, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. Those seeing lewdness in Victoria's Secret's window have more problems than could ever be treated in this newspaper.

A. John Blake
Westfield

Parent Teacher Group Shouldn't Ask Taxpayers

To: Parent Teacher Student Organization, Executive Board Westfield High School.

Regarding parking at Westfield High school, there are four solutions:

1. Carpool.
2. Ask Mom or Dad for a ride.
3. Ride a bike.
4. Do as your forefathers did — walk.

Please do not ask the taxpayers to underwrite free student parking.

Dexter Force
Westfield

