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Letters to the Editor
SP DPW Employee Thanked for Helping at Traffic Accident

There is a principal that is fundamental to the proper handling of any government agency. It is the principal of public service. It is therefore incumbent on those who work in these agencies to exemplify the heart and spirit of a public servant.

Unfortunately, this is not always the case, but I felt compelled to write this letter to highlight one public servant who epitomizes this principal. He is Kevin Brown, a member of the Scotch Plains Department of Public Works. On Wednesday, August 25, my wife was involved in a minor traffic accident at the intersection of Route 22, West and Mountain Avenue in Scotch Plains. I am so grateful that Mr. Brown was in his vehicle directly behind

my wife. Upon witnessing the accident, Mr. Brown positioned his vehicle to protect my wife from traffic. He checked on her safety, and the safety of the other driver - then directed traffic and called police. His presence and leadership were incredibly calming to my wife, and made a bad situation so much easier to bear.

I am extremely grateful to Kevin Brown and wanted our town to know the kind of man who is serving our community in our Public Works Department.

Pastor Kevin Brennan
 Evangel Church
 Scotch Plains

Union Catholic Will be Respectful of Neighbors Regarding Timing of Lights

Having had two daughters graduate from Union Catholic High School in 2007 and 2009, we witnessed firsthand for six years the deplorable condition of the athletic field that so negatively impacted the school's fall and spring sports schedules.

That's why it was exciting as a parent and a member of UC's School Consultative Board to be part of the committee that researched Union Catholic's options when field renovations could be put off no longer. The committee, administration and, ultimately, the board recognized that Union Catholic could not deliver on its philosophy to "...create the proper environment for nurturing the maturation of the whole person: spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, morally, socially and physically" without upgrading the field where student-athletes play and learn teamwork and sportsmanship as members of competitive sports teams, intramural teams and physical education classes. The board reached consensus that a turf field, new track and companion facilities would mean greater opportunities and a richer learning experience for all students.

UC also recognized that another state-of-the-art playing field in Scotch Plains,

where field time is at a premium, would mean good things for many more local student-athletes than those registered at UC.

Going into field renovations in the early summer of 2009, Union Catholic hosted an open house for its backyard neighbors to layout the scope of the project and to give them an opportunity to voice questions and concerns. Following that UC hosted a second gathering for neighbors with the project engineer to provide answers to more technical questions.

Today, as the school prepares for phase three of the project, I understand that the prospect of lighting this field for night play does not sit well with certain neighbors. However, having worked closely with Sister Percylee Hart, principal, and her administrative team, I have every confidence that they will continue to be respectful of their neighbors and monitor the use and timing of those lights very carefully. Union Catholic has been a good neighbor in Scotch Plains for nearly 50 years. The UC community is surely committed to honoring that tradition in the years to come.

Susan M. Dyckman
 Scotch Plains

Westfield Wasted Taxpayers on Illogical Central Avenue Project

I invite all Westfield residents to see how Westfield is wasting the taxpayers' money for an illogical, unjustifiable project that is offensive to the entire neighborhood in the vicinity of the 1300 block of Central Avenue. It will disrupt even more of the traffic flow on this street. It appears that any homeowner in this town can have his property ravaged by a surprising unjustifiable project.

my next-door neighbor's home and in front of half of my property, they installed a pedestrian crossing light - and on the other half of my front yard, they installed a traffic light. A second traffic light was installed cross the street on the newly constructed sidewalk blocking Cambridge Street. Consequently, my driveway is now lying between two traffic lights and approximately 10 feet from a pedestrian crossing.

The segment of the "Central Avenue corridor" in the 1300 block has nothing to do with "making much needed improvements to the entire Central Avenue corridor that will be beneficial to many, many Westfield residents, including those who travel along Central Avenue, those who need to cross Central Avenue, and those who are residents along Central Avenue and the neighboring traffic grid," as the mayor said. In contrast, this intersection will become a much more dangerous spot for both car drivers and pedestrians.

Instead of putting a traffic light at the corner of Central Avenue and Clover Street, and maintaining the crossway where it has been for at least 30 years, the town put them in the middle of the block where there is no intersection. Consequently, the corner of Clover Street with Central Avenue and vicinity is becoming extremely unsafe.

I don't know how I will be able to get out safely of my driveway. It now even has handicapped ramps on both sides.

Nobody invited any of the owners of the properties in the immediate vicinity of this segment of the "Central Avenue corridor" project to any meeting or hearing. There was no input from any of the citizens of this neighborhood. Some of the owners received a letter of notification delivered by Mr. Ciarrocca's 12-year-old son only two weeks prior to when the work started, even though the project had been conceived more than one-and-a-half-year ago. I was never notified about this project in any way, and my property is the one most affected.

The Town of Westfield is moving the crossway, that has functioned for more than 30 years, 130 feet south and now is in the middle of the block and in front of my house. They are spending approximately \$100,000 in spite of 0.3 miles of parallel, continuous sidewalk between Cedar Street and Frazee Court. This is a waste of money received from the county.

