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Our Lives Have Changed, But Terrorism Should Not Claim a Permanent Victory

September 13, 2001 The Westfield Leader and The Times After the death of President John F. Kennedy, former U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan lamented that, "we'll never be young again." After this week's numbing, almost surreal, events, it may be safe to say that America will never be innocent again. Many called Tuesday's terrorist bombings in New York, Washington, D.C., and elsewhere a second Pearl Harbor. I'd concur, with one difference: Pearl Harbor was physically far removed from the lives of most Americans 60 years ago, and that attack was not broadcast live to the nation. The nearly unbelievable events of Tuesday, September 11, 2001, a date that will also live in infamy, occurred in the midst of the country's biggest population center and it was all broadcast live on television. We'll leave it to our leaders in the government to sort through matters and, hopefully, come up with an appropriate response to the horrific attacks on the World Trade Center towers, the Pentagon and other sites. Our thoughts are, of course, with those whose lives took them to Lower Manhattan on Tuesday morning. Many people from our area work in New York's financial district, or know people who work there, and we sin-

cerely pray for their safe return to their families. Life has been permanently changed for all of us - here in Union County and across the country. What will a trip to the airport be like from now on? How will we avoid an always-lingering concern anytime we venture into New York City? How will this week's tragedy affect our ability to live some semblance of normal lives? Is the nation about to contract a permanent case of the jitters? And how will we react when we see the lovely New York City skyline, with a chunk of it now gone forever? Television has been criticized, often rightly, for being a vast wasteland filled with inane programming and too many commercials. This week, though, television brought us together as a community, much as it did with JFK's assassination, the Challenger explosion and the Gulf War. We saw images - broadcast live - that will be burned into our memories forever. Watching the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center collapse in a ghastly, smoky cloud; seeing a piece of the Pentagon in flames; watching frightened Americans fleeing from the catastrophes like refugees in far-away wars, and hearing the recounting of the events from shaken survi-

vors were stunning, once you re-minded yourself that this was not some Hollywood movie with dazzling special effects. The nation on Tuesday came to as much of a standstill as is possible in a country as large as ours. Just in our area, people seemed to be going about their day in varied levels of shock. Quiet conversations, whispered comments, tense nods of the head and much silent brooding were the norm. Our local fire and rescue squads were commandeered into assisting New York in the city's time of great need; if ever there was a reason to donate to these local volunteer organizations, this week's tragedy provides the best one. Life will go on. Routes will be re-established at some point. But for now, we mourn and try to make sense of a senseless horror. Family and friends will be of the utmost importance in the days and weeks ahead, as we attempt to recover from the experiences of this week and share our thoughts and fears. We've all been affected by the actions of a faceless, cowardly, brutal adversary. Terrorism may have triumphed on Tuesday, September 11, 2001. It's the task of everyone - citizens and our government - to make sure that sick victory is limited to just that one day.

As the Murders of 9/11 Fade, Are You Still Infuriated?

The greater part of a decade has elapsed since the events of September 11, 2001 were seared into our consciousness. Eight years later, the images of that day continue to remind us of the shock, the terror and the immense sorrow that we experienced as we witnessed the unimaginable unfold before our eyes. Although public recollection of that tragic day remains vivid to some, is it fading? Other concerns have come to dominate the national spotlight, as eventually happens following even the most cataclysmic occurrence. We move on, supposedly, which is a part of the healing process. Nevertheless, we must not allow 9/11 to fade too far into memory. Terror visited us in our own backyards and continues to lurk. The forces that orchestrated those events still constitute a dangerous reality. Our troops risk and sacrifice their lives each day on the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq - combating al-Qaeda, the Taliban and other Muslim terrorist groups - those who would harm us and all other peoples of the world in pursuit of their fanaticism. We must never become so complacent as to feel we are no longer at risk. On one September morning, which dawned without a hint of pending disaster, husbands and wives, daughters and sons, fathers and mothers, friends and neighbors, were taken from their loved ones. People of many nations and faiths were murdered. For their

