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HUNG UP!!

**People Need to Conquer Anxieties
In a Way Comfortable to Them**

*By Milt Faith, Executive Director
Youth and Family Counseling Service*



An angry wife writes: My husband ruined our family's summer vacation. We went to Lake George, relaxed, did a lot of sightseeing, ate well, walked a lot, and some of us swam in the resort's pool. That is, everyone but "Sam" (disguised name).

Our eight-year-old son is afraid of going into a pool, or water, at the beach, because he once saw his cousin almost drown. My husband insisted that Sam be forced into the pool as a way of resolving his fear. He said, "I believe in the saying that if you fall off a horse, the best way of not being scared to ride a horse again is to get right back on the animal."

He's a great believer that a person should overcome his fears by doing whatever he is afraid of doing. We fight over this all the time, causing all of us misery. Your reaction, please.

Answer: Certainly, each situation, each individual, is different. For some, directly facing your fears works. For others, the anxiety can be so overwhelming that it is best to avoid the situation until you feel more comfortable.

In this situation, we have two problems. Obviously, your son was traumatized by his cousin's near fatal accident. He avoids the water. I would recommend that he seek counseling as a way to resolve the problem — to decrease the anxiety and increase his comfort level, leading to swimming (ultimately).

Secondly, you and your husband need to work out areas in which you disagree, so that Sam is not exposed to the hostility, and all of you are not living in moments of misery. Here, too, professional counseling can be of enormous help.

A TV viewer writes: Do you think the TV series "Sex and the City" has any psychological redeeming values? So much is said about its advocacy for the strong woman who feels she is entitled to live her life to the fullest instead of the repression of the past — that is, the past where women did not feel they had certain rights and felt that their roles were to satisfy the needs of men. Any comments?

Answer: I wouldn't get too psychological about "Sex and the City." I think it's popular for several specific reasons. First, it's on HBO and its hype focuses on the sexual experiences of the four female leads. Secondly, its sexual depictions are explicit and, consequently, we all want to see what's being done — and how — and if we are doing it! Thirdly, it does tell an interesting story of four

women in their 30s who are struggling with relationships, attempting to find love, passion and care, and, most of all, trying to avoid future loneliness and hopelessness as they age.

The main question for me is: Do I care for the characters and do I appreciate their struggles? I do care about the women, and I feel that their struggles for happiness (in and out of bed) and attempts to be independent and in control of their lives are valid, both on a symbolic (the plight of women) and on a practical basis.

On the other hand, several of the leads come across as extremely self-absorbed and needing immediate self-gratification. The Kim Cattrall role is a wonder in physical gyrations. So enjoy the show if you can, or knock it if you want to; at least enjoy the New York scenes.

A divorced mother writes: My husband and I finally divorced this past summer. After a messy divorce, we were able to work out issues of visitations, holiday visits, vacations, support money and just about everything else. The only issue remains our two children's activities and interests, and which to support.


"Mark" (disguised name) is 11 and athletic. My former husband feels he should be in competitive sports and, in particular, he wants him in wrestling where Mark can truly be in control over his opponent. I want Mark to appreciate sports and want him to enjoy it and not worry about being a winner, and I hate wrestling, where pain seems to be a priority.

My daughter, "Sharon" (disguised name) is 10 and loves music. Here, too, my ex-husband has decided that she should study jazz and blues (he was raised by a jazz, piano-playing father). I don't want my daughter to feel "different" from her peers, who love hip-hop and even rock. How would you resolve this difficult issue?

Answer: Not once do you mention what your children's preferences would be. I recommend that you both put your own lists of athletic and musical priorities aside, sit down with each child and, unless their requests are totally off the wall, honor which sport, and music interest, each prefers, respectively.

Too often, we, as parents, want to tell our children what they should do, what they should want, etc. Please don't control them or try to make them into your image. Listen to them and let them enjoy their lives!

