

### The Westfield Leader

— Established 1890 —  
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 Legal Newspaper for Union County, New Jersey**

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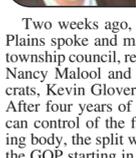
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## Scotch Plains Talk

### We Reported, The Voters Decided



Fred Rossi, Westfield Leader/The Times

Two weeks ago, the voters in Scotch Plains spoke and made their choices for township council, re-electing Republican Nancy Malool and electing two Democrats, Kevin Glover and Jeffrey Strauss. After four years of unanimous Republican control of the five-member governing body, the split will be 3-2 in favor of the GOP starting in January.

As far as we know, voters were free to make their own choices on November 7. Except for a problem at one polling place where the name of one of the Republican candidates was inadvertently obscured inside a voting booth, we heard of no irregularities or other problems. Yet last week, in a letter to *The Leader/Times*, Democratic Party Chairman Ken Lipstein criticized this newspaper's coverage of the municipal election campaign, saying that we bore "responsibility for what we saw in the Scotch Plains campaign."

We're not completely clear what Mr. Lipstein is referring to, but it seems he is blaming our campaign coverage for the defeat of Neal LeStrange, the only Democratic candidate who wasn't victorious on Election Day.

In his letter, Mr. Lipstein said *The Leader/Times*, despite his protests, "rushed to print a letter to the editor from former police chief Thomas O'Brien falsely accusing [Mr. LeStrange] of racism, and wrote an article about it, without investigating the facts." In fact, another look at Mr. O'Brien's letter in the Oct. 12 edition of *The Leader/Times* reveals no accusations of racism against Mr. LeStrange, but rather Mr. O'Brien taking note of Mr. LeStrange's own testimony in a deposition four years ago "regarding his attendance at the 'Good Old Boys Rally,' a four-day event participated in by members of various law enforcement personnel, particularly on a federal level. It was an event with derogatory racial overtones and had received national press coverage back in the nineties."

Mr. LeStrange's attendance at the event was not in dispute. He admitted attending, stated he had been upset at the racial overtones of the gathering and had not returned afterwards. In the same Oct. 12

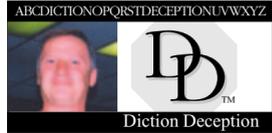
edition of *The Times*, we gave Mr. LeStrange an opportunity to comment on the letter, which he did. Richard Samuel, the Democrat's campaign manager, also issued a statement commenting on Mr. O'Brien's letter. Two weeks later, *The Times* published a lengthy article in which Mr. LeStrange and Mr. O'Brien spoke extensively about the issue. In addition, a number of letters to the editor addressing both sides of the matter were published.

In his letter last week, Mr. Lipstein also called the campaign reporting of a competing newspaper "balanced and fair." We feel our coverage was balanced and fair as well. Both sides were given ample opportunity — via interviews, letters to the editor and campaign press releases — to comment on this particular matter. *The Leader/Times* never wants to rely solely on campaign press releases to comprise our election coverage. There are issues that should be more closely examined.

The LeStrange matter fell into this category, as did the Democrats' ideas for administrative changes in the township government, which we covered in an interview with Mr. Lipstein in late October. In addition, all press releases issued by both sides were published. All letters to the editor regarding the candidates — and this newspaper's coverage of the campaign — were printed. Our Oct. 5 edition included an article in which all six council candidates spoke at length about the campaign and the issues. And, as we do annually, we invited all the candidates to take part in a televised question-and-answer forum, although the Democrats declined to participate.

It would have been a shirking of our responsibility had we not reported — fairly, we feel — on this matter. The issue was raised; we were expected to then ignore it and not attempt, with input from both sides of the matter, to inform the public?

We don't endorse candidates in municipal elections. We didn't slant our coverage to favor one candidate over another or one party over another. And we certainly don't believe we were a factor in Mr. LeStrange's defeat earlier this month. We reported, the voters decided.



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. Incendiarism — Willful destruction of property by fire
2. Retromingent — Discharging the urine backwards
3. Castoreum — A substance having a strong, penetrating smell, obtained from beaver sex glands
4. Chromidrosis — A condition characterized by abnormally colored perspiration

#### ZOKOR

1. A wedge
2. A burrowing rodent that looks like a mole rat
3. Calcium tungstate
4. A Turkish dish consisting of boiled rice, mutton or fish and spices

#### TERGIVISATE

1. To give a wavy form, margin, or surface
2. To please, charm or delight
3. To desert a cause
4. To flatten or squash

#### RELICTION

1. Land left uncovered by the recession of the sea
2. A separation or passing through
3. Ignoring; neglecting
4. Deception; sleight of hand

#### CHURRUS

1. An outside staircase
2. Minced chicken or veal, mixed with eggs and bread crumbs
3. Crude borax
4. A gum resin which oozes from the Indian hemp

## Letters to the Editor

### Share Your Thanksgiving Blessings To Extend Thanks-Giving all Year

Thanksgiving is a distinctively American holiday, set aside for giving thanks for the blessings of health, food, shelter, family, friends and community. During the Thanksgiving season, many Westfielders, who recognize how much they have to be grateful for, say "thank you" by giving to the Westfield United Way, which helps maintain the quality of life for all in our community.