families and others left behind, 9/11 is still very much part of the present. We also have a duty to remember the countless heroes of 9/11 - trained emergency responders and ordinary citizens alike - who came to the aid of their fellow citizens at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Equally courageous were the passengers aboard United Airlines Flight 93, who, in their final moments, undoubtedly won back the lives of others who also had been targeted for destruction. While we may not always recognize it in the bustle of our everyday routines, the events of September 11, 2001 changed us forever. We possess a greater awareness of the threats to our way of life, to be sure, but also a greater awareness of who we are as a people, and of the sufferings of others. In the wake of this devastating event in our nation's history, we showed ourselves to be a nation of strength, humanity and resilience. We must remember this as well. With the eighth anniversary of 9/11 taking place tomorrow, let us take some time to remember the people and events of that day. Several commemorative observances will occur within our local communities tomorrow and Saturday. We must never forget. We must not become weak or grow complacent, succumb to fear or defer to political correctness. The dangers are too great. We must remain resolute and strong. Are you still infuriated?



I remember sitting on the couch, watching TV as the towers burned with a drawing board on my lap, while drawing that cartoon. The towers had not fallen yet as I drew. I had to change the cartoon slightly after they fell to show they were no longer there. Every time I see that cartoon, it reminds me of that morning on the couch. I will never forget it. Dale Nesman, Cartoonist, Leader/Times

Letters to the Editor

Is It Nero's Fiddle We Are Hearing? County Government Is a Bad Joke

Thank you, Westfield Leader, for your outstanding editorial calling attention to Union County's proposal to establish a court system, in a desperate attempt to enlarge government and grab a revenue stream away from municipalities. Please understand that Union County government is very expensive to manage: there are all those friends and family on the payroll, all of those political donors who expect play (lucrative contracts) for pay (campaign contributions); and of course the unselected political bosses who make sure friends, relatives, unions and donors are all well-served at the county level. Last week, the ACLU got into the Union County act by defending the public's right (previously denied) at public meetings to ask about nepotism in hiring practices. Apparently the Union County Freeholders, employees of the people, are touchy about their employer's right to know the facts. How pitiful. But show goes on - Music Fest - that is, with VIP tents for fat-cat donors, friends and family - all on the public dime. However, is it Nero's fiddle we are hearing? Like the Roman Empire at the height of its arrogance, county government has begun to gasp for air. It is a redundant and useless level of government that continues to exist; because in the archaic structure of New Jersey politics, it is the county political machines that control political

nominations - and hence are the seats of all political power (and patronage) in our state. Is it possible for the system to overthrow itself today? No. But it is possible for the U.S. Attorney's office to change the political culture in our state by continuing to lockup the crooks and clear the playing field for the election of more men and women of virtue and vision who one day pray will liberate us from a layer of government and taxation that in the modern era has clearly outlived its' need. Is there hope for New Jersey? Yes. Close county government, crippling the political bosses and eliminating their nests of patronage. Let the state step in to manage the parks, prisons, social welfare programs and county roads. There will be economies of scale and tax savings to New Jersey residents; and also a lot of out-of-work cousins, nephews and in-laws of the former king-makers. Union County's proposed expansion of government into a court system, only the second county in the state to do so, will come at a time when overburdened N.J. taxpayers clearly want less government not more. It is a joke - a bad joke. Currently more than 20 cents of every Westfield tax dollar already goes to Union County and towards keeping this family cruise ship afloat. Enough is enough. Councilman Sal Caruana Westfield Finance Chairman

Nero Fiddled in Private, But Union County MusicFest Is Public

The inconvenience of hosting this MusicFest, as you well document in your September 3, 2009 editorial, is not the main problem with it. We'll get through that. The county has become good at putting on these events and they'll make this the biggest and best MusicFest ever. Placards are everywhere. It makes one think that, when inverted, they morph into Freeholder campaign signs. Two major rock stations in the tri-state area WXPB 101.9 and WDHA 105.5 are running contests giving away VIP passes. When I listened, people from Middletown and Howell won. A lot of time, effort, and money is being pumped into this and I'm certain no expense will be spared. The problem is the mindset that allows this bacchanalia to flourish at a time when people are losing their jobs, their homes, and even their lives. What good does it do the 480,000 Union