This segment was initiated and designed, with its execution requested, with perseverance of the Town of Westfield (Mayor Andrew Skibitsky and Councilman Mark Ciarrocca). Union County cannot be blamed. The plan was designed by so called "outside traffic experts."

It revolted my neighbors. It affected all the properties around my house, and disfigured my property. There are a lot of complaints. Every single person I talked to said the same things: "It does not make any sense," "It is incredible," "This is a safety hazard," "This is unheard of," and "This is crazy." Even people who are involved in the execution of the project are puzzled by it.

My neighbors and I addressed our concerns to the mayor and Councilman Ciarrocca. They did not want to review the plan before the work started. Instead, they pushed for its execution. This shows a disrespect to the property owners and disrespect to the efforts to improve the economy and the environment by wasting taxpayers' money.

I am a 71-year-old woman and have lived in my home for 29 years. I took good care of the "county's property" (eight feet from the road) and I am very surprised by the disrespect I was treated with by the people whom I voted for.

The people who initiated this badly conceived project should correct the work. If they really care to improve the traffic flow and reduce the speed and accident frequency on Central Avenue, they should move the traffic lights to the Clover Street and Central Avenue intersection. They should leave the pedestrian crossing where it has always been - at the corner.

Otherwise, they should pay back the money wasted and reimburse the owners for all the damages - including the drop in the value of their houses.

Adina Enculescu
 Westfield

SP Residents Paying Senior Housing Complex Utility Bills is Complex Issue

This past week, I wrote to Scotch Plains Mayor Nancy Malool and the township council requesting information regarding the proposed payments of utilities for the senior housing complex on Lake Avenue. I needed to understand why we were all of a sudden, using taxpayers dollars to pay the bills for this entity - something we have not done in the past.

particular Councilman Glover, and Mr. Marion has taken on our behalf. Mr. Glover has been the council liaison to the board of the senior housing complex for the past 15 months and was the first to alert the council that this entity was experiencing some financial difficulty. He has made several suggestions as to how they can reduce costs and has offered the possibility of extending some shared services ideas to further reduce expenditures.

Of the \$100,000 reported shortfall, nothing has been paid out to date. A payment of no more than \$48,000 will be made directly to the utility companies once the bills can be verified.

Within a couple of days, the mayor responded and confirmed the need for the township to make these payments - and directed me to speak with Chris Marion, the town manager. Mr. Marion quickly returned my call and spent considerable time explaining why the township is now faced with making these payments. To my pleasant surprise, I also received a call from Councilman Kevin Glover offering further detail to my inquiry.

In short, it seems that back when the facility was being built in the late 1990s, the then council agreed to cover any operating shortfall this entity encountered. It appears to be a very complicated agreement, the details of which are on file downtown. The bad news is that we are stuck with making these payments for the unforeseeable future as long as this facility operates at a loss.

While none of this is good news, the residents should be aware of the positive steps the mayor and council, in

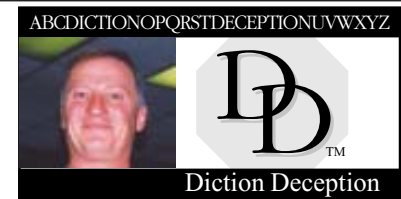
addition to the sidewalk in front of

It appears that all the questions residents might have concerning the facility, such as expenses, salaries, etc., have already been asked and answers are being sought.

While I do not claim to fully understand this very complex issue and hope that the information reported here is correct, I come away satisfied that our best interests as residents are being represented. I am very grateful for the positive and professional manner in which all concerned handled my inquiry.

I thank those for the time they donate to our town. It really is much appreciated.

Geraldine Keogh
 Scotch Plains



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. Spheniscan - A penguin
 2. Burinist - An engraver
 3. Chamal - The angora goat
 4. Sphragistics - The science of engraved seals

- SASIN**
1. A slender dagger used in the Middle Ages
 2. The Indian antelope or black buck
 3. Menacing; frightful
 4. A type of Syrian scarf

- VATIC**
1. Characteristic of a prophet or seer
 2. Vigorous; very active
 3. Wreathed; coiled; curly
 4. Artistically suited for show or display

- SCATURIENT**
1. Having a terrible sound; sounding dreadfully
 2. Tearing in pieces
 3. Roily; muddy; filthy
 4. Gushing forth

- VERSUTE**
1. Crafty
 2. Eloquence; readiness of speech
 3. Relating to pigs; swine
 4. Hook-beaked

See more letters on page 5

Letters to the Editor

Remember Those Who Have Come Before Us, Famous Or Unknown

Reading the obituary columns should always give a person pause. Today in *The New York Times* (August 26,2010) was no exception.

Edward Keen, 85, the writer for the "Howdy Doody Show," has died. According to historian Stephen Davis's history of the show - "Say Kids! What Time Is It?" - Mr. Keen "wrote almost every spoken line and every note sung" and "came up with every major creative decision, story line, and character." He wrote the lyrics to the show's famous theme song, "It's Howdy Doody Time."

