

The Westfield Leader THE SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD
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Letters to the Editor

Freeholder Kowalski Misplaces Blame For Need to Privatize Runnells

At the last freeholder meeting, Freeholder Bette Jane Kowalski opined that the Union County Freeholders care immensely for their patients at Runnells Hospital but need to privatize it because the state has cut back on its Medicare and Medicaid funding. Nice. Kick the can conveniently up the road and blame it on the Republicans when the county Democrats can't or won't get their fiscal house in order.

Maybe the county doesn't have the money to spend at Runnells (a notorious patronage pit of bloated salaries) because the county freeholders, including Ms. Kowalski, voted to spend upwards of \$30 million on a new country club at Galloping Hill Golf Course. Ya think? Or was it the full lifetime health benefits that they voted for 450 non-Union County employees and their families without any idea of what that would cost the taxpayers - that robbed the patients at Runnells of their funding?

Another case of the freeholders and their families getting theirs and the taxpayers be damned. Nice, Ms. Kowalski. I'm not buying what you're selling. Sad thing is - you believe what you're saying.

Jim Buettner
Cranford

Comm. Chairman Seeks to Set Record Straight on Burial Grounds Letter

Hoping to set the record straight concerning David Kane's letter to the editor about the Burial Grounds of The Presbyterian Church in Westfield, we were offended by what we consider Mr. Kane's unfair portrayal of:

- 1.) the significance of the cemetery;
- 2.) our fund-raising methodology;
- 3.) our fund-raising adequacy;
- 4.) the capability of our conservators - Materials Conservation Collaborative, LLC;
- 5.) the errors in Herbert Halsey's book, "A Guide to the Colonial Cemetery in Westfield;" and
- 6.) criticism of our record keeping for buried tombstones.

And we would like to inform Westfielders accurately about these six items Mr. Kane raised:

- 1.) The cemetery is 3.5 - not just one acre - with 1,450 tombstones - a significant iconic cemetery on the National Historic Register.
- 2.) The Cemetery Revitalization Committee, which assumed responsibility for the "Burial Grounds" in 2007, recognized the need for major revitalization of the cemetery. It established a fund-raising campaign to raise \$300,000 from the church, foundations, trusts, Westfield charitable organizations and "Friends of the Cemetery." It also put the cemetery on a sound perpetual care fiscal basis for longer-term future.
- 3.) Over the five-year period (2008-2012) the committee brought the cemetery up to a very respectable condition by preservation/conservation of old tombstones (\$130,000), a substantial improvement in the cremains area (\$50,000), a new safety/decorative fence around the cemetery (\$38,000) and a new entrance/pathway. We have preserved 177 gravestones to date.
- 4.) We utilize Materials Conservation Collaborative, LLC (MCC) for the preservation work. They are a high-quality, recognized architectural conservation firm who has done work throughout Philadelphia, as well as at the historic Elizabeth First Presbyterian graveyard. They use the latest techniques to save "old" stones but recognize that there are some stones which cannot be restored. These are photographed, recorded and buried on site. These records are maintained and are available in the church office.
- 5.) The Herbert A. Halsey Guide, a 136-page document which required several years compilation, is a 99.99-percent accurate manual codifying all the gravestones - a remarkable manual published in 1980. Halsey is revered for his lifetime work to preserve the historic cemetery.
- 6.) The Burial Grounds are owned by The Presbyterian Church in Westfield. Access to the Burial Grounds is gate-controlled via the church office. The records of the gravestones are maintained in the church office for administrative, safety and privacy purposes.

Lee M. Hale, Westfield
Co-chairman, Cemetery Committee

ABCD EFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
 Diction Deception

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. Rident - Laughing, smiling, or grinning
2. Anacalis - Bending backwards
3. Pantoffle - A slipper
4. Chamade - In military usage, a signal for retreat or ceasefire

OGDOASTICH

1. A poem of eight lines
2. An order of mollusks having irregular hinged teeth
3. A homeless person; a beggar
4. A small piece of land surrounded by a hedge or wall

BRAIZE

1. Mischievous; devilish
2. Charcoal powder or coal dust
3. To scrape or chafe
4. Very strong or potent; virile

MESORHINE

1. Having a nose of medium width
2. A slaughterhouse for cattle
3. In Germany, an area known as the Black Forest
4. A large rodent of South America; the capybara

AZYMIC

1. Apathetic; disinterested
2. Having no common traits; unrelated
3. Unbalanced; unstable
4. Pertaining to unbleached bread

See more letters on pages 2, 3, 5, 19, 20

Letters to the Editor

Thanks to Community For Support of FDR

On behalf of the Foundation for Diabetes Research (FDR), we would like to again thank John Dugan of the Westfield PAL and the parents and children participating in the Westfield Flag football program for supporting our annual bake sale fundraiser.

This is the fifth year for our fundraiser, which was held on Saturday, September 29. Each year the support is overwhelming. The FDR is essentially a volunteer organization run by parents of children with Type 1 Diabetes. The money raised all goes directly to various research efforts focused on improving the lifestyle of people with diabetes and finding a cure.

