

**The Westfield Leader** THE SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD  
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## Is The League of Municipalities Convention Worth The Expense?

Last week mayors, town council members, department heads and state lawmakers along with vendors, engineering firms, lawyers, etc., gathered in Atlantic City for the annual New Jersey League of Municipalities Convention. The League's convention comes just weeks after the New Jersey Education Association held its convention.

Vendors, such as Maser Consulting, a large engineering firm based out of Red Bank, held large parties where they wined and dined officials as a thank you for the millions of dollars in government contracts they have received. With that in mind, should these parties really be part of the convention? Isn't this just another form of pay-to-play to garner even more lucrative contracts that come out of taxpayers pockets? Locally, we have received pictures from our mayors and council members from the political parties who attended the convention. We would like to hear from them if the convention is worth the trip. Did they learn anything from seminars and classes? Did they see any products or equipment that could be useful for their towns? And, most importantly, who paid for them to attend and did they stay overnight? Did anyone ring up a large bar or dinner tab?

Elected officials use the convention to network with other municipal representatives. Likely candidates for Governor, Senate President Stephen Sweeney and Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop, both Democrats, and Assembly Minority Leader Jon Bramnick of Westfield, a Republican, hosted parties as they look to build support for the

next gubernatorial election in 2017. Elizabeth Mayor Chris Bollwage and Newark Mayor Ras Baraka also hosted parties.

Again, we hope the convention produces valuable information other than being just a large, expensive networking/pay-to-play party for politicians and vendors.

The League is surveying the attendees. The results from below would be interesting.

1. The Conference was a valuable experience?
2. The Educational Sessions were worthwhile?
3. The CEU tracking system was easy to use?
4. The Convention Center was adequate and helpful?
5. The Consulting Period was a valuable tool?
6. The Atlantic City Convention Center is safe?
7. The League staff was informative, professional?
8. The registration process was clear and concise?
9. The shuttle bus service was well coordinated?
10. The food and beverage amenities were adequate?
11. The exhibitors provide valuable resources?
12. The Vendor Solution sessions were beneficial?
13. Did you check the League's social media updates?
14. Effectiveness of the social media updates?
15. Would you utilize a Conference App?
16. Type of operating system is currently used?
17. Do you plan on attending the 2015 Conference?
18. Future topics for educational sessions?
19. How did you register for conference?
20. Did you find the process straightforward and simple?
21. What did you like most about conference?
22. What did you like least about conference?

## Have Fun, Meet People, Shop and Dine Locally

With the Christmas and Hanukkah holiday shopping season now here, shoppers have a lot of choices to make. What to get family members and friends? How much to spend? And, most importantly, where to shop? The malls? Online? The most logical answer on where to do your holiday shopping is "stay local." One of the reasons we choose to live in this area, after the school systems and quality housing stock, is the vibrant downtown shopping districts.

Westfield and Cranford, the larger of the business districts, offer many quaint stores and boutiques. Garwood, Fanwood, Mountainside and Scotch Plains, although smaller, also have merchants who might have the perfect gift for your holiday shopping list. It is important that residents support our downtowns to keep them successful. And while doing your holiday shopping, take advantage of the many quality restaurants we have in the local area.

As we get closer to Christmas, towns such as Westfield will bag the parking meters for free shopper parking as an incentive to shop locally. In addition to downtown shopping, there are many holiday

boutiques and sales sponsored by community organizations occurring over the next few weeks that also are looking for the community's support.

Also, if you are looking for the perfect Christmas tree, the Westfield Area Y's Men's Club has their annual sale. According to their website, the club has generated over \$2 million in sales revenue since the tree sale began 61 years ago. The money has been used for community grants. Each year three tractor trailer loads of trees are delivered to the Board of Education field at Walnut and Elm Streets.

The Fanwood Lions Club and Fanwood Fire Department are teaming up again this year for their Christmas tree sale at LaGrande Park, a tradition dating back 65 years. All profits are donated to local schools for scholarships and to other local charities. Local groups also will be selling luminaries as we get closer to Christmas.

We also encourage area residents to attend the Christmas tree lightings and holiday celebrations, information about which is provided on the front page of today's paper.

