

It's Unfair to Discriminate Against All Dog Owners for Actions of a Few

In response to the mother's concern about her perceived lack of "doggie etiquette" in downtown Westfield, I think it is important to point out that it is unfair to discriminate against all Westfield dog owners, the vast majority of whom are responsible and considerate pet owners, based on the actions of a few bad actors. Indeed, it is unfortunate that the mother has not encountered me and my dogs downtown, or any of the many other responsible Westfield dog owners, to observe first hand the practice of good "doggie etiquette."

I live within walking distance to our lovely downtown and I frequent the downtown area at least once a week with my two large breed dogs, as well as my husband and two young daughters. My dogs are always at my side while downtown and only allowed to meet and greet others with permission from both parties. I would never think of allowing my dogs to sniff or lick a young child (or anyone else for that matter) unless the individual first asked to meet the dog. Nor would I bring my dogs into a downtown retail store or do any of the other outrageous things referenced by the mother. I can attest that there are many other Westfield dog owners

that are equally polite and responsible with their dogs, because a number of them are clients of my pet-sitting/dog walking business.

Hopefully those residents displaying improper doggie etiquette downtown will rethink their manners after reading your article. In the mean time, please avoid the pitfalls of stereotyping all dog owners based on the actions of a few. As with any other form of discrimination, such attitudes are inherently harmful to the majority of upstanding members of the group to which they are erroneously applied.

I also would like to take this opportunity to send out a reminder to all Westfield dog owners to "pick up" after their dogs. During the last couple months, I have noticed an increasing amount of forgotten dog "jobs" during my frequent walks. This is particularly concerning near our town's many schools. If I can pick up after my own two large breed dogs, as well as all of the other dogs that I walk for my business, then anyone can pick up after their dog. It's a responsibility that comes with dog ownership. Let's keep our beautiful Town of Westfield clean.

Kara Paoletti
Westfield

That School Bond Increases Debt So Children Can Play Games is Appalling

I am appalled by the callous efforts of many of my neighbors in Scotch Plains and Fanwood when it comes to a bond issue for ball field improvements that will appear on the ballot in April for \$2 million. To put it in perspective, this bond issue will increase our debt so their children can play games.

The fact, which was brought out by the only dissenting voice at a recent school board meeting, mentioned that there are residents who are on fixed incomes and the projected additional \$25 would be hard ship. What was not mentioned is that this applies to us who are trying to save for retirement or are facing additional costs as a result of aged parents?

Those who are rejoicing over the potential passing of this bond issue are extraordinary selfish. They only care that their children can hit or kick a ball around the field, and are using the very roofs over our heads as threat to our future.

Should these individuals have pride on their support for this bond? Why not visit those on fixed incomes who don't support this irresponsible borrowing? Explain why they need our money so their children can play these games. What is next? Do you expect us to do without medicine, figure what bill to pay, sacrifice our retirement, abandon our parents so you can take your children on vacation to Disneyland and have us pay for it?

The average household already pays out on a yearly basis some \$6,000. The news media reports that the cost of living in New Jersey this year may increase some \$2,700. Yes, some may get back 20 percent, 15 percent or 10 percent from the Trenton. But we must keep in mind that

was financed for only the first year by increasing the sales tax from 6 percent to 7 percent.

In addition, the placing of this bond issue on the ballot in April is paramount to fixing the vote. It is no secret that the vote during this month is low and tends to be those with a vested interest in the schools; not the majority of the taxpayers.

Looking at the big picture, taxpayers in Scotch Plains alone face the potential of 5 percent raises in both the municipal and county tax rates for this year. One can only imagine what the school board will come up with. Over 50 percent of the school budgets were rejected last year, but not in our communities.

In looking at the letters to the editor and editorials in the media, one can see that there is a general belief that the aforementioned property tax "relief" is only smoke and mirrors. As I mentioned before in previous letters to the editor, placing this bond issue on the ballot, and should it be approved, only proves that Scotch Plains and Fanwood does not need any type of reform or relief. We would prove that our communities are so wealthy that we can afford to put out extra money for dirt and grass. Therefore, Trenton don't bother sending us any more money — we don't need it.

In conclusion, I cannot emphasize enough that support of this bond in nothing less than financially irresponsible, utterly selfish and makes me embarrassed to say that I made the mistake of moving into this community.

Albert Muller
Scotch Plains

Letters to the Editor

Legislation Allows Anyone to Learn What Their Friends, Neighbors Earn

Want to know what your neighbor makes? Your best friend? Your worst enemy? Thanks to the pending property tax bill passed by the legislature and awaiting the governor's signature, such may be possible. Whenever I think things in New Jersey cannot get worse, they do.

The new tax relief/credit bill is another example. For seniors like me, it involves requesting and being mailed, in that Office of the Governor envelope, a check, about what I got in prior years. This is cash from state revenues based solely on my age and gross income and owning one, not multiple, houses in the Garden State. Not much change in procedure.