Every year there are more advances with is let cell transplants, stem cell research, closed loop pumps and other significant advances made possible by your contributions. We were also supported by generous donations from Manhattan Bagel, Starbucks, Rockin Joe's Café, Philly Pretzel Factory and Dunkin' Donuts.

Thank you again for your continued support.

Tom Decker
Westfield

Candidate Forums Are Set in Scotch Plains and In Fanwood

As a service to the communities, *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* has been sponsoring candidates' forums for over 12 years. We are happy to announce this week that both political parties in Scotch Plains and Fanwood have agreed to participate again.

The Scotch Plains Candidates' Forum will be held on Thursday, October 25, at 7:30 p.m. in the council chambers at the municipal building on Park Avenue in Scotch Plains. The Fanwood Forum will be held on either Wednesday, October 24, or Thursday, October 25. Details of the Fanwood forum are expected to be announced shortly.

SPF-Times reporter Fred Rossi will moderate the Scotch Plains' program. Scotch Plains TV will televise the event live. Candidates, as well as members of the community, are invited and encouraged to e-mail questions they would like asked during the program to editor@goleader.com. The candidates will be e-mailed the list of general topics to be covered on the weekend of October 20 and 21. These topics will also be posted on the Internet then at www.goleader.com.

A coin toss prior to the start of the forum will determine the order of questions. The candidate who directly answers the first question will give the first closing statement; the candidate who provides a rebuttal to the first question will give the last closing statement. The Scotch Plains program will begin at 7:30 p.m. with the two candidates for township council, Democrat Colleen Gialanella and Republican Edward Saridaki. They will answer questions for approximately 20 to 30 minutes. Questions will alternate between the two candidates, with the candidate directly answering a question having up to two minutes to respond. The candidate rebutting will have up to one minute to reply. At the end of the Q&A, each candidate will have up to three minutes to deliver a closing statement.

Both candidates will have equal time to speak. Time will be kept and candidates will be forewarned

when their time is running out and then again when their time has expired.

The program will then resume with the two candidates for mayor, Democrat Kevin Glover and Republican Mary DePaola. They will answer questions for 30 to 45 minutes. Questions will alternate between the two candidates, with the candidate directly answering a question having up to two minutes to respond. The candidate rebutting will have up to one minute to reply. At the end of the Q&A, each candidate will have up to three minutes to deliver a closing statement.

Both candidates will have equal time to speak. Time will be kept and candidates will be forewarned when their time is running out and then again when their time has expired.

It would be ironic if the Fanwood and Scotch Plains Candidates Forum happen to fall on the same day, Thursday, October 25 - since consolidation of the two towns and shared services are being actively debated by both municipalities. We muse that the events could be combined, requiring just one moderator, one TV station, one municipal building.

Kidding aside, the Fanwood Borough Council candidates are Republican incumbents Robert Manduca and Mike Szuch and Democrat challengers Dan Levine and Jack Molenaar.

We encourage the public to attend in person or watch the live broadcast in Scotch Plains on Comcast cable channel 34 and Verizon FiOS channel 22 or in Fanwood on Verizon Fios Channel 24 or Comcast Channel 35. Thank you town TV personnel.

We thank candidates in both towns for their participation in what we expect will be informative discussions on important issues impacting residents of Scotch Plains and Fanwood.

Be heard. Send your questions for the candidates now, email editor@goleader.com. Stay informed, monitor the election updates at www.goleader.com. Vote in the General Election on November 6, 2012.

Thank You Westfield, Walk to School Day Was A Tremendous Success

The B.R.A.K.E.S. Group (Bikers, Runners, And Kids are Entitled to Safety) would like to salute all of the children of Westfield who walked to school on Wednesday and Thursday, October 3 and 4, in celebration of Westfield's annual Walk to School Day. We had a tremendous turnout of over 2,000 students plus family members who, despite the weather, left their cars at home and walked to school instead.

The children were encouraged to wear something red, in order to be very visible. Everyone got lots of fresh air and exercise, while freeing the streets around the elementary schools from the usual morning congestion and pollution. The aim of the day is to make walking to school a regular habit for many of these families. To make it easier for parents who cannot walk their children to school on a regular basis, the BRAKES Group, in conjunction with the Westfield Town Council and administration, continues to support a program called the Walking School Bus at the Westfield elementary schools. The program has been running for approximately five years and was funded by a grant from the New Jersey Department of Transportation as part of its Safe Routes to Schools initiative. We urge parents to take advantage of this program. For questions, please ask your local school PTO representatives.

We would like to thank everyone who helped make Walk to School Day a tremendous success. We would also like to thank our local "celebrities" who walked with the children who were lucky enough to win our

raffles, including Acting Mayor Jo Ann Neylan, Deputy Fire Chief David Kelly, Sergeant Jason McErlean, Detective Lisa Perrotta, Town Councilman Mark LoGrippo. Tamques' Tammy the Tiger, and the six elementary school principals: Marc Biunno (McKinley), Dr. Eileen Cambria (Franklin), Michael Cullen (Tamaques), Jeanette Munoz (Jefferson), Dr. Andrew Perry (Washington), and guidance counselor, Frank Uveges, filling in for Joseph Malanga (Wilson). A special thank you to Michael Scott at Coldwell Banker for his continued support of this event.