We are grateful to all who have generously responded to the 2006 Westfield United Way campaign, and we urge all who have not yet sent in a pledge card to do so now, as a sign of "thanks-giving". By sharing their blessings, Westfielders can extend the spirit of Thanksgiving throughout the coming year.

A past edition of the "Friendly Place," a newsletter for Westfield Community Center Senior Citizens (one of the 19 member agencies supported by our United Way), contained the following inspirational message, which we would like to share again this year:

"Be Thankful — Even though I clutch my blanket and growl when the alarm rings each morning, thank you, Lord, that I can hear. There are those who are deaf."

Even though I keep my eyes tightly closed against the morning light as long

as possible, thank you, Lord, that I can see. There are many who are blind.

Even though I huddle in my bed and put off the effort of rising, thank you, Lord, that I have the strength to rise. There are many who are bed-ridden.

Even though the first hour of my day is hectic, when socks are lost, toast is burned, tempers are short, thank you, Lord, for my family. There are, many who are lonely.

Even though our breakfast table never looks like the pictures in the magazines, and the menu is at times unbalanced, thank you, Lord, for the food we have. There are many who are hungry.

Even though the routine of my job is often monotonous, thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to work. There are many who have no job.

Even though I grumble and bemoan my fate from day-to-day, and wish my circumstances were not so modest, thank you, Lord, for the gift of life.

On behalf of all of us at the Westfield United Way, let me wish everyone a most happy Thanksgiving season.

**Scott Cassie, President  
Board of Trustees  
Westfield United Way**

### NJ State Legislature is Proposing More 'Robin Hood' Taxes

A recent State Legislative Committee came out with a several-hundred-page report on property tax reform. With the highest real estate taxes in the nation, you would naturally expect the focus to be on tax relief for all homeowners. However, for Westfield area residents, they're suggesting we pay more.

While there are suggestions on reducing costs, the greater financial suggestions are reallocating the burden. This reallocation would likely outweigh cost reductions for our area resulting in even higher taxes.

In a section of the report, "Property Taxes Based On Ability To Pay," statements are made as if they were fact. "Property taxes are only fair if based on one's ability to pay" and "An income tax-based system is a more equitable option."

I don't agree. This is completely unfair and contradicts our State Constitution that mandates all property be taxed in a uniform way, at the same rate and assessment ratio. The Uniformity Clause bans the use of property tax as a tool of social or economic policies.

Our Federal and State income tax systems already allow rules for "Robin Hood" style taxation. They have completely skewed income taxation to a point where half of the people in our country pay virtually no tax while the other half pays more in tax than anything else in their life — more than housing, food or raising a child.

The committee is concerned to "... prevent the mass exodus that is underway" of people that cannot afford property tax. Their greater concern should be the mass exodus of our wealthiest people and largest companies from the state. Last year, the state raised the income tax on our largest contributors by 50 percent. These top citizens pay most of the tax collected.

Since then, the hottest NJ topic among tax professionals has been, "How many of your clients have changed their residence to another state?" Our state has historically treated our best customers as

villains.

Former Governor "McGreedy" accused our 20 largest companies of not paying their "fair share." Someone should have told him that these same companies (that were losing billions of dollars that year) are paying all kinds of other taxes and employing hundreds of thousands of NJ workers, allowing them to pay tax, go shopping, buy homes and keep our economy alive.

This year, they quadrupled the corporate tax on small businesses. Why should these companies choose to stay in NJ? We need our top taxpayers, employers and investors staying, but we're encouraging them to leave. Our first priority should be stopping the mass exodus of tax revenue and jobs — or nothing else will matter.

We have more than enough Robin Hood taxation. We need to welcome back our best customers — not kick them off the fence and into another state.

Living wherever you want is a privilege and a choice, not an entitlement. It sounds great to waive real estate taxes for various groups; seniors, veterans, single parents, new homeowners, brunettes, CPA's, etc. But there is another side to the equation. We still need the money, so everyone else has to pay more.

I'm sure there are cases of true unforeseen hardships. And for those people, they are allowed to go several years accruing but not paying the tax. But eventually they need to pay, sell, or have someone else pay for him or her.

