

The Westfield Leader

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Letters to the Editor

Mayor Mahr Points to Fanwood's Downtown Development Progress

As Fanwood's Mayor, I was surprised to read last week's editorial "Political Economic Powerhouse in the County west of the Parkway." While primarily focused on Plainfield, the editorial contended there was "lack of progress" in Fanwood's redevelopment efforts.

Your paper has covered the challenges and successes of Fanwood in great detail. The contention is wrong.

Let me set the record straight: Economic development is alive and well in Fanwood. In the past 18 months, many positive changes have occurred - some are evident and others are projects that are about to break ground after months and months of hard work.

See the Mattress Factory putting the finishing touches on their newly renovated building to house a factory and showroom. Stop in next door, and say hello to K-9 Resorts, a daycare and luxury hotel for dogs. Continue down South Avenue and you will see major renovations at Dunkin Donuts, scheduled for completion by year's end and anticipated to be the nicest Dunkin Donuts in the region.

At the corner of First Street and South Avenue, witness first hand the construction on a three-story, mixed-use building that will provide first-class commercial, retail and residential opportunities.

In March 2005, The (Scotch Plains-Fanwood) Times wrote "First Application Received Under the Borough's New Redevelopment Plan." The owners of 222 South Avenue became the first to approach the mayor and council with a plan that would see the demolition of obsolete buildings and create an exciting three-story, mixed-use building within Fanwood's redevelopment area.

In July 2005, The Times would again report on the Internet at goleader.com. For those who wish, please become the correspondent for your event. You won't be let down, and it is gratifying. We've updated the "help" directory on the Internet at goleader.com/help to assist with questions you may have.

Nearly everyone has a computer connected to the Internet and access to a digital camera. That's all that's required other than a passion to report on your favorite affair.

Being in print in the newspaper is a definitive validation and there are supplemental outlets emerging to expand the exhibit of your community reporting work. You may find the Internet photos interesting. Please see goleader.com/photos.

Also, videos online are becoming practical. Please see goleader.com/videos. There are many ways that Internet uses can be combined with print publications and local television to enhance community journalism. Sporting event photos and video clips prove to be popular. Perhaps artists desire to display their works. Web-casting video interviews with local candidates for office is emerging.

The technical details of InPrint and Internet publishing can be worked out in enhancing community journalism. Don't let this stand in your way. Most important is the creative energy of individuals from the public, such as you.

Adjacent to 222 South Avenue, one should stop in and chat with long-time merchant Helen Ling of Enchantments. Mrs. Ling and her husband, Ken, bolstered by the excitement of the redevelopment progress, are now the contract purchasers of the property they currently lease. More importantly, they recently received planning board approval for an absolutely beautiful three-story mixed-use building. The Times front-page article on September 22 was "Board OK's Second Application Under Downtown Redevelopment."

As mayor, I have worked extremely hard forging real working relationships with committed property owners to create an atmosphere in which private investment is welcomed and encouraged. The borough is about to reap the benefits of all that hard work by having these projects generate much needed taxables that will help ease the burden on our already over-taxed residents.

Redevelopment, negotiations and obtaining all the necessary approvals can take months. The dedicated members of the municipal council and planning board have been working so hard to review all of these above-mentioned projects. We are indeed witnessing history in Fanwood and there are even greater things to follow.

Thank you for your coverage of these successes in the past. We look forward to additional coverage of these wonderful future events.

Colleen Mahr Mayor of Fanwood



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. Impalpable - That which cannot be felt

2. Siccate - Causing to dry 3. Pungar - A crab 4. Salto - In music, a skip

TUCCULAR

1. Twining about; twisting 2. Pertaining to a cough 3. Full of life; very lively 4. Formed like a fan

KAME

1. A low mound or hill composed of sand, gravel, etc. 2. Boiled corn meal; mush 3. Brittle 4. A small brook or rivulet

PULE

1. To run abandon; decamp 2. Covered with a hairy substance or wool 3. A type of sweet onion 4. To whine, cry, whimper

KEB

1. Playful; sportive 2. Untidiness; filth 3. Scottish for a tic or sheep louse 4. A pustule or pimple

See More Letters On Pages 5 & 10

Letters to the Editor

Many Thanked for Fanwood Rain Garden

In keeping with the new storm water rules issued by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), our Environmental Commission of Fanwood and specifically David Schwartzberg of the commission has introduced and coordinated the establishment of a "rain garden" adjacent to our library.