## Letters to the Editor

### Westfield Area Y Men's Club Christmas Tree Sale

For over 60 years The Westfield Area Y Men's Club has held its annual Christmas Tree Sale with all proceeds donated to local charities and non-profit organizations. The event is run by club members from Westfield, Scotch Plains, Mountainside and Cranford, along with many volunteers from area organizations and local youth.

Some of the many donations the club has made over the years include Westfield Area Y programs such as The Strong Kids Campaign, Minority Achievers, Healthy Kids Day and The Leaders Club. Local organizations include the Resolve Community Counseling Center; NJ Youth Theater; The Children's Learning Center in Scotch Plains; Furniture Assist; Westfield Rescue Squad; SPF Lacrosse; Cancer Center at Overlook Medical Center; United Fund of Westfield and Children's Specialized Hospital. The club is a NJ non-profit and recognized 501(c)3 charitable organization.

This year's tree selection includes top quality Fraser Firs, Balsams and Douglas Firs. Sizes range from three-

foot "table top" Balsams all the way up to 10-foot Fraser's. Also available are wreaths, Evergreen roping, grave covers and tree stands.

The tree lot is located on the Elm Street athletic field, across from Stop & Shop. The sale starts on Saturday, November 29 and continues through December 23. Lot hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays; 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The club is always seeking new members that share our values of respect, responsibility, volunteerism and youth development. It's a great way to give back to the community and get in the holiday spirit! Stop by the lot and talk to any member for more information or visit the Y website [www.westfieldny.org](http://www.westfieldny.org) and look for the Y's Men contact information.

We want to extend our sincere thanks to the many loyal customers for their support year after year and look forward to seeing you back again this year.

Bill West, President  
Westfield Area Y Men's Club

## Caregiving For Older Adults; Thank You for The CARE Act

When older adults need support from loved ones to get through their recovery period at home after checking out of a hospital, who assumes the burden of "caregiving?" The answer is usually women, who are already juggling with the demands of being competent at work, be responsible as wives, mothers and daughters.

On behalf of these women, spending on average 20 hours per week in this unpaid role of family caregiving, I would like to send my heartfelt appreciation to New Jersey's legislative leaders and Governor Christie for signing the Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable Act, also known as the CARE Act.

This new law will support our caregiving women in receiving re-

sources, training, and information from the hospitals to manage transitions between care facilities and handle post-discharge care, such as medication management, administering injections, operating specialized medical equipment, and performing wound care.

I also commend all the primary Assembly and Senate sponsors of the CARE Act for acknowledging family caregiving as an important public health concern, especially for New Jersey's female caregivers, who have been long putting up with the physical, emotional and financial stress of caregiving.

Tasneem Faridi  
Franklin Park, NJ  
Jeff Abramo  
AARP New Jersey

## All The Objections Raised at Garwood Planning Board Need Reporting

Because I consider *The [Westfield] Leader* the "paper of record" for our area, I have to question if the reporter present at the November 12th session of Garwood's Planning Board was at the same meeting as me. I realize this was a marathon session, but I don't see why that should allow for a *Leader* reporter to cherry pick and then choose to print only one of my objections regarding the matter before the Board which then appeared in a front-page article stated as fact.

To be clear, my one printed objection referenced a hardship created "on the neighborhood" by adding more vehicles to an already crowded block, as well as the specific hardship on my family (and likely hit to my property value) because of all these vehicles will be using a shared driveway due to a 2012 board decision.

I would love to know where said vehicles are going to go during a snow emergency.

My other objections not printed were:

- 1) The lot in question is the smallest residential property on all of Center Street;
- 2) There is no evidence on the

record of there ever being a legal two-family occupation;

3) Garwood's own ordinances require sufficient off-street parking for four vehicles with a two-family residence (which will require more variances, if even possible to accomplish on this undersized lot), and;

4) The house that burned down was unoccupied for a period of time (around a year) which does not equal consistent and continuous use as a two-family residence.

Since the political and personal associations of my mother were deemed relevant enough for front-page publication, I believe my actual objections should be worthy of some ink.