ABCD EFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ



Diction Deception

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. Limacous — Like a snail or slug
 2. Phare — A lighthouse
 3. Spodogenous — Having the character of waste matter
 4. Latigo — Spanish strap with which a saddle girth is adjusted

- PLAGA**
1. In zoology, a colored band or streak
 2. Small number; insufficiency
 3. The barbed iron head of a dart or arrow
 4. An infection causing pernicious clotting of blood

- PANDY**
1. Range of vision or sight
 2. To punish by striking the hand with a cane
 3. To please, charm or delight
 4. A nickname

- GEORDIE**
1. A miner or a miner's safety lamp
 2. A battle ax or mace
 3. Private road or lane
 4. A scallop or large mollusk

- DACCOT**
1. A member of a gang of robbers in India or Burma
 2. Nomadic; roving
 3. A laborer; member of the working class
 4. Given to debate or dispute

Letters to the Editor

WF Resident Pays Tribute To the Late Charles Brandt

This past week the town lost one of its finest, Charles Brandt — former Town Attorney of the Town of Westfield (1977 — 1998). To his family, and office staff, I extend my heartfelt sympathy. I had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Brandt during my tenure as Tax Assessor of the town from 1966 to 1997, and I must say that he was one of the greatest gentlemen I ever met.

His dedication to the community of Westfield, his daily stops at the municipal building, as well as his knowledge of municipal law, made my job much easier.

After his tenure as municipal attorney, and until the time of his passing, Mr. Brandt continued to stay in touch with "us retirees" and was only a phone call away if we needed his advice.

Goodbye, "Charlie" — May You Rest in Peace — you earned it!

**Bob Brennan
Westfield**

Dr. Foley Provides Westfield Public School Opening Information

Editor's note: This letter was sent by e-mail on Thursday through the Westfield Schools distribution network.

Westfield High School will open on Monday, September 8, to ensure safety during the final stage of renovations. All elementary and intermediate Westfield Public Schools will open on Wednesday, September 3, as planned.

Today I again inspected the high school building. There are several classrooms that are incomplete, but my concern is based more on health and safety. With renovations underway, the air in some corridors and classrooms is dust-filled, which may trigger allergic reactions. There is equipment and furniture still blocking corridors that cannot be moved until the classrooms are ready. By waiting until September 8, the building can be cleaned, the corridors cleared and classrooms completed. The guidance office will be in place, the main gym will be ready for use and most importantly, the building will be clean and safe. Some projects, such as the new elevator and the band room will still be ongoing, but they will not interfere with the operation of the building and are isolated areas.

Freshmen orientation, which is scheduled for Tuesday, September 2 at 8:30 a.m., will be held in the auditorium as planned. Students will be given a tour of the building at a later date. Guidance counselors will be on duty and the offices will be open as usual.

The delayed opening will require that Tuesday, February 17 and Monday June 21 will be school days. This alternate plan was approved by the Board last spring in the event we faced construction delays.

I am sending a letter home to every Westfield High School parent with this information. I regret any inconvenience this delay will cause them. Health and safety, however, must be my primary consideration. As I inspected the building today, I was not confident that we would be ready for a safe opening on September 3.

**William J. Foley, Ed.D.
Westfield Supt. of Schools**

Questions To Candidates Seeking Public Office?

Please send your questions of candidates on issues by e-mail to:

editor@goleader.com

The Westfield Leader and The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood will seek responses to your questions and publish them during the course of the campaign.

**Horace Corbin
Publisher**

September Brings New Beginning As the Pace Picks Up In Area

It's like a power switch has been turned on in September as residents return from vacation. Gone is the leisurely pace, and the roads are packed.

Parents get their children back to school, and other residents readjust to their bustling commute. Shortly, attention will turn to the many social and political matters upcoming for the area. Clubs, meetings, politics, business and everything else shift into high gear. We look forward to this energy propulsion.

There are many things to be aware of, such as this Saturday morning. The Union County Office of Emergency Management will conduct a drill of preparedness for weapons of mass destruction. The drill starts in Union Township and moves to the Westfield Train Station on South Avenue. Don't be startled by unusual activity.

In local politics, many offices are up for election; particularly in Fanwood, Westfield and among the Union County Freeholders. There are no offices open in Scotch Plains. The Mountainside council candidates are running unopposed. However, this year, the entire state legislature is up for election. Campaigners start now in earnest.

Normally, all incumbents waltz back into office. However, the Democratic Freeholders of Union County have angered some of their base with the proposed reactivation of railroads. This might give a

Republican candidate a chance to pull an upset and gain representation. Incumbent state senators and assemblymen in our Legislative Districts 21 and 22 have "safe seats." Still, Mayor Martin Marks of Scotch Plains promises to provide some excitement in an uphill battle against Senator Joe Suliga (DEM, LD-22) of Linden.

