

Thank You To All Who Helped Me With My Eagle Scout Project

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly acknowledge and thank all of the individuals who helped to make my recently completed Eagle Scout Service Project a success. (If you haven't seen it, it is the outdoor sitting and reading area behind the library on Arlington Avenue.)

From the earliest planning stages, Mr. Israel, the director of the library, and Mr. Gildea, Westfield's town administrator, were encouraging and helpful, as were Mr. Stokes, the chair, and the entire library board. When I appeared before the town council, Mayor Skibitsky and the entire council were supportive, and throughout the entire process, no one had anything other than constructive comments. It was refreshing to see our political process at its best!

Next came the fundraising and purchasing. I knew in what high regard the community holds our library and its dedicated staff, but I must admit that I was not prepared for the outpