

**The Westfield Leader** THE SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD  
 — Established 1890 —  
 Legal Newspaper for the Town of Westfield,  
 Boroughs of Mountainside and Garwood  
 And the County of Union, N.J.

Members of:  
 New Jersey Press Association • National Newspaper Association • Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce  
 Scotch Plains Business & Professional Association • Fanwood Business & Professional Association

Periodicals - Postage Paid at Westfield, New Jersey Periodicals - Postage Paid at Scotch Plains, New Jersey  
 P.O. Box 250 • 251 North Avenue, West Westfield, N.J. 07091 P.O. Box 368 Scotch Plains, N.J. 07076  
 Tele: (908) 232-4407 • E-mail: editor@goleader.com • Web: www.goleader.com • Fax: (908) 232-0473  
 POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the offices of the newspapers at P. O. Box 250, Westfield, New Jersey 07091

Published every Thursday by Watchung Communications, Inc.

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SUBSCRIPTION PRICE  
 One-year - \$28 • Two-year - \$52 • Three-year - \$76 • One-year college (September to May) - \$20

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**Letters to the Editor**

**Council Meetings Are for Business, Not for Campaigning for Office**

Regarding the Westfield Council meeting of July 7, 2009, - It's interesting how Mr. Brennan keeps exhibiting the same inappropriate behavior time and time again. For someone to continue to try to use the forum of our town council meetings for their own personal soapbox is disturbing and makes me question how genuine anything else this candidate says or does.

I find it ironic that he makes these comments the same night that councilman Caruana announces that the town has achieved an AAA bond rating this week from S&P. Apparently the mayor's budget process is getting great results. There's no logic in someone making the same mistake over and over again and expecting a different result. I find it equally disturbing that Mr. Bigosinski chimes in for what can only be the same purpose.

For years, I have observed that Mayor Skibitsky has always been accessible, open and more than willing to speak to me as well as hundreds of other residents when we make arrangements through his office. I have attended many town council and various town commission meetings. Until just before his recent declaration of candidacy, I don't recall seeing Mr. Brennan at any of them - much less the "countless council meetings" he states he has attended.

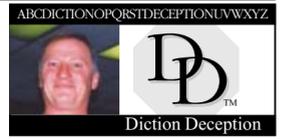
While I don't doubt that he has attended any, it is interesting that he has been absent from what makes this town tick for years. Actions speak louder than words. Mr. Brennan has said that he will

take the time to go to the finance committee meetings, but noticed he failed to show up at the budget hearing in June. He's also failed to take the time to vote in five consecutive school budget elections. This makes me pause to question what he is sincere about.

If Mr. Brennan has something to say, I would suggest that he stop interfering with the Town of Westfield business meetings and use the conventional means of paid advertising. Nine volunteers give up most every Tuesday night, year after year, to attend to the matters at hand. These meetings take so much time from their families and personal business and often go late into the night. His personal agenda only adds to this time that could be better spent on the business of the day.

Most candidates buy advertising of one sort or another instead of trying to use the non-political process for their own purposes. This show of disingenuous conduct only confirms my thinking that it is even more important than ever to support Andy Skibitsky.

I hope that every citizen will respect the excellent work done by this collective body, led by Mayor Skibitsky, and respect the process as well. He has honed the council into a positive, forward-moving group. Despite attempts to derail this, I am pleased to see our mayor keep out of the muck and mire that some try to drag him into.



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. Drawk - Coarse weeds growing in grain; wild oats
  2. Fermillet - A buckle or clasp
  3. Timbrology - The science or study of postage stamps
  4. Imprecation - A curse
- LAPIN**
1. A sort of coarse canvas
  2. Shiny; glossy
  3. Rabbit fur used in imitation of more valuable skins
  4. To whip or lash
- LEFE**
1. Friendly; likeable
  2. In Scots law, a legal stay of proceedings
  3. The head of a household in France
  4. Loved one; a friend
- PARGET**
1. A grimace
  2. Very pale or faded
  3. Plaster or wall coating
  4. An illustration for a book
- MEAR**
1. Topsoil
  2. A boundary
  3. An enzyme that assists a bee in making honey
  4. A horsefly

**In Fact, It Does Not Contain Any Additional Cost...At All**

It's been about 10 years now that the open space tax has been in effect.

The State of New Jersey started it in 1998. Scotch Plains got on the bandwagon and started one in November 1999. The county's open space tax was started in 2000. From our archives:

1998 Letter to the Editor: *Yes Vote on Second Question Will Keep New Jersey Green Into 21st Century and Beyond* - by (former State Senate President) Donald DiFrancesco of Scotch Plains.

"In January of this year, in my annual State of the Senate address, I announced that open space preservation would be the State Legislature's top priority in 1998...securing a stable source of funding to protect New Jersey's remaining farmland and open spaces before they are lost forever.

"...everyone could agree this was the best plan to preserve the beauty of the Garden State for our children and for our grandchildren. Even established, densely populated counties, such as Union County, can benefit from a statewide Open Space Preservation Program.

"...the legislation can be used to maintain and beautify existing parkland and reserves, and can even create open spaces and recreational areas where there once were abandoned buildings or empty lots...

"Passing ballot question No. 1 will allow us to protect New Jersey's open spaces without raising taxes. In fact, it does not contain any additional cost to the taxpayer at all. The proposal relies on \$98 million a year for the next 10 years from existing sales tax revenue to purchase open space, farmland and historic sites, as well as to provide a total of \$1 billion dedicated to protecting these natural resources....

"...Let us support this initiative to ensure a greener New Jersey and a better quality of life for us all!"

October 28, 1999, *Open Space Recreation Trust Fund*: "The question reads: 'Shall the Township of Scotch Plains consider establishing a Municipal Open Space Recreation Trust Fund to be used exclusively for the purposes of acquiring, developing, maintaining and administering land for preservation as open space in order to protect drinking water sources, provide recreation or assist in the acquisition of same or the administration of programs serving the same purposes within the Township of Scotch Plains to be funded at a rate not to exceed \$.02 per \$100 of total municipal real property valuation.' (\$187,000 for 10 years, \$2,000,000)."

July 6, 2000 *Creation Of A County-Wide, 2 Cent Tax Per \$100 Of Assessed Valuation*. "That rate

would channel \$6.5 million into a Union County Open Space Trust Fund each year. The tax would represent an average increase to taxpayers of \$70 in Westfield, \$47 in Scotch Plains, \$33 in Fanwood and \$62 in Mountainside, according to published information attributed to the committee's report. The tax would generate \$65 million for the county over 10 years, to be used for development of the county's parks and recreation system, for the acquisition of open space for the county and for towns to purchase open space and develop local parks."

In our opinion, it's time to take a look at just what these open space taxes have achieved. Maybe it's time to get rid of them and realign our priorities.

Has this money really gone to where the people with good intentions envisioned? Was it your vision to preserve land for trees, plants, animals and people? Or was your vision to use the taxes to turf it over with plastic? Where was the commitment to use the sales tax for open space - or to use the recent increase in sales tax for property relief, for that matter?

The county's open space tax has now grown to \$12 million a year. Most of us are not aware that this money is used as a down payment, like a mortgage - and we don't know how much the county and other governments have borrowed against these taxes.

In New Providence, the county offers to spend \$3.5 million of open space taxes for park improvements and a turf field - but the county wants the town to turn over the deed to the land. The town council narrowly approved a "memorandum of understanding" Monday night in front of over 200 citizens in attendance demanding a referendum on the matter.

The citizens in New Providence are upset; some say that the county is taxing them, and then using the tax to buy their land. There is a point here that we can see.

Clark last year turned over land to the county for park development. The Seville property in Scotch Plains, a tax ratable property for the township then, was taken off the books a couple of years ago when it was bought by county open space tax money.

And just how much do Westfield and Summit, the largest taxpayers to the county, get out of the open space tax? There is no open space fund prospects in Westfield.

Maybe this whole program should be reviewed and reconsidered.

After all, we were told, "...protect New Jersey's open spaces without raising taxes. In fact, it does not contain any additional cost to the taxpayer at all."

**Chairman Thanks Those for Making Scotch Plains Block Party Great**

Last Thursday, the Scotch Plains Cultural Arts Committee sponsored its Second annual Block Party on Park Avenue in downtown Scotch Plains. It was a great event attended by over 1,000 people of all ages. It was a beautiful, cool evening conducive to a great outdoor party. I want to take this opportunity to thank the people who made this event possible.