On money matters, the public should follow closely the redevelopment proposals in Fanwood and in Westfield — whether in favor or opposed to the concepts. Each proposal is perhaps \$50 million in scope and could obligate property owners to underwrite the exposure. Although there has been much public presentation, negotiations with developers are conducted in private. So, impending contract details are unknown. There will be no vote by the public on the matters.

The Westfield redevelopment debate is being waged on the web. See:

www.westfieldredevelopmentproject.com
www.westfieldredevelopment.com

Newspaper stories and letters on redevelopment proposals in Fanwood and Westfield can be researched at our site, www.goleader.com.

These are just a few of the things you may have missed this summer. Most certainly, this will be an exciting fall.

Letters to the Editor

Returning Westfield Native Considers SUVs A Big Problem In Town

I want to be candid from the outset: I hate SUVs in Westfield. It is not that I am an SUV bigot. I just returned from vacation in New Hampshire. I had no problem with SUVs there carrying around four big lumberjacks.

However, in Westfield, a Ford Explorer is carrying a 100-pound woman on her cell phone downtown to Starbucks to meet a friend for coffee.

I'm what some people call O.W. (Old Westfield). I am 58 years old, grew up in Westfield, lived away for 20 years, but came back and have been here for the last 20 years. I feel something has been lost over those years. It is the polite, considerate behavior I remember growing up here, and SUV ownership is a symptom of that change.

What do I mean? First, the SUV driver will sit four feet higher in their vehicle, so they can see while everyone else cannot. Second, when I pull out of a parking space next to an SUV, it is impossible for me to see if I will crack into another vehicle in the process.

It contributes to a loss of a sense of being part of a community, where consideration of the impact of your behavior on others affects the overall quality of life.

I have not run the numbers, but my observation is that SUV drivers signal less, speed more, and cut off others more than any other class of driver, with the exception of 20-year-old males in muscle cars.

I take a big risk in saying these things because I am offending most of my friends who own SUVs. I just have one suggestion. Many people in Westfield have two vehicles. Get a smaller vehicle and use it to drive down town.

A new neighbor of mine asked for four variances when they bought and renovated their house. They needed one variance so

that they could have his and her SUVs. They are a lovely young couple and I am offending them, too. But, this is the way I feel, so as my hero, Rhett, would say ...

For those that are interested, please read "The World's Most Dangerous Vehicle and How They Got That Way" by Keith Bradshar, former head of the *Wall Street Journal's* Detroit Bureau.

I love this town, and want it to remain the great place to live that it is. But come on people, work with me!

**Bill Tittle
Westfield**

Reader Disagrees With Recent Calif. Gov. Pen & Ink Column

In her most recent Pen & Ink column, Michelle LePoidevin reached new levels of partisanship with her ill-conceived attacks in her defense of Arnold Schwarzenegger.

After accusing several actors of behaving like fifth graders, LePoidevin then proceeded to lower herself to petty attacks on Cybill Shepherd and Rob Reiner. She then continued by accusing these stars, and others, of being "all talk and no action" and not having backbone.

Is she not aware that Martin Sheen has been arrested dozens of times for participating in political demonstrations while standing up for what he believes in? Does she not know that Rob Reiner earlier this year was at the National Governors Association meeting, to present "Preparing America's Children to Learn?" Or that since 1999 he has held an unpaid position chairing a state commission dedicated to helping young chil-

Ind. Candidates Need To Receive Coverage

How come there was no mention of any independent candidates in your article on the Union County Freeholder race in *The Westfield Leader*? Joe Renna from Cranford is running, and there was no mention of him.

**Kurt Mueller
Cranford**

Editor's Note: We encourage submissions from all candidates for office, and we will publish them. Please see our policy on this page.

dren in California?

If Mr. Schwarzenegger is elected Governor of California and starts to "pull the reigns on some of the filth" coming out of Hollywood, as Ms. LePoidevin suggests, he'll certainly have to start with his own film catalog which is filled with some of the most hyper-violent scenes ever committed to celluloid. Compare that to Martin Sheen, who has done more to foster good will for politicians in one film, *The American President*, than Mr. Schwarzenegger has done in his entire career. And the director of that fine film? Rob Reiner.

To paraphrase the President in his final speech from that movie: "We've got serious problems, and this is a time for serious people, Michelle, and your fifteen minutes are up."

