

The Westfield Leader

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Legal Newspaper for Union County, New Jersey

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Sports Performance Enhancements Involve More Than Aluminum

It's been thirty years now, a generation ago, when little league baseball, high schools and other leagues switched over to using aluminum baseball bats.

Back then, the new aluminum bats were constructed to act like wooden bats, yielding a similar exit speed when the ball was hit. Aluminum bats offered a cheaper way to go versus wood, as they didn't break as easily. A wooden bat might last a season but a metal bat could last for three to four years.

Technical advances in design and construction of metal bats have resulted in significant performance enhancements. Scores have soared to the point that now even an average hitter can whack a home run. The ten-run mercy rule comes into play more often than ever before. Special alloys and manufacturing techniques have been introduced to make these bats perform in such a superior manner.

Some of these bats cost over \$300 each. Has the original purpose of cost effectiveness now fallen by the wayside, and have other problems been introduced?

A pitcher has less than a half second to defend against a line drive to the mound. "Small ball" - singles, hitting behind the runner and bunts are now passé.

The baseballs are made more consistent now, playing fields and conditions are better and gloves rival those worn by goalies in a hockey game. Everything is more refined, including the use of artificial turf.

Certain equipment advances in baseball are absolutely welcome to the game, however. Batting hel-

metts, catchers' protective gear and improved shoes come to mind.

Baseball isn't the only sport where equipment development has significantly changed the game. Golf is an example where professionals hit drives over 300 yards on an everyday basis with new high-tech clubs. But in golf, it does not seem to have destroyed the game. In fact, golf is more popular now than ever before. Every golfer knows that it's "drive for show and putt for dough."

While golf is an individual game for the most part, baseball is unique. Baseball depends on outstanding individual performances, yet achievement can only occur in a team fashion.

When there was "small ball" and a lot of base runners, it was exciting to see how Dick Groat and Bill Mazeroski could turn a double play; to see Phil Rizutto choke up to fake a bunt then punch it over the third baseman's head; to see a great slugger like Mickey Mantle out-run a drag bunt to the right side.

There will always be technical advances, some good and some bad. Technical changes aren't limited to the mechanics of materials in how a bat is made though. Technology has many facets that all lead to significant performance enhancements, including the application of chemistry.

Somehow, we're not impressed with the achievements of Barry Bonds and others in that respect.

This makes it clear, in our opinion, that the use of technology for performance enhancements in sports must be carefully examined - whether it's aluminum, androstenedione, norbolethone or ZMA.

placed calls to area leaders requesting that they join in this public panel discussion.

Television, meeting place and other details are being arranged. Input is welcome from the public. Please e-mail your comments to editor@goleader.com.



Union County News Property Tax Convention Needed to Revise System

Daniel Sullivan
Union County Freeholder

There are many ways for governments to raise the funds they need to provide services. Property taxes are among the most regressive. Property taxes make little distinction about a resident's income or ability to pay, so residents with large properties or with homes in high property values are hit hardest, including those on a fixed income.

And yet, New Jersey primarily relies on property taxes to fund the services most important to residents: schools, police protection, roads, parks and recreation programs, services to senior citizens and people in need.

New Jersey collects 45 percent of its total tax revenues from property taxes. The national average is 30 percent. Households with incomes in the lowest 20 percent pay 9.2 percent of their earnings in property taxes, while the wealthiest 20 percent pay 3.6 percent of their income in property taxes.

Over the last decade, as the cost of local services has increased, property taxes have increased by 52 percent.

To preserve our quality of life and strength of our communities, we must develop a better system to fund services.

Our system of property taxation is set forth in our State Constitution. Municipal and county governments cannot make changes to the system without addressing the funding system set forth in this document. The world has changed a lot in the 58 years since the Constitution

was written. This is why the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders is supporting a citizens' convention on property taxes, and why we're asking the legislature to put this question on the ballot this November. We have sponsored a county resolution supporting the convention.

Such a convention could consider shared services, the elimination of unnecessary state mandates, and the adoption of spending reforms, while ensuring that a quality public education system and other public services are maintained at appropriate levels. The convention is under consideration by the state Senate and Assembly, and we have urged our representatives to vote "yes."