Thanks to Ray Poerio and the entire recreation department staff for making the event possible. Particular thanks go to Steve Dahl, who coordinated much of the entire event. Thanks to summer camp counselors Rebecca VonLangen and Sarah Konzelman for their tireless work at the always-busy face-painting table. Thanks also to the police department and the department of public works for making the block party successful.

A very special thank you goes to the Tavern at the Stage House (delicious pulled pork sandwiches), Steve's Sliders (great hot dogs), Florence Ravioli (excellent ravioli), Portusa BBQ House (exceptional chicken legs and fries), and Quick Stop (great drinks) for providing the food and drink for the evening. Everything was presented well and at a very reasonable price.

The event could not have happened without the efforts of my fellow Cultural Arts Committee members. Council liai-

son Mary DePaola, along with Nancy Barnes, Chuck Beardsley, Jackie Giardiello, Pat Kane, Liz Mangan and Sal Trifiro made it possible for the block party to come off as well as could have been imagined. They all worked hard the night of the event to assure its success.

Thanks go to Don Wussler for setting up a great car show. There were 30 classic cars on display. I had the privilege of being one of the judges, along with Mayor Nancy Malool and recreation commission chairman Bob Giordanella. If I could have, I would have given trophies to all the cars.

Special thanks go to the Scotch Plains Management Corporation for their generous support of the block party.

Please join us for the remainder of our summer program. We have concerts Thursday evenings beginning with a children's show at 7 p.m. followed by the main performer at 8 p.m. The series runs each Thursday through August 20 with the exception of August 6. That Tuesday, August 4, is National Night Out and we will have our concert in conjunction with the police department.

Hope to see everyone at the Village Green.

**Letters to the Editor**

**Lance Thanked for Voting for Energy Bill**

I would like to thank my congressman, Leonard Lance, for his yes vote on the American Clean Energy and Security Act (H.R. 2454). Mr. Lance represents a new, more modern, more progressive GOP. He is not beholden to the Bush-Cheney-Palin Big Oil interests. Mr. Lance recognizes that the planet is warming, human beings are responsible for its warming, and human beings must fix it.

We are all going to need to make some sacrifices to save the planet. Those who don't want to make those sacrifices are simply selfish. Although I did not vote for Mr. Lance in 2008, he has my vote in 2010 should he seek re-election.

**Writer Calls Lance 'A Disgrace' For 'Yes' Vote on Cap and Trade**

Congressman Lance you are a disgrace to yourself and our district and our country. Two months ago I presented you with a Portrait of George Washington with a plaque which was inscribed "To: Congressman Leonard Lance, Honor, Honesty, Integrity, Loyalty, Character; from William M. Sanders, president Mountainside Republican Club." The presentation took place at Mountainside Borough Hall after you addressed our club meeting. I should have put more into the fact (as you stated in our meeting) that you were impressed with the fact that the Speaker of the House recognized you in a D.C. restaurant that you were having lunch in, than your principles (if there are any).

You sir, don't know what it is to run a business and the tax burden, which your vote will put on them. To vote on a bill that you had not read, and know nothing about, regarding its impact on not only our state but the country as a whole is an absolute disgrace to you and the voters that put their trust in you.

You sir should not be in office, and I vow that I will run against you in the next Republican Primary and kick your butt out of office, because you are a disgrace to the words Honor, Honesty, Integrity, Loyalty, Character.

**Fast Food Is Not Right Concept for Westfield**

Following up on my comments to Westfield's Town Council at the July 7, 2009, public meeting, I'd like to re-emphasize several points.

A new fast food restaurant sponsored by the Subway Corp. is scheduled to be opened at the corner of Quimby Street and Central Avenue, in the heart of Westfield's central business district. This type of venture is a departure for Westfield's downtown retail makeup and should be studied and reviewed by the town council with sufficient public input prior to anything final.

There are several problems that come to mind. One is the prime location where it will be - an entranceway leading into the downtown and the first ward residential area. Another is that the concept of fast food, although tasty, has not been a part of Westfield's downtown growth and heritage through the years. Also, these types of restaurants seem to follow each other into an area. We are urged to take an interest in this matter and let our voices be heard.

**Mayor of Elizabeth and County Sheriff Should Follow Monmouth, Morristown**

It's about time! All law-abiding citizens should be rejoicing at the latest development that clears the way for the Morristown Police Department and the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office to participate in an overhauled federal program that allows local officers to act as immigration agents (Feds let local cops nab illegals linked to serious crimes, *The Star-Ledger*, Saturday, July 11, 2009).