We all have desires, make compromises and have choices in life. Are you willing to pay your neighbors tax so that they have a shorter commute, or to be closer to their family, or so they don't have to downsize or move for some other reason? Should you write a check before they sell an investment or ask their own family? Maybe they should prioritize differently, or have made better choices throughout their lives to be more prepared. It's really none of our business — and shouldn't be our burden.

We already have rebates based on income (which is against the Uniformity Clause) and county taxes that subsidize other towns. Don't allow our legislature to make this even worse. Real estate taxes should be based on real estate, not income. Object to any legislative attempt to deviate from the Uniformity Clause.

**Bob Saunders  
Westfield**

### Knights of Columbus Thank Blood Donors

On behalf of the Blood Center of New Jersey, the Garwood Knights of Columbus would like to thank everyone who donated blood to our three drives this year, which resulted in 90 pints being collected. Our blood drive dates for 2007 are: Saturday February 3; Saturday, May 5, and November 3. The hours for each drive are 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

For information, call the Knights at (908) 789-9809 after 4 p.m., or visit the Blood Center of New Jersey's website at [www.bloodnj.org](http://www.bloodnj.org), or call (973) 676-4700, or 800-BLOODNJ.

**Keith M. Gallagher  
Knights of Columbus  
Garwood**

### Councilman-elect Thanks Residents

It gives me great pleasure to thank all the residents of Scotch Plains that voted this year. I am honored to have been elected one of your new councilmen and for the opportunity to serve all our neighbors. As I have shared personally with many of you throughout the campaign, we are all in need of good government, and I believe it needs to begin at the local level.

I look forward to working with the other members of the council to achieve the goals raised during our campaign. "Putting Scotch Plains First," building a more fiscally sound and caring community, one that is sensitive to all our neighbors' needs, is my pledge and promise to you. I look forward to meeting with and working for all of you.

**Kevin Glover  
Councilman-elect  
Scotch Plains Township**

### Mr. Strauss Thanks Scotch Plains Voters

I wish to thank the voters of Scotch Plains for expressing their confidence in electing Kevin Glover and myself to the township council. I intend to work with the mayor and council in a cooperative, open and productive manner to achieve the goals expressed during our campaign and improve Scotch Plains for all residents regardless of political party affiliation.

We are residents of the same wonderful town in which all of us have a vested interest in a vibrant and active community with a responsive and thoughtful government. I am honored and privileged to participate in such an important mission.

**Jeffrey Strauss  
Councilman-elect  
Scotch Plains Township**

### Clark Congratulates Garwood Victors

I would like to congratulate Mayor McCarthy, Councilwoman Villaggio and Councilman-elect Sluka, on their victory in the recent elections; and to thank them for a very well run, clean campaign.

To the citizens of Garwood who voted for me, thank you from the bottom of my heart. To those who didn't, I was happy to meet all of you that I could and listen to your concerns. Hopefully I will have a stronger message, next time around.

Without making any excuses, I had just recently undergone knee surgery, and was unable to get out enough, to get the maximum exposure needed in a campaign for public office.

I have extended my hand to the mayor and council, and promised I would be at their disposal, for whatever they needed, and what is best for this great borough.

Once again, thank you all. May God bless each and everyone of you, and may God continue to bless this, the greatest country in the world — the United States of America.

Like Mac Arthur said "I shall return."  
**Dennis Clark  
Garwood Council Candidate**

## Happy Thanksgiving and Wish Well for Others That Have Not

Thanksgiving is exclusively an American holiday, commemorating the journey and triumphs of our country's first settlers and celebrating the beginning of our melting pot culture. Originating with the early settlers while they were struggling to survive, Native Americans helped and provided kindness. The strangers broke bread together.

Most of us feel that the holiday is a personal one, one that brings together important people in our individual lives. Families and friends, separated by distance, reunite and are grateful. We see our college students who return home; visit with aunts, uncles, moms and pops; bump into past classmates and pause to pet the family dog an extra moment.

We give thanks for our good fortune and provide a thought for others. This holiday reminds us of how precious the gifts of family, friends and community truly are.

Thanksgiving might mean an epic feast, not to be rivaled by any other meal during the year — a smorgasbord of delights ranging from turkey to pumpkin pie, and perhaps the big football game — all made especially festive by brilliant autumn hues and the start of the holiday season.

Thanksgiving is a warm American tradition devoid of the pressure of getting the right gift, or worse yet, forgetting to get that gift at all. It's hard to imagine that the Thanksgiving national holiday was embroiled in political controversy for more than 250 years since its first conception in 1621 in Massachusetts. George Washington proclaimed a National Day of Thanksgiving in 1789, but many then were opposed to it — feeling that the hardships of a few dozen Pilgrims did not warrant a national holiday.