The purpose of the "rain garden" is to capture the rainwater from the library roof and direct it to the "garden" as a storm water mitigation project, which may be introduced at sites with impervious cover issues.

The plantings have been performed by the Union County Master Gardeners and will be used as an educational project at the Fanwood Library. Indigenous plants of New Jersey were used in the plantings. In coordination with the Rahway River Association, Mr. Schwartzberg and the commission hope this "rain garden" project will be used to collect rainwater through directing downspouts so that rainwater won't be wasted but conserved. The garden can be viewed currently as it is in place.

Clayton Pierce Fanwood

Height Restrictions On Homes Should Be 30 ft.

I was pleased to learn that the town council provided a small victory for citizens opposed to the indiscriminate construction of McMansions, by limiting the height of such structures to 35 feet. However, this ruling addresses the height problem only in a general way. More important is the question of whether the height (and footprint) of a house is appropriate for the neighborhood.

Whereas a house with a height of 35 feet may be compatible in a few neighborhoods with very large older colonials however such houses are inappropriate in most areas of Westfield as they disrupt the architectural view and sense of neighborhood that currently exists. For example, a house under construction on my street has a height that is about 15 feet taller than the adjacent colonial house, which in itself is a reasonably large house. A good part of this additional height is simply attic space.

I believe the town council needs to reconsider this ordinance and limit the height of new houses to 30 feet except for situations where a higher limit can be justified by the adjacent homes in the neighborhood.

John Engelhart Westfield

Former Teacher Seeks Bone Marrow Help

It is my hope that there are some people in your area who will remember my late husband, Lucien Reid, who taught industrial arts and technology education at Terrill Middle School from 1964 until his death in 1996.

Our youngest son, Peter, who turned 30 last May, is suffering from acute leukemia and needs a bone marrow transplant.

There is a simple blood test to determine if someone is a suitable donor. If a person is a match, the bone marrow is taken under general anesthesia and the donor would likely spend a day or two in the hospital afterwards. A bone marrow transplant provides a cure for the recipient.

There is a bone marrow drive for Peter at Immaculate Conception School on Mountain Avenue and Route 28 in Somerville on Sunday, October 2 from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The test is \$25, but there are sponsors who are willing to pick up the cost if need be. The family will gladly cover any expenses the donor may incur as a result of the bone marrow donation.

If there are any questions, I can be reached at kreid@immaculatahighschool.org or (908) 722-0200, ext. 191, or 908 236-6795 in the evenings. Thank you for your consideration and your prayers.

Kathleen Reid Lebanon, NJ

Westfield Rec. Chairman Writes About Comments on Fees and Responsibilities

I want to respond to three letters in last week's paper, one from Frank Fusaro about the batting safety improvements and one from Thomas Fuccillo regarding field user fees. Also, I want to comment on a statement Tom Jardim made in his letter.

Mr. Fusaro's letter regarding the baseball safety improvements: At the July meeting of the recreation commission, we heard a first-hand report from the family of the child who was injured at the baseball field. The commissioners were horrified as to the seriousness of the injury and were relieved to learn from the parents that the child was recovering and was going to be okay.

The Westfield Municipal Code Chapter 16, Article 1b presently stipulates: "The Public Works Department shall have the responsibility for the physical condition and maintenance of the town fields, parks, tennis courts and other public recreation facilities and their appurtenances, except for the Memorial Pool which shall be the sole responsibility of the Recreation Commission."

The recreation department has assisted DPW with the installation of the "No On-Deck Swinging" signs at all baseball backstops on town property, as well as additional spectator safety fencing at these fields. However, the Westfield Baseball League is responsible for enforcing its own rules, in this case "No On-Deck Batting." The recreation department cannot enforce these rules; it is ultimately the responsibility of the WBL to ensure the safety of its players. If the WBL wants to make safety changes to field design, i.e. on-deck batting cages, a detailed plan needs to be submitted.