County residents who won't be attending though they'll be paying for it? - Or the thousands of residents who will lose jobs in the next few months because of this depression? - Or the hundreds who will lose homes in part due to outrageously high property taxes? Or the family of Frank Congiusta? Will getting VIP passes make it all good? The freeholders, the county manager, and whoever supports this blatant waste of resources should be ashamed. Even when Nero fiddled, he had the good sense not to do it on a stage. County government should not be entertaining. They should be running prisons, maintaining parks and tracking land sales. If they can't do that economically, then they have no business even existing. John Bury Kenilworth

Free Offsite Parking Is Available At the Union County MusicFest

The Westfield Leader's editorial today [September 3, 2009] mistakenly gives the impression that only \$10 parking is available at MusicFest. That is not true. There is also free off-site parking available. Please see below and if you can run a clarification. *There will be paid on-site parking for \$10 a vehicle, and free off-site parking will be made available at the Vo-Tech School [1776 Raritan Road] with a free

shuttle to MusicFest and The Union County Fair. MusicFest's official hotel, Crowne Plaza Hotel, will offer discounted rooms and a free shuttle, too. By the way, this information was in my press release, which was distributed earlier this month. Thanks again. Sebastian D'Elia Director, Union County Public Information

Reader Calls for Debates Between Westfield Mayoral Candidates

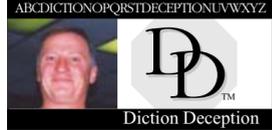
I have recently read New Jersey State Senator Tom Kean, Jr.'s letter to the editor appearing on this page last week, in which he was asking Governor Corzine to have a series of debates with his opponents, and to move up the proposed dates of the debates, so the voters had an opportunity to hear from the candidates early on in the campaign. The Senator said "the people of this state deserve to start hearing the candidates discuss major issues well in advance of the general election." I agree with Tom Kean, and applaud his concern for what is best for the voters. In fact Governor Corzine also agrees, and the voters of this state will hear from the candidates directly in a real debate, early on. Well done Senator, and well done Governor. Now the rest of the story. We in Westfield have a very important election locally in November, and that is for the office of mayor. Former Westfield Judge Bill Brennan has for months been asking Mayor Skibitsky to agree to a series of real debates to contrast what each candidate has to offer the Town of Westfield. Mayor Andy Skibitsky does not want this to occur. He has taken on the "just say no approach" to this challenge. Bill Brennan has suggested a series of real debates, one on one, that can be moderated by the students in Westfield High School, and by the editorial board of The Westfield Leader. It is very clear what Andy Skibitsky's strategy will be in this campaign, hide behind the ceremonial duties of office, have his friends attack Bill Brennan for each suggestion he brings up to improve Westfield, and then spend a great deal of money to send glossy campaign mailers

to the voters. There is an alternative to this method, a true old American debate. Of course there will be a meet the candidates night near Election Day, in which both candidates answer questions, along with all the candidates running for four Town Council seats. This is not a real debate. This is exactly what Senator Tom Kean said he was not in favor of, when discussing the Governor's race in New Jersey. Tom, you said "the Governor's efforts to delay a debate must be recognized for what it is, an effort to obscure meaningful discussion of serious problems and the approaches to dealing with them." I publicly ask Senator Kean to convince Mayor Skibitsky of the power of your statement and stop ducking Bill Brennan in his challenge of real mayoral debates in Westfield. If the mayor were proud of his record, would he hide from the challenge of real debates? Just as Mayor Skibitsky was missing in action during the town's recent budget meetings, he intends to be missing in action to Bill Brennan's request for debates. Tom, we cannot have a double standard for political reasons. You have been known to be fair and upright, will you demand the same of Mayor Skibitsky, as you did for Governor Corzine? I look forward to your public response. I look forward to real debates for the good of democracy and good government in Westfield. Tony LaPorta Westfield

Why Do We Restrict Carpooling to Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School?