We're also taking a two-part approach toward a long-term solution: First, we're using economic development as a tool to build a solid tax base, and to bring greater prosperity to residents. Second, we're developing new innovations and working harder than ever to deliver high quality governmental services with greater economy and efficiency.

Union County is working with our partners on the local and state levels to strengthen economic opportunities and offer innovative governmental services for seniors and our working families. We have become one of the great places in New Jersey to live and do business in. By working with the state to improve the way services are funded, we can do even better.

Letters to the Editor

Will We Get to Vote On A Property Tax Convention?

By BUD BOOTHE
Specially Written for The Leader and The Times
Editor's Note: The following is the first of a two-part series.

"Mayor brands legislators cowards" on tax reform" read a headline in last Saturday's *Star-Ledger*.

Wow! Of many things written about property tax problems, this is perhaps the harshest - and the only comment to draw applause last Friday from several hundred municipal mayors and officials at a League of Municipalities forum I also attended.

The mayor is Westfield's neighbor Martin Marks, who is no newcomer to this problem. Part of his statement was that maybe New Jersey taxpayers do not deserve tax relief because they continue reelecting "the same old nothing, self-promoting cowards to Trenton year after year." Mayor Marks, a Republican, was critical of members of both parties.

I wrote here several years ago about the first league symposium discussing a proposal to convene a special Constitutional Convention, which would write specific property tax relief into New Jersey's fundamental document. The league then was ambivalent; it has since become a strong proponent. The most vocal, and most powerful, force against the convention is the teachers union, the N.J.E.A.

To have a referendum on a convention on November's ballot, a law is needed. The Assembly Speaker promises a hearing and expects an affirmative vote on this by June 30. The State Senate, the president of which is also the Acting Governor, Richard Codey, is lukewarm. It's a question if it will pass, and/or if acting Governor Codey will sign it.

Taxation, especially property taxation, has a long history in this state. It is not an easy issue. I like to think that if it were, it would have been solved decades ago.

WHS Coach George Kapner Thanks Community and Mentor Gary Kehler

I am writing this letter to thank the community of Westfield for the opportunity that I have had to serve the high school students of this wonderful town over the last 30 years. On the afternoon of April 26, 2005, the Westfield High School tennis team beat Bergen Catholic by a score of 3-2 to bestow upon me the 740th win of my 30-year Westfield High School coaching career, thereby surpassing the 739 wins garnered by Gary Kehler. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the numerous individuals who took the time to write, call or personally send their congratulations to me regarding this momentous personal achievement.

To even be mentioned in the same sentence as Gary Kehler is surreal to me. He is one of the finest gentlemen that I have met in my life and, as most of this community is aware, he is among the best coaches in the history of high school coaching, not only in the state of New Jersey, but also in this entire country. He was a mentor to me during the first half of my career, initially as the dean of coaches at WHS, then as our Athletic Director. I had the opportunity to learn from the best and it is my fondest desire that I have been able to pass on some of his wisdom to the next generation of WHS coaches.

Although I am sure that I will leave many worthy individuals out, I feel that it is mandatory that I thank certain people. In addition to Gary, I have had two other fantastic athletic directors at WHS. The late John Lay was instrumental in helping me traverse the difficult path that a young varsity coach must face. The present AD, Ed Tranchina, has been more supportive than I could ever express. Sandy Mamary and John D'Andrea worked their training room magic with my athletes providing whatever was needed from TLC, to recognition of life threatening symptoms, and everything in between.

The Principal of WHS at the beginning of my career, Al Bobal, believed in me enough to allow me to take my first varsity-coaching job, even though I had not yet proven to anyone that I could successfully run a varsity program. Jack Shields was the assistant principal responsible for hiring me and, to this day, continues to serve as a mentor and advisor. He not only helped me become a better teacher, but he also helped me reach for my potential as a human being. Coaching is another teaching venue, so I

also feel that the supervisors of the mathematics department, Kathy Stevens, Lee Jensen and Hal Johnson helped me become a successful teacher of mathematics, thereby helping me become a successful teacher of athletics.