I personally spoke to Frank Fusaro on several occasions this summer, reinforcing the commission's support of his efforts to make changes to the fields and reiterating the need to submit a detailed plan. The recreation department has requested on several occasions the WBL's design recommendations for On-Deck Batting Cages to again assist the WBL in moving the request within DPW.

The Recreation Director has also indicated, on several occasions, his willingness to meet with the field committee to lend his expertise and experience of field design and maintenance.

Creating a fenced on-deck batting area is a major redesign of the fields that cannot be done quickly or easily without planning and coordination. I know many people thought the town should act immediately, but it's not that easy. You just can't install a fenced area along the base path for the on-deck hitting because it will interfere with the game, creating a potentially more dangerous situation.

Also if the cost of requested on-deck cages were beyond DPW's operating budget of available funds, the request would need to be a capital budget request for 2006.

Jim Marvin Chairman, WF Recreation Comm.

Young Athletes Have Nearly Reached Goal of SP-FHS Ice Hockey Team

With awkwardness never evidenced on the hockey rink, a dozen teenaged boys in suits and ties and a couple of young women filled the chairs at the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education meeting last week.

Faces intense and serious, the "team" listened quietly to heated discussions regarding their bid for a Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School ice hockey team. They were worried. SPFHS Principal, Dr. David Heisey, originally thought to be a supporter, had appeared to equivocate.

Schools Superintendent Dr. Carol Choye was not an advocate. The president of the board was vague about her status. Difficult questions were raised about "pay to play," costs, responsibility and priorities. The boys fidgeted as the wheels of local government ground

slowly. Without the swagger normally seen on the rink, boys stepped to the mike to talk about hockey being their anti-drug and a desire to represent their high school.

Dr. Choye was touched. Board members responded with seriousness and respect.

A few weeks later, dressed in matching jerseys, sporting third place medals from a travel league, the hockey players again took their front row seats to continue the battle. Again, our young men stood up, identified themselves and voiced their dreams of competing for SPFHS, wanting the same opportunities most neighboring schools already have. Other towns, such as Westfield, came forward with information and history to support the players' plan.

Parents spoke eloquently to support their children's hope; but the voices of a dozen teenagers held more passion.

Now, in September, months after they began, these determined young men have almost achieved their goal. The last period has begun as the board of education finalizes the steps to make a dream reality. And 12 dignified young athletes, who worked within the system, are all MVPs in my book.

Linda Van Fossen-Bromley Scotch Plains

Deadlines General News - Friday 4pm Weekend Sports - Monday 12pm Classifieds - Tuesday 12pm Ad Reservation - Friday 4pm Ad Submittal - Monday 12pm For more information, see goleader.com

WHS Cross Country Team: They Deserve to be Noticed!

We just want to say how extremely disappointed we are with your gap in WHS high school sports coverage. In case you didn't know, there is a sport played at WHS where the participation for boys and girls we think is one of the largest sports at the school (approximately 90 boys and 60 girls).

By reading The (Westfield) Leader since the school year began, you would think the sport didn't even exist. The sport we are talking about is WHS Cross Country teams. This sport has been a part of WHS for 25 years and it has a great successful history for both girls and boys teams. In fact, did you know that currently the boys are ranked in the top ten of the state according to the Star-Ledger? You see, we have to go to the Star-Ledger to get this information because we guess the Leader doesn't find it newsworthy.

Each school year, we look forward to reading the sports coverage in the Leader to see how all the different WHS sport teams are doing. Unfortunately for this year, the Leader has totally ignored the

WHS Cross Country Teams. This is a disgrace!

There was no mention about the kids last Saturday, September 17, where both the boys and girls won their respective meets at Warinanco Park in a class meet against many of the top teams in the state. Don't they deserve credit for their efforts?

I am a big fan of all WHS sports. I want them all to do well and get the due recognition they deserve. It doesn't matter if they win or lose, they all deserve the recognition, and not just small little paragraphs that you give some of the teams. During the school year, these teams deserve the majority of the sports coverage.

The girls and boys literally run their hearts and souls out for their team and coaches. They deserve to be noticed! So since you have neglected to give them their due, we will - Great job WHS XC! We are so proud of all of you!