Finally, I would like to state that I understand and respect the decision of the Board, which I believe was erring on the side of protecting the rights of property owners, but I in no way agree with it and will continue to pursue the many issues I raised which the Board failed to address in its decision.

Vincent Kearney  
Garwood

## Kean University Spending \$219K For a Table Shows Need for Change

The fact that Kean University spent \$219,000 on a conference table shows how broken New Jersey's higher education system has become.

Kean charges about \$11,000 for tuition and fees for in-state students, so consider that \$219,000 would equate to full scholarships for about 20 New Jersey students. A fancy conference table should never be a higher priority for a university than educating students, but priorities are out-of-whack here. The university can't even come up with a sensible explanation for its abusive spending.

Whether or not this is legal, it's

certainly not ethical and it's a waste of taxpayer money.

The time to reform higher education in New Jersey is long past. I don't need a study to know a university shouldn't be spending up to \$219,000 for a conference table. I already know it's wrong. So do the students and families struggling to afford a higher education.

I have asked the attorney general to review the bid process waivers used by Kean University.

Assemblyman Joseph Cryan  
Union

## Too Bad The Letter Was Not Mentioned In Garwood Council Article

Something of vital importance was left out of the article regarding the rules and regulations for our new complex. Several residents did make

comments, but the most important one came from a committee member, Richard King, who had received a letter about the complex, which BTW was not signed.

That letter contained incorrect information about the complex and urged nearby residents to attend the special meeting. Upon checking into the letter, it seemed that other residents did receive it as well.

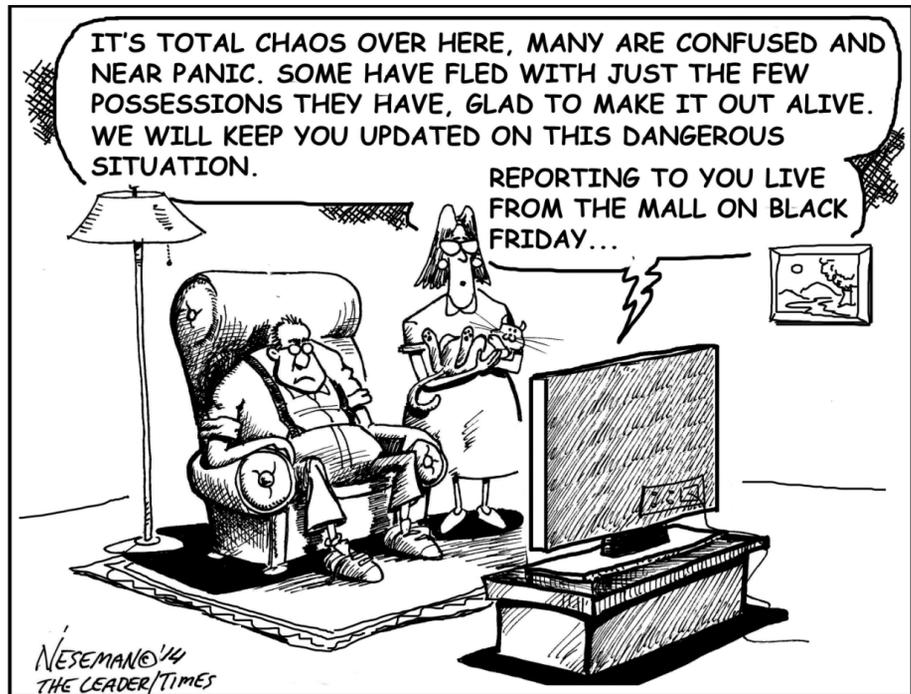
Too bad the letter was not mentioned in the article as well as the residents' comments about the project, mostly positive.

Pat Quattrochi  
Mayor of Garwood

## Postal News

The Postal Service called. "As of Jan 5, 2015 first class mail could take between 2 and 5 days to reach out-of-state destinations."