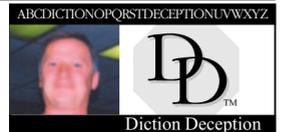
There are two other groups of people, far too numerous to mention individually, that deserve thanks. First, the parents of Westfield who have always given their time and effort to teach, coach and support the children of this town to become the best that they can be. The parents who have composed the Westfield Soccer Association (WSA) since its inception deserve special recognition since most of my personal coaching success has occurred in that sport. There is no doubt whatsoever that my personal success is directly tied to the efforts of the parents who are the WSA and the parents who tirelessly worked with the children who became my athletes in girls basketball, girls soccer, boys soccer, boys swimming and boys tennis.

The other group that I must thank is composed of my fellow coaches over these last 30 years, especially my assistant coaches, including Dave Shapiro, Pete Giordano, Toni Bristol, Marc Best, Chris Carson, Alex Schmidt, Don MacDonald, Shaun Cherevich and Bruce Johnson.

Finally, and most importantly, I need to thank the hundreds of athletes who have given their tireless effort to me and to their teammates. I hope that I have impacted their lives in a positive fashion, but I can guarantee that they have had a far greater effect on my life than I have had on theirs. Many of my teams and many of the young persons that I have coached have presented me with memories that I am sure I will carry with me throughout my lifetime. If you are, or were once one of my athletes and you are reading this, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for allowing me to have the experience of sharing an athletic journey with you.

I cannot imagine a professional life more joyous than the one that I get to live here in the town of Westfield, New Jersey. Thank you to this entire community. I will always be filled with pride to be attached to both the town of Westfield and to Westfield High School (see photo on page 5.)

George Kapner
WHS Mathematics Teacher
Coach of Boys Soccer and Tennis



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. Holcad - An ancient Greek merchant ship
2. Torgoch - The red-bellied lake trout
3. Rurigenous - Born in the country
4. Intermeccine - Deadly to both sides; great slaughter

DEHISCENCE
1. Humiliation; shame; falling from grace
2. In botany, a bursting or splitting open of a seed capsule
3. Discontent
4. Inflammation of a mucous membrane; especially of the auditory canals

DEGRAVATION
1. The act of making heavy
2. Small number; insufficiency
3. A starving or dying of hunger
4. Desperate; wanting

TRIPUDIATION
1. Violating faith or allegiance
2. The act of dancing
3. Being trampled under foot, as in a stampede
4. A governing by three men or coalition of three parties. A triumvirate

THIONIC
1. Containing or derived from sulfur
2. Shaped like the seed of a gourd
3. Artistically suited for show or display
4. Expressing great thanks; formerly used to express thankfulness with surprise

Governor Discusses His
Balanced State Budget

Over the last several weeks, the Legislature has been debating my Fiscal Year 2006 Budget. My proposal reverses the dangerous trends of the past that have left New Jersey with soaring deficits and out-of-control spending.

Hard working New Jersey families know they cannot spend more money than they bring in. In tough economic times, we have to tighten our belts and put off some spending until better times. That is what my budget does.

This budget has been especially difficult because of deep funding cuts from Washington and the state's increasing fixed costs. On top of this, last year we spent more than we brought in, leaving us with \$3 billion in the red.

I hope that this budget will begin a new era of fiscal responsibility and government accountability.

With the largest spending cuts in state history, this proposal presents a budget that is \$500 million smaller than last year's.

These cuts make this year's budget the most conservative in decades. Like the family that has spent too much, New Jersey must now cut expenses and assess priorities.

I am recommending:

A freeze on spending in state government operations; cutting funding for the Office of the Governor and for each of the Cabinet members by 10 percent; shrinking state government and eliminating at least 500 positions; zero borrowing to cover operating costs; spending cuts that exceed revenue raisers by a 5 to 1 margin.

Even in times as financially tough as these, I understand that we cannot sacrifice our security.

Thus, my budget has included \$189.7 million in funding for homeland security initiatives. Among these are: \$32.4 million for enhanced 911 services; \$32 million for homeland security grants to municipalities; \$27 million for State Police Emergency Operations; \$12.3 million for bioterrorism/disease surveillance; \$12 million for statewide security.

By maintaining assistance for our seniors, children and disabled residents, this budget is fulfilling my promise that we will not balance this budget on the backs of those who can least afford it.