Tom Buttrick Westfield (Proud parents of a WHS XC runner)

Westfield (Proud parents of a WHS XC runner)

cent progress. I believe your editorial does a disservice to our efforts. The three designated developers are finalizing their plans, and construction will begin in 2006. In addition, outside the redevelopment area, there is a new mixed-use project under construction on South Avenue across from the Chelsea and a new Dunkin' Donuts under construction at their existing site.

In the future, I would hope that you contact the mayor or another appropriate public official in Fanwood before making an editorial comment such as this. Thank you.

Fanwood Councilman Joe Higgins Chair, Downtown Advisory Committee

Letters to the Editor

Can Newspaper Assist 'Op. Yellow Ribbon'?

The 250th Signal Battalion (Westfield National Guard) will be receiving orders soon to come home from their tour of duty in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Although we are also seeking donations for the homecoming, I ask your support for "Operation Yellow Ribbon."

We would love to have the soldiers see yellow ribbons or red, white and blue through downtown streets, homes and highways (overpasses) as well as banners welcoming home our heroes from Iraq. Can you assist in "Operation Yellow Ribbon" by publicizing this campaign?

Although we do not have an exact date of return, we do not want to be caught short. Therefore, we would like this by mid-October, just in case. Just imagine the soldiers' appreciation if every house and business had a yellow ribbon and their ride home had signs welcoming them home.

Betty and Bruce Maloney Garwood

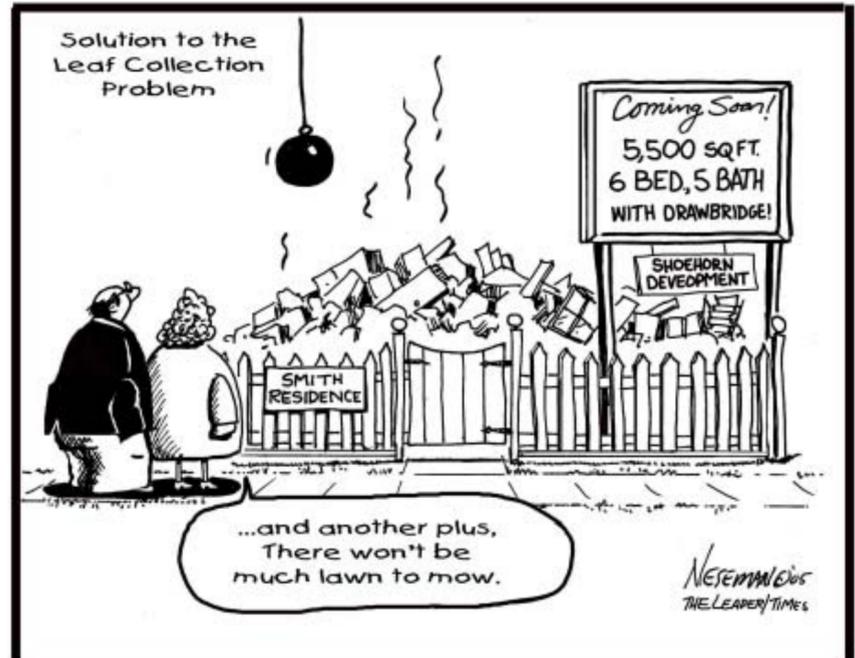
Fanwood Councilman Responds to Development Editorial

I read with disbelief your editorial (last week) regarding development west of the Parkway, particularly in Fanwood. It appears that you conclude: 1) that there is a lack of progress in the borough's downtown development, and 2) that this conclusion is somehow based on a comment by one Fanwood resident.

I served as Chairman of the Fanwood Downtown Advisory Committee, and I currently serve as a Councilman. Our advisory committee worked diligently for nine months to ensure that maximum public input was achieved. We sought and received the opinions of property owners, merchants and borough residents, and we then held three well-publicized, open public forums. More than 200 resi-

dents and property owners attended these meetings. This process took some time, but it displayed this administration's goal of maximizing public input. This, in and of itself, represents progress.

The Redevelopment Plan for Downtown Fanwood was adopted on Feb. 24 of this year. Since then, we have had three developers come before mayor and council and all three have been named as "designated developers" for their sites. Two of the three proposals have received Planning Board approval, which, ironically, was reported on the front page of the same issue of your paper. Those of us who have worked on downtown development in Fanwood for the past year and a half believe that this constitutes signifi-



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