The non-senior setup is property tax relief in that it comes off the local tax bill as a credit, albeit in a cumbersome way. For non-seniors, and for local governments like Westfield, a new set of expenses and hazards are created at the state and local levels when we are trying for efficiency and savings. With a bunch of mayors as sitting legislators, I am surprised none of them caught this.

My non-senior neighbors have to apply for a credit, not a rebate. The credit is a reduction of the tax bills we get four times a year, not a mailed check. Trenton then has to notify the 566 local tax collectors, taxpayer by taxpayer, thousands per municipality, to deduct x dollars from the August and November tax bills of various taxpayers in 2008. Inevitably, more staff for both state and municipalities?

This means, among other things, that both the collector and any member of the public can, with simple arithmetic, learn a property owner's gross household income, within ranges, tax records being public. No credit appearing, the adjusted gross income of the property owner is over \$250,000. Marketers should latch onto this quickly.

Tax bills frequently are printed outside town hall. If the credit arithmetic and thus the bill printing process gets screwed up, as has happened, the bills cannot be sent out in time to require payment by the usual date. The banks, holding in escrow a substantial part of the municipal tax revenues, are not going to part with cash without a bill in hand — nor are non-escrow taxpayers. The banks get a float, but a lot of escrow accounts to adjust.

The municipality, required by law to pay over 100 percent of the school and county budget revenues on time no matter what, has to short-term borrow to pay them as well as its own expenses — another interest cost imposed on the municipal budget about to be capped at 4 percent increases. The municipalities, having seen

a chunk of their anticipated revenues taken off the tax owed by non-seniors, now have to wait for checks from Trenton to cover the shortfall. Will the state pay on time, as most property owners do?

The surplus or cushion many municipalities, including Westfield, had to cover past problems like this were liquidated by Governor Jim Florio a dozen years ago, another state level one-shot revenue fix.

You do not have to prove you are 65. Why not do what makes the most sense, costs the least, including postage — let all taxpayers, seniors included, take the credit off their state income tax return. No more will there be a 39-cent envelope giving the governor an unwarranted political plug. Deal with credit for renters the same way.

This mess is another reason for a no-holds barred convention on taxation and spending, with no more than a third of the delegates being present or former legislators, another third present or former school board elected or appointed officials, and the last third residents with no, never, government experience.

Bud Boothe
Westfield

Because Dollar Bill is the Yardstick, Global Warming is Ignored

It's shocking to see a March 1 letter to the editor that there are still people who try to deny the reality of global warming while even scientists are shocked over and again at its rapid acceleration.

Scientists have understood for more than 100 years that our Industrial Revolution was harming nature because the effects were seen immediately. The new warning by scientists presents even more evidence that global warming is not something in the far distant future but something, which we have already begun to experience. Nor is there any question but that global warming is caused by human activity; i.e., the burning of fossil fuels.

The original "Scientists' Warning to Humanity" in 1992 also called very clearly for cultural change. It was met with silence by our press. However, when we use an artificial instrument like the dollar bill as a yardstick to judge the value of our children, nature/natural resources, or our planet, we are making suicidal decisions.

While there has been no liberal plot to create fear based on a fictional global warming, there has very definitely been an effort over decades by our oil industry to hide the reality of global warming from citizens. In recent months, the Royal Acad-

It's a Relief to Know That Global Warming Doesn't Really Exist

I read with great interest Kevin Retcho's letter about global warming as a "typical liberal scare tactic." I was comforted to know that global warming isn't real. Thank God for clear-headed lay people who know more than virtually every credible scientist worldwide (even including, at last, those under the sway of the present administration).

It's a relief to know that the ice caps aren't really melting, we haven't had eight of the 10 warmest years on record in the last decade, and that we should just go back to consuming as much oil and gasoline as possible.

As a side benefit, it's good to know we can continue our dependence on repressive monarchies in the Mideast (Saudi Arabia chief among them). For a minute there I was concerned that we as a nation

had simply ignored the obvious issues raised when I was in high school in the 1970s. Congratulations to our present administration for editing the work of our own scientists at NASA, the NSF and other federal agencies when it seemed to indicate that global warming was and is real. They must know better. Most important, it's really much more of our children's and grandchildren's problem; let's let them worry about it. They'll already have the largest deficit in our history, courtesy of an unprecedented war expenditure combined with tax cuts for the wealthiest among us. One more major issue won't change much. Apparently, we really can have it all, so long as we ignore what's staring us in the face.

Travis Hudelson
Westfield

SP-F Class Pres. Supports Parking Action by Town at the High School

Editor's Note: This letter was addressed to Mayor Martin Marks and copied to the newspaper.

First, I just wanted to thank you for all your time spent on the issue discussed last night [Tuesday, February 27] at the pub-

lic hearing. Clearly by your opening statement, you have been close to this issue for some time.