Michael Love  
Garwood



<p><b>State LD-21</b>                  Sen. Thomas Kean, Jr. (R)                  425 North Ave. E.                  Westfield, N.J. 07090                  (908) 232-3673                  Asm. Jon Bramnick (R)                  251 North Ave. West                  Westfield, N.J. 07090                  (908) 232-2073                  Asm. Nancy Munoz (R)                  57 Union Place, Suite 310                  Summit, N.J. 07901                  (908) 918-0414</p>	<p><b>State LD-22</b>                  Sen. Nicholas Scutari (D)                  1514 E. Saint Georges Ave.                  Linden, N.J. 07036                  (908) 587-0404                  Asm. Linda Stender (D)                  1801 East Second St.                  Scotch Plains, N.J. 07076                  (908) 668-1900                  Asm. Jerry Green (D)                  17 Watchung Ave.                  Plainfield, N.J. 07060                  (908) 561-5757</p>	<p><b>7th Congressional District</b>                  Representative Leonard Lance (R)                  425 North Avenue E., Westfield, NJ 07090                  (908) 518-7733                  [Westfield, Mountainside, Garwood, Summit and Cranford are in the 7th Congressional District]  <b>12th Congressional District</b>                  Rep. Rush Holt (D)                  50 Washington Rd., West Windsor, N.J. 08550                  (609) 750-9365                  [Fanwood, Plainfield and most of Scotch Plains are in the 12th Congressional District]</p>
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ABCDIJKLMNOPQRSTUWXYZ  
  
 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. Thanatopsis - A view of or meditation on death
2. Ridgel - The half castrated male of any beast
3. Peenge - To complain in Scottish
4. Intratelluric - Located or occurring deep inside the earth

### TETRIC

1. Balanced; stable
2. Out of use
3. Distressing; perplexing
4. Perverse; harsh

### HAEJ

1. The Egyptian cobra
2. A Moslem who has completed his holy trip to Mecca
3. A nocturnal Australian marsupial. Kangaroo rat
4. A street vender; a seller of fruits and vegetables

### SCATOPHAGOUS

1. Tendency to eat clay or dirt
2. Flesh eating
3. Subsisting on dung
4. Having a wavy, floating light

### QUEAN

1. Strong beer or ale
2. A structure that projects over the side of a ship or boat
3. A boat hoist used for raising and lowering smaller boats
4. A bold, immoral woman; a slut

See more letters on page 5

## Letters to the Editor

### Snow in Buffalo

Editor's note: Checking in with *Leader/Times* cartoonist, Dale Neseman who lives in Hamburg, N.Y. (Buffalo) - "Dale, we here in Westfield hope you are OK."

I would say yes, all is well, except for the four feet of snow outside. Ha! Just a dusting!

Travel bans all around here, so can't go anywhere. The plows are trying to keep up but at the moment, it is a futile effort.

Supposed to be in high 50s with rain this weekend so maybe we'll wait and let it melt!

But we are fine, warm, drinking hot cocoa and then switching to wine later in the day.

This too shall pass. Thanks for checking in!

Dale Neseman  
Hamburg, NY

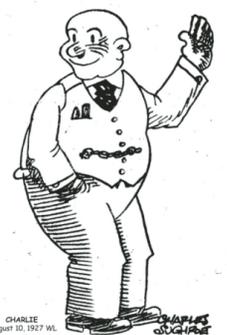
## Thanks For Supporting Our Pancake Breakfast

The Garwood Lions Club would like to thank all the people that made our recent pancake breakfast a success. First, we would like to thank everyone that attended our annual breakfast at The Westwood on November 16. Thank you to The Westwood for continuing to host this event at no charge to the Lions Club. Also, thank you to Advanced Printing for donating your printing services for our placemat. Thank you to the many local businesses for taking an ad out in our placemat. We are grateful for your support.

The money raised from the pancake breakfast enables the Lions Club to support the blind community. In fact, we recently partnered with Mountainside and hosted a Union County blind meeting at the Columbian Club in Garwood. Thank you to the Columbian Club for donating the space for this event. Also, the Garwood Lions Club supports our local community by hosting a picnic for senior citizens, awarding scholarships to graduating seniors and eighth graders, sponsoring a t-ball team, hosting our annual Halloween Parade, and more. Thank you all again.

Sara Todisco  
Garwood Lions Club

## 220K TABLE?



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