Later, President Thomas Jefferson scoffed at the idea of a thanksgiving holiday. Sarah Josepha Hale of Boston, a magazine editor, spent 40 years of her life writing and badgering governors and presidents until President Abraham Lincoln in 1863 proclaimed the last Thursday in November as a national day of Thanksgiving. It seemed that Mrs. Hale finally had her way.

Since Lincoln, every president supported the Thanksgiving holiday, but the date was changed a

few times. Franklin Roosevelt changed the date twice, first to be earlier by one week in November to create a longer Christmas shopping season. This irritated the public, and he changed it back. Congress finalized the matter in 1941 by declaring Thanksgiving a legal holiday, taking place on the fourth Thursday in November.

It seems now like we finally have the date right, although our Canadian friends may not. They celebrate Thanksgiving on the first Monday of October. Granted, winter comes early for the Canucks.

At such a busy time, with so much to prepare for, it is easy to take for granted the privileges and opportunities most of us experience daily as citizens of the United States, but which are a luxury or non-existent in many other parts of the world. The majority of us need not wonder how we will feed, shelter, educate or obtain medical care for our children. We need not fear persecution or worse because of cultural or religious differences.

We have the freedom to express our individuality, practice our faith, voice our dissent and elect our leaders. We can associate with whom we choose and pursue our dreams as far as our ambition and hard work will take us, regardless of our background.

It was these very tenets which gave the Pilgrims courage to venture across the Atlantic to begin new lives in an unfamiliar and uncharted land; that fueled the American colonists' fight for independence more than a century afterwards and inspired countless men and women to risk their lives in defense of these freedoms ever since.

While our society is not flawless and our lives may not be perfect, we continue to stand tall for our strength as a nation and for the ideals we represent. So as you sit around your holiday table, take an extra moment to contemplate the many things for which we have to be grateful. Then take another moment to remember all of those people, both here and abroad, who face a daily battle just to survive, live with dignity or carve out a better tomorrow for their children.

And to all our readers, and your families — our warm wishes for a happy and healthy Thanksgiving Day.

### Villane Family Mourns Loss, Seeks Answers About Robert's Death

Our family suffered a very sudden and tragic loss on Monday, November 6. Our brother Robert was taken from us. He was the youngest of eight boys. Our parents are devastated, our family is grieving, and Robert was finally laid to rest on Friday, November 10, 2006.

Our family focused attention on Robert, to give him a respectful and dignified burial, which he deserved. Our attempts at removing newspaper articles about our brother's death from our parents' attention were unsuccessful. We wanted to stop them from focusing on the negative aspect of his death. The facts are already being distorted and nothing is being said about how affectionate and peaceful he was, mental illness and all.

We want to set the record straight. Yes, our brother had a mental illness. He was not a criminal. He was loved by all who knew him. He was trying to get his life and beautiful mind back to the way it was. *The Star Ledger's* article with Union County Prosecutor Theodore Romankow's comment and reference about Robert being "high on drugs" was hurtful and damaging. The record will be set straight and an apology will be demanded.

Now that our brother is at peace, we

will gather all the facts. We too are going to conduct an investigation to find out why our brother died. If the police procedures are considered correct and there was no wrongdoing in their eyes, then the procedures need to be reviewed and changed. Death should not have resulted.

With the proper training and patience, the police could have kept the situation calm. My parents were told to leave and they would handle the situation. My dad relayed the same message to me, and me to my brothers.

Something went wrong that day, and we are not trying to point fingers. Our intentions are to find answers so this never happens again. The ambulance was not on site until long after Robert was forced from his apartment, handcuffed and prone on the ground, helplessly. There are guidelines to follow when confronting someone that is psychotic. An example is how police react with a person who is threatening to jump from a bridge, or a hostage negotiator. The police in these cases are calm and do not aggravate the situation by yelling with the person. NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) has free training available for all police officers. I can only hope they take

full advantage of these programs.

Our brother suffered from a mental illness and was not high on drugs. Robert had good intentions, but he was not taking his prescription medications when confronted by police. Robert is not here to say what happened. Robert deserves to have the truth brought out. The police need to reevaluate their handling of this matter so this never happens again. This cannot be ignored and swept under the rug as being an incident that was handled with total professionalism.

If mistakes were made, they will be brought out. If there was wrongdoing, apologies need to be made. If police consider this proper procedure, then procedures need to be changed.

We hope that this matter is handled with dignity and honor for the sake of all concerned. We suffered a great loss and do not want others to go through this same tragedy.

**William Villane, Jr.  
Michael Villane  
Richard Villane  
Don Edward Villane  
Dominick Villane  
David Villane  
Westfield**



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