Mary Camacho
BRAKES, Westfield

Letters to the Editor

Westfield BOE Need Not Resign Re: Defeat of Referendum

In response to Stephen Schoeman's letter in the October 4 issue of *The Leader* in which he suggested that the school board should resign based upon the results of the proposed school bond, I cannot help but wonder why such a drastic measure should be required.

There is much we can say about whether the board was out of touch with the sentiments of Westfield residents, and there is little that can be said that hasn't already been expressed in newspapers, blogs, coffee shops and grocery stores. But there is no denying that the democratic process was followed, the board did its homework about the projects and kept

Westfield residents informed, and in the end, Westfield residents made their feelings known at the ballot box. This is how the process is supposed to work.

To suggest resignation is to suggest a flaw in competence. I do not for a minute believe that we have a competence problem on our school board any more than I believe that Westfield voters were stupid to vote this bond down (as some in the minority have suggested).

I hope that the school board handles this rejection the same way any person or business should: by reassessing the objectives, collecting and analyzing additional information and

presenting new ideas that will enable the school system to continue well into the future at a high level - ideas that the vast majority of Westfield residents can accept.

I for one am anxious to learn what the school board proposes as an alternative, and I look forward to seeing their suggestions.

I believe the appropriate adage would be, "Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors." Let's see what the board is made of, and let's see who steps forward and takes a leadership role.

Mickey O'Brien
Westfield

Why Second Referendum Re: 'Roof-and-Field' Defeat?

Why is the BOE publicly floating a suggestion for another referendum in December to vote yes or no on a bond to pay for repair of school roofs? At every single one of the 25 polling places in our town, voters turned down the September roof and turf field bond referendum. First and second wards were 2:1 against, third ward 3:1 against and fourth ward a loud and clear 4:1 against. Is the BOE prepared to risk another \$30,000 of

polling costs to twice learn that voters wish to live within budget and prioritize spending?

Some say the no vote was reaction to a neighborhood transforming lighted turf field or opposition to the unwise combination into a single referendum the necessary roof maintenance with less urgent needs. I disagree. Voters are feeling the economic pinch and are concerned about the direction the BOE is taking us. The

BOE must re-prioritize substantial budget monies to annually and adequately fund timely maintenance of predictable infrastructure needs. Couple this with a fully vetted, long-term plan to modernize our valuable public school buildings and fields. Then ask Westfield taxpayers to fund it. You'll have my vote.

Rob Nehring
Westfield

Why Add More Taxes In Scotch Plains?

Editor's Note: The following was written as an open letter to Scotch Plains Democratic candidate for mayor, Kevin Glover.

I am a senior just like almost 4,000 of our town residents. For over 200 years, town residents have carried the sewer bills of tax-exempt organizations. Let me assure you, our usage is significantly lower than the average household since a lot of us are a family of one.

When our town instituted a sewer tax so that tax exempts would pay their share of the usage, we finally got some relief from this annual tax burden we all carried - that is except those who were never subjected to real estate taxes. By the way, several New Jersey communities have also instituted a sewer tax. It is only fair.

We have seen our investments decimated by poor economic policies out of Washington and our sons, daughters and grandchildren loose their jobs or cannot find one. Our home values we may never live to see return to a robust state. So as we ponder, which to do pay? - our taxes or cut back on our meals or medications - you want to add more taxes to our over burdened lives?

You should be ashamed of yourself. You would like to lead our town, but where to, a state of degradation, where we will no longer see it as a place to be proud to live, but where we will be forced to go elsewhere away from our families and friends? Aren't you adding enough to our burden by using our tax dollars to pay for your healthcare? I am disgusted and so should every resident of our town.

I would ask every voter in Scotch Plains to think carefully before they select a mayor to lead them through to prosperity and a better future.

Liz Mangan
Scotch Plains

Consolidation, Not Much Savings for FW

As a 30-year Fanwood resident, I strongly agree with the belief reported in *The Times* on October 4 that consolidation "would result in a loss of distinctive Fanwood spirit." To give just one example, *The Star-Ledger* on September 29 described Fanwood as "a picturesque version of small-town suburbia" where for many years, police were dispatched not to addresses but to "so-and-so's home" and where "after a snowfall, the plow driver used to leave one hilly road covered in white so the kids could sled." Fanwood's small size is a virtue, and leads to much more community spirit and citizen participation than would be found in a larger, more bureaucratic municipality.

The savings from consolidation would be meager. Princeton Borough's average tax bill of \$15,255 was expected to be reduced by \$201 as a result of merger with Princeton Township. Fanwood's average tax bill is much lower and the savings would be lower as well, especially when you consider that the already-consolidated school system and the county account for most of our property tax bill. On my tax bill, school taxes alone are more than triple the municipal tax.

David Harris
Fanwood