Initially, the other officers and I had been planning to state our opposition to the ordinance. Just from your opening statement, however, we realized that our entire standing on the issue was premature; like you suspected, many people including us, were misinformed. We had no idea that the council was considering allowing students — not just residents — to obtain parking permits on the streets surrounding the high school, and we also believed that the decision would take effect in a few weeks.

After hearing your remarks and Mr. Russo's, I changed my mind and suddenly supported passing the ordinance because it meant things would soon be set in motion. Setting a deadline is really all passing the ordinance did. If anything, the parents of students and the students themselves who were present at the hearing should have been pleased with the outcome.

We were guaranteed that a fair solution would be found by September. I believe most people at the hearing were dead-set on getting what they originally wanted when they walked in the door yesterday evening and were not looking at the situation with an open mind. Despite having to personally deal with all of the parking problems at our high school, I can still say that I support the decision made last night, and I am excited to find a solution to the problem.

I look forward to meeting with you, the Fanwood Council and the board of education soon to try to resolve this issue. Breakfast, lunch, dinner, you name it, and we'll be there.

Diana Chaves
President of SPF-HS Class of 2007

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Smart Wines
From Everywhere at Every Price

VILLANYI PINOT NOIR 2004 \$25.99
There is something ethereal about this wine. Small scents of Asian spices, tulips and light earth tones. You could just smell this and feel happy. It is both light and long on the palate. Dried cherry and berry fruit mingle with light tobacco notes and hints of mineral. From California or France, this would cost twice as much. From Hungary, it is an affordable luxury. Decant for 30 minutes.

AURUM ALPES PINOT GRIGIO 2005 \$12.99
From the Alto Adige in the far North of Italy, this is proof that pinot grigio doesn't have to taste like water or be hugely over priced. There are citrus and apple notes in this, and lovely floral & spice accents. This has real depth on the palate. It will do nicely with cheese and crackers, salads, but it is also big enough to do serious fish dishes.

MOTIF MERLOT 2005 \$11.99
In a market place where merlot is in huge demand, it has become almost impossible to discover anything worth drinking at an everyday, Tuesday night kind of price. Except we did. This has all kinds of mulberry, cherry and plum fruit. It is medium bodied and has no harsh tannins. The acidity is lively without being harsh. A perfect wine for your leftover pot roast.

Your Favorite Wines

Blackstone Merlot	\$8.99	750ml
J Lohr Chardonnay	\$10.99	750ml
Simi Chardonnay	\$12.99	750ml
BV Coastal Cabernet/Merlot	\$7.99	750ml
Hess Select Chardonnay	\$9.99	750ml
Toasted Head Chardonnay	\$10.99	750ml

Your Favorite Value Wines

Mondavi Coastal Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay	\$16.99	1.5L
Beringer Founders Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay	\$15.99	1.5L
Woodbridge Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay	\$10.99	1.5L
Vendange Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay	\$6.99	1.5L
Fetzer Cabernet/Chardonnay	\$12.99	1.5L
Cavit Pinot Grigio	\$11.99	1.5L
Walnut Crest Cabernet	\$8.99	1.5L
Cesari Pinot Grigio	\$10.99	1.5L
Bolla Soave	\$10.99	1.5L
Beringer White Zinfandel	\$8.99	1.5L
Franzia Burgundy/Chablis/Chianti	\$10.99	5L
Carlos Rossi Burgundy/Chablis/Paisano/Sangria	\$9.99	4L
Opici Homemade Barbarone	\$11.99	4L

Your Favorite Cordials

Baileys	\$17.99	750ml
Romana Sambuca	\$18.99	750ml
Kahlua	\$16.99	750ml
Southern Comfort	\$14.99	750ml
Amaretto Di Saronno	\$18.99	750ml

Your Favorite Vodka

Absolut 80	\$32.99	1.75L
Ketel One	\$35.99	1.75L
Grey Goose	\$26.99	750ml
Smirnoff	\$19.99	1.75L
Stolichnaya	\$31.99	1.75L
Skyv	\$24.99	1.75L
Wolfschmidt	\$13.99	1.75L
Gordons	\$14.99	1.75L

Your Favorite Scotch

Dewars White Label	\$29.99	1.75L
Chivas Regal	\$54.99	1.75L
Johnnie Walker Black	\$56.99	1.75L
Johnnie Walker Red	\$29.99	1.75L
Clan MacGregor	\$16.99	1.75L

Your Favorite Whiskey

Jack Daniels	\$36.99	1.75L
Jim Beam	\$24.99	1.75L
Seagrams 7	\$15.99	1.75L

Your Favorite Gin

Bombay Sapphire	\$35.99	1.75L
Tanqueray	\$31.99	1.75L
Hendricks	\$27.99	750ml
Beefeater	\$28.99	1.75L
Gordons	\$14.99	1.75L
Seagrams	\$16.99	1.75L

Your Favorite Rum

Captain Morgan	\$24.99	1.75L
Bacardi Silver	\$19.99	1.75L
Bacardi Gold	\$19.99	1.75L
Malibu	\$23.99	1.75L

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