He conceived of the characters Phineas T. Bluster, Clarabel the Clown, Princess Summerfall Winterspring, Flub-a-Dub and Chief Thunderdub. He coined the word "cowabunga" which has become part of the American vernacular. It was Mr. Keen's idea that Howdy Doody run for President in 1948. Howdy extolled the virtues of democracy. The campaign received nearly 60,000 requests for campaign buttons!

David Rowland, 86, the inventor of the Tidily Stacked Chair, has died. This industrial designer, working out of a \$40-a-month one-room apartment in upper Manhattan in the late 1950's, made it possible for millions of people to sit at all sorts of meetings - including even those on submarines - in comfortable sculptured chairs which could quickly and easily be stacked four feet high in lots of 40 in a corner to provide space for other activities.

Marcel Albert, 92, who was one of the leading Free French fighter pilots during World War II, has died. He won France's "Order of the Liberation" founded by General Charles de Gaulle. In November 2009, the French Ambassador to the United States gave Mr. Albert a medal recognizing him as a grand officer of the Order of the Legion of Honor of France.

The world is a better place because of them, a point we should bear in mind the next time we see a headline about some crook or tyrant or other unsavory character.

The very moving marble tablet on the floor just inside the entrance to Westminster Abbey in London reads, "Remember Winston Churchill." We must always remember those who have come before us, famous or unknown, who have in their own way by big brick or by tiny brick built the edifice of civilization.

Stephen Schoeman
 Westfield

Newark Councilman on Christie's Blame

The Christie Administration has cast a wide net, blaming everyone from mindless drones in Washington to Rahm Emanuel and the Obama Administration itself. The facts are clear, that the mistake in New Jersey's Race to the Top application originated in the Governor's office and the blame game should begin and end there.

Ronald Rice
 Newark Councilman

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We Shall Never Forget 'The Day The Earth Stood Still'

In a little more than two weeks, nine years ago, it was like "The Day The Earth Stood Still." No, it is not a re-showing of the 1951 science fiction movie nor is it the annual Union County Freeholders premier entertainment event, MusicFest in Oak Ridge Park in Clark to be held on September 11. Nor is it the opening fall show of the Fanwood Performance Series also to be held on September 11 at 7 p.m. at the carriage house.

Many of you remember where you were on September 11, 2001 - the dastardly attacks on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City and on the Pentagon, the heroic resistance of those who died at the crash site in Shanksville, Pa. - the murder of so many, those innocent - the heroes of the moments and dauntless dedication of the first responders.

The Town of Westfield will observe the ninth anniversary of the September 11 attacks by Muslim terrorists, al-Qaeda, with a community gathering on Saturday, September 11, at

the 9/11 Memorial site on North Avenue at East Broad Street. The ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. Union County will hold its annual September 11 vigil at the county's memorial at Echo Lake Park in Mountainside from 6 to 9 p.m. This is a quiet moment for families, friends and members of the Union County community to remember all those who were killed. There will be no speeches or formal program at the county vigil.

Perhaps it's too early today for us to be advised of commemoration services to be held by other communities on that upcoming date, though we're concerned there's been too little word about it. We think the public should not let this shrink into a fading memory.

We urge communities to remember. We are happy that the freeholders have inserted a moment of pause and remembrance along with their top-billed entertainers during the MusicFest on 9/11. It's the right thing to do; as for many of us it was "The Day The Earth Stood Still."

N.J.'s 'Race to The Trough': Disgraceful, Inept and Petty

Governor Chris Christie cleaned house last week on his end in firing Bret Schundler as education commissioner. It's difficult to tell what actually happened. We're befuddled, though we thought the Governor was going to fire Mr. Schundler in June, when the commissioner negotiated a deal with the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) outside of the guidelines established by the Governor. But whatever happened last week was the breaking point for Bret, an affable guy who is easy to like.

Fans of former Acting Governor Donald DiFrancesco must be chuckling beneath their breath as they remember how Mr. Schundler "swiftboated" Mr. DiFrancesco in 2001 before the Republican Primary for Governor; Mr. DiFrancesco withdrew from the race after adverse stories surfaced concerning his past legal and business dealings. Mr. Schundler back then had promised to amplify and document the reports.

So, Mr. Schundler battled Jim McGreevey for Governor, and "lucky New Jersey" elected "big Jim McGreevey" in November 2001.

But what does any of this have to do with "Race to the Trough?" It should be apparent to all by now that the top of the education empire in New Jersey is dysfunctional, and has been for some time. If Mr. Schundler was thrown under the school bus while cleaning house, isn't the job only partially done?

How long can the taxpayers - citizens, teachers, children and elected officials - put up with this disgrace? We think the NJEA should clean house too and throw union President Barbara Keshishian under the school bus. She's giddy at New Jersey's failed attempts to improve and correct itself. She seems embittered and petty. "Do it for the children."

It's time to get rid of them all and take our chances with anyone else to run the New Jersey education empire. It can't get any worse.

Meanwhile, our trust is with the professionals of the system - our teachers and administrators; it's all that we have left to hold things together. We're confident they will step up.

We don't know if "The Race to the Top" was beneficial or not - but that's not the point.



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LD-21 includes Westfield, Mountainside, Garwood, Summit and Cranford.
 LD-22 includes Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Plainfield, Clark and Linden.

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