**Rick Lieblich
Westfield**

Letters to the Editor

Leader/Times Reader Upset Over Governor McGreevey's Hotel Tax

It's nice to know that all our local politicians are doing cartwheels, headstands and jumping through hoops with joy over the news that they can impose a brand new tax, all by the grace of the governor. The new tax is a hotel tax beloved by all of them. I am hearing how much more new found revenue will be dumped into the coffers of the municipalities — if they pass the legislation required to collect this new tax. As to quote Rahway's own Carl Sagan, "Billions upon Billions."

However, there is one aspect of the new tax that I have not seen discussed. This tax will also be applied to those people in need of emergency shelter. This shelter is paid for through tax dollars. Whether the emergency occurs because of a natural disaster, or homelessness or any other reason, this new tax will be applied to the cost that

goes towards the housing of these people in need.

The money that goes towards this type of emergency shelter usually comes from the county's Department of Human Services. This money also has limits as there is only so much of it — until it drains out of the accounts that it's held in. Then, that's it, until the next fiscal year. So, "X" amount of dollars will house only "Y" amount of people in need.

This new tax, because it will be applied to human services dollars, will result in housing less people in need. Otherwise, the Freeholders will need to pass legislation to raise taxes.

This new hotel tax will also be applied to those in the county's Witness Protection Program, but I won't discuss that here. Till next time.

**Vincent Lehotsky
Rahway**

Ratner Writes About Free Speech And Questions LePoidevin's Column

In reading Michelle LePoidevin's column, in which she criticized Hollywood actors for speaking out against Arnold Schwarzenegger's gubernatorial bid, I was struck by the ease with which an otherwise-talented writer can stray across the border that separates objectivity from ideological claptrap.

This may come as a surprise to Ms. LePoidevin, but the very same First Amendment that permits a pack of unbalanced, bombastic and lying dingbats on the Fox Network to spout their sneering gibberish on public airwaves also protects the right of all Americans to voice their opinions. Yup, like it or not, Woody, Martin and Sybill (who, unlike Ms. LePoidevin, are, I suspect, California residents and therefore have a vested interest in the identity of their governor) have the same right to speak out on matters of concern as, for example, the cantankerous Bill O'Reilly.

Is Ms. LePoidevin serious in her apparent belief that Arnold should be immune from a detailed investigation of his past, including allegations of womanizing, just because she doesn't care for the politics of the investigators? If so, that's actually a very un-Republican attitude. After all, it's the Republicans who generally display a weirdly obsessive fascination with the sexual activities of others. Or, does Ms. LePoidevin only advocate background investigations of Democrats?

Are questions about steroid use also to be verboten? Surely, the same folks who were so preoccupied with the question of whether our last elected President did or did not inhale cannot rationally expect that their candidate won't face similarly invasive and exhaustive questioning.

Ms. LePoidevin's column confirms that the Republicans' standard phobic response to fair elections has not abated. While this may have something to do with their inability to win them, understanding this pathology makes it no less offensive.

And speaking of offensive, I was utterly fascinated by Ms. LePoidevin's speculation that Governor Arnold "might just pull the reigns (sic) on some of the filth." Perhaps in her next column, she will edify us as to the meaning of "filth." I suspect that I'm not the only reader who will be enthralled to learn just which is filthier in her lexicon — the consensual

activities to which she objects or the decidedly non-consensual acts of mass murder, horrific violence and gratuitous mayhem that characterize the bulk of her favored candidate's artistic output.

**Robert Ratner
Westfield**

See More Letters On Page 5

Publishing Policy Noted For Campaign Releases

The Westfield Leader and The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood provide a forum (each week, two months prior and to the week before election) for candidates of the region to express their views to our readers, in print and on the Internet. We provide equal space opportunity each week to all candidates at no charge. On the last Thursday edition prior to the election, no releases will be accepted as the space is dedicated for our editors to summarize the campaign/election.

Criteria for Campaign Releases:
(1) The forum is for issue messages to our readers. Discussions of local issues are encouraged. Personal attacks on opponents will not be accepted; generic releases, not exclusive for our newspapers are discouraged. Our Editors' sole judgment shall apply, and submissions may be rejected if criteria are deemed out-of-policy.

(2) Please limit submissions to a maximum of 400 words. If a photo is sent, then limit the text to about 150 words, plus a caption. Submissions shall be by e-mail (paste text in body).

Digital color photos are preferred over film. Please include caption information.
(3) Submissions must be received by Friday evening of the week prior to publication. E-mail to editor@goleader.com.

Thank you and good luck to all.

**Horace Corbin
Publisher**