I am again embarrassed by remarks made by a public official as reported in your [Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times] September 3, 2009 issue. Police Chief Brian Mahoney is quoted saying, "parking on Evergreen Avenue poses a safety risk for children crossing the street between parked cars." While there may be legitimate reasons for modifying parking regulations, this remark is stupid. If the parents and school personnel cannot educate children to cross the street at the location supervised by a crossing guard, the driver must take [the child] to the school door and escort the child via the correct crossing point as part of their education. An alternative would be to construct a 10-foot fence around the school and require an adult to sign off for the children as they enter and exit the school grounds via limited access points. Another alternative would be to prosecute the adults for endangering the welfare of the children. We have regulations restricting young drivers from carpooling to school. These same 17-year-olds can enter our armed services (with parental consent) and be

treated as adults. However, we prohibit them from carpooling, buying cigarettes (age 19) and alcohol (age 21) but they can vote and marry at age 18. So why do we have a problem specifying an adult? We even give our prosecutors and courts the arbitrary latitude to charge young children as adults. So why, with all the problems of limited high school parking and the objective of doing "green things" do we restrict carpooling to school? Can we not educate our children to drive safely between age 16 and 17? If not, they will be no better at 18. Tom Chieffo 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. Tienda - A booth or shop 2. Sapo - The toadfish 3. Carabao - A Philippine water buffalo 4. Pandit - In India, a scholar or learned man PARLE 1. A sort of coarse canvas 2. A long handled battle-axe 3. To thrash or beat 4. To converse PISK 1. A pustule or pimple 2. The common nighthawk of America 3. A stem, stalk or support 4. The rock trout of California FECUNDATION 1. The act of making fruitful or prolific 2. Revenge; reprisal 3. A process of cleansing the body; fasting 4. Starvation VACA 1. Round or oval in form 2. Very small amount; a pinch 3. A cow in the Southwest 4. Dark; gloomy See more letters pages 5, 17

Letters to the Editor

Candidate Jalloh Clarifies Positions

Editor's Note: The newspaper conducted a 56-minute interview with the Democrat Candidates for Union County Freeholder. An article summarizing the interview appeared in our September 3 edition and the complete video can be seen at goleader.com. [Regarding a quote in the article], "He said the county would like to collect all of the revenue from the county police-issued tickets after the state collects its share." In an effort to clarify the record, I never made the above statement, nor was there anything that I said that would allow someone to reasonably infer the above. I did say that currently the fines collected from county-issued summons based upon a statue are split 50-50 between the county and the municipalities; and if based upon a county ordinance, 100 percent goes to the county. At no time and in no way did I propose to cut the municipalities out of the revenue share. I also spoke on the difficulties municipal prosecutors may have enforcing county ordinances. Finally, I addressed our obligation as a county to ensure that our laws are being enforced and that any such study to determine whether or not the county is fulfilling its obligation is warranted. I am certain the statement is an error and not a deliberate attempt to make me look unfavorable in the municipalities I seek to represent. As such, I respectfully request you add this clarification (in its entirety) so that the public is accurately informed. Mohamed Jalloh, Roselle Candidate for Freeholder

Thanks to WFFD, Platoon A for Help

On Sunday, September 6, I was in Westfield when I accidentally locked my wallet in my glove compartment of my car. After 40 minutes of trying unsuccessfully, my sister went to the Westfield Fire Department (at 405 North Avenue West) and asked if they could help. Within five minutes they had arrived and were able to help out. I just want to thank the guys from Platoon A for their high level of professionalism and their friendly services. Although this was not a pressing matter, the firemen of Platoon A displayed a professional concern, willingness to help and a seriousness that was greatly appreciated. Please extend my thank you and best wishes to each of the individuals involved and the leadership of Platoon A for a job well done. Dan Schnitzer Basking Ridge

Lance: Give the People Same Health Care Plan That Congress Has

I was very interested in what Mr. Lance said to you at The Westfield Leader, and I think I can help him if he will give me a chance. First, I can save him some time and money: "get rid of the experts you have reading the bill and quiet all the opposition that individuals have the perfect right to express their view," and present a vision of a health care bill and become the party of yes, rather than the party of no. It is very simple, give the people that are paying for your health care the same plan that you, Nancy Pelosi and Charles Schumer and the rest of our representatives have. I don't think you will need an expert to review it for you. I am quite sure you know exactly how it works, if not ask someone who has been there forever like the guy from Alaska with the wide stance and the oily wallet pocket to help you. Of all the complaints I have heard out of Washington in my 68 years, I have never heard a politician complain about his health care plan. Hope this will help you and your colleagues. Richard Parry Westfield

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