The budget includes: \$783 million for senior programs; \$653 million for mental health services; \$204.8 for child care services; \$61.9 for Veterans assistance.

I believe that as the state nears its final budget over the next few weeks, it is important that the people are as informed as possible.

A new state web page provides insight into this year's proposed budget, and provides details about the state's financial situation. The "Truth About the Budget" uses graphs, facts and statistics to explain the budget and let New Jerseyans know how their money is being spent.

Please see www.nj.gov/truthaboutbudget to learn the truth about this year's budget.

Richard Codey
Acting Governor

WFHealth Dept. Thanks Sponsors, Donators

The Westfield Regional Health Department would like to thank the sponsors, donators and participants that made the Spring Health Fair on April 30 a great success.

Approximately 100 to 120 residents from the supporting towns attended. This fair was our department's best spring health fair yet. We could not have made it so wonderful without the help of generous donations from the following sponsors: Print Tech in Westfield, Williams Nursery in Westfield, King's in Garwood, ShopRite in Springfield, Chester Hill Market in Roselle Park, Thred Joe's in Westfield, Bovella's Bakery in Westfield, Dunkin' Donuts in Garwood, TigerMart/Dunkin' Donuts in Westfield, Starbuck's in Westfield, Manhattan Bagels in Westfield and Stop and Shop in Westfield.

The above companies provided our health fair with various donations that enabled fair attendees and participating vendors a more enjoyable experience. In addition, many thanks go to the participating vendors for sharing their time and expert knowledge with all who attended the fair.

We look forward to working with you all again at our next health fair, in the fall at Roselle Park High School on Saturday, October 29.

Anne Travisano, RN
Westfield Health Dept.

Letters to the Editor

Mayor Marks Issues Property Tax Challenge; Calls For Public Forum

As the citizens of New Jersey grow increasingly angry and frustrated with the highest property taxes in the nation, the issue of property tax reform has received considerable attention. Several reform plans have been put forth by various entities and the call for a Constitutional Convention has been hotly debated.

At the May 6 Property Tax Summit hosted by the New Jersey League of Municipalities, I lamented the fact that the statewide escalating property tax is not an overnight phenomenon, and that year after year, both Democrat and Republican administrations in Trenton have failed to heed the call for change.

I went on to place some of the onus on New Jersey voters who continually send the same legislators that lack the political will to effectuate change back to Trenton.

Also, I issued the following statement on May 16: "In light of the attention the recent property tax summit received, I feel it is important to keep the issue fresh on our citizens' minds. I make the following three-part challenge.

First, I invite my fellow elected officials, in particular district 21 and 22 state legislators, Union County Freeholders, area mayors, and board of education members to join me in an open to the public forum on property taxes, and the prospect for reform.

Second, I challenge the *Westfield Leader/Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* to be the facilitator of the event.

Third and most importantly, I challenge my fellow citizens in this region to attend the event and interact with their elected officials on the issue of property tax reform."

I'd like to see this event occur at a mutually convenient place some time in June before the summer months arrive. I believe it will take a modicum of courage, especially from our state legislative leaders who ultimately hold the power to initiate changes to the system, to meet me and their constituents in an open forum on property taxes. I hope they are up to the challenge.

Martin Marks
Scotch Plains Mayor

Future Reporter Liked Day at The Leader

I would like to thank you for letting me spend Take Your Child to Work Day at *The Westfield Leader*. I thought it was very interesting to see how the paper works. If I had the chance, I would go back there again. It was a very rewarding experience.

I liked that I got to find a picture and write an article to go along with that picture. It was very fun. I worked on my school paper and this seemed to be different. The major differences were that people appeared to write the articles in the office and not at home. Another difference was that everyone was not crowded around one computer trying to decide the layout.

I'm surprised that there weren't more people or computers, but that really isn't an important matter. I found that this job doesn't really use that much math. I'm very good at math—I just hate it. So, in my opinion, that is a good part about this job.

It seemed pretty laid back at the office. It didn't appear too busy, but I'm sure that on other days, it is much busier. I had been thinking of becoming a journalist for a while, not too long, but a while. And some of the stuff that I saw made me want to become a journalist even more.

Thank you again for letting me spend the day at *The Westfield Leader*.

Brigid Ryan
Westfield