Congratulations and a well-deserved thank you to Morristown Mayor Donald Cresitello and Monmouth County Sheriff Kim Guadagno for having the courage to take on this out-of-control foreign-free-for-all that is illegal immigration and standing up for the rule of law and the American people.

Elizabeth Mayor Christian Bollwage and Union County Sheriff Ralph Froehlich would do well to follow the example of their respective counterparts. It is quite

obvious that Elizabeth/Union County is also plagued by the illegal immigration mess, yet the mayor is in denial and the sheriff seems more concerned about finagling children and locating senior citizens - both of which are fine endeavors, but do nothing to address a safe community law enforcement issue such as the illegal immigration invasion that is plaguing our communities. It is sad, shameful, outrageous and disgraceful that these two "see, hear, and speak no evil" politicians lack the courage to buck political correctness. They sit on their hands while the rule of law is tossed out the window, and the voice of the American people is ignored. Open your eyes, gentlemen. Take a look at the inscription above the front entrance to the Union County Courthouse. It reads, in part, *Vox Populi*. Get it?

**Who Is to Dictate Which SAT Prep Courses Help Students in Westfield?**

As a concerned parent, I would like to share the following experience with other concerned parents and their teens.

Last year my son graduated WHS with a perfect GPA and is now a sophomore at an Ivy League school. Before he took the SATs, he enrolled in a SAT prep course offered by WHS. The course offered a review of material already covered by the curriculum, but offered little to improve test-taking strategy.

In the summer before my son's senior year, I received an e-mail from a former WHS student alerting me to a SAT prep course, the Ivy Insiders. It seemed innovative and interesting, and it was relatively inexpensive. I was sorry that I did not find out about it sooner.

This year, when my son was looking for summer employment, I suggested that he apply for a position with Ivy Insiders. He was offered a position as a SAT tutor and completed a rigorous training program. He visited WHS guidance counselors and explained how the program works. He offered to give students a free information session and negotiated a rental contract with the Westfield Board of Education to teach the classes on the premises of WHS. He sent e-mails to WHS stu-

dents to inform them that there is a viable option to improve their SAT scores.

He was immediately contacted by the PTSO and told him that he cannot send e-mails to WHS students as the directory is private, that the claim that the course increases SAT score is untrue and that the PTSO contacted their attorneys. An e-mail was sent by the PTSO to WHS students to disregard all Ivy Insiders' e-mails. The room for his free event was cancelled and the Westfield Board of Education voided the rental contract.

Westfield was always a community conscious of quality education. As a matter of fact, the quality of schools was the main reason my family moved to Westfield some 20 years ago. It defies all logic, and it is beyond my comprehension why the PTSO and the Board of Education would go to such an extent to preclude WHS students from an opportunity to find an effective and inexpensive way to improve their SAT scores.

Did we become so complacent that we allow others to make choices for us without exploring all options?



**Your State Legislators**

<p>---LD-21---</p> <p>Sen. Thomas Kean, Jr. (R)                  425 North Ave. E.                  Westfield, N.J. 07090                  (908) 232-3673</p> <p>Asm. Jon Brannick (R)                  251 North Ave. West                  Westfield, N.J. 07090                  (908) 232-2073</p> <p>Asm. Nancy Munoz (R)                  57 Union Place, Suite 310                  Summit, N.J. 07901                  (908) 918-0414</p>	<p>---LD-22---</p> <p>Sen. Nicholas Scutari (D)                  1514 E. Saint Georges Ave.                  Linden, N.J. 07036                  (908) 587-0404</p> <p>Asw. Linda Stender (D)                  1801 East Second St.                  Scotch Plains, N.J. 07076                  (908) 668-1900</p> <p>Asm. Jerry Green (D)                  17 Watchung Ave.                  Plainfield, N.J. 07060                  (908) 561-5757</p>	<p>LD-21 includes Westfield, Mountainside, Garwood, Summit and Cranford.</p> <p>LD-22 includes Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Plainfield, Clark and Linden.</p> <p><b>E-mail</b>                  senkean@njleg.org                  senscutari@njleg.org                  asmbrannick@njleg.org                  aswmunoz@njleg.org                  aswstender@njleg.org                  asmgreen@njleg.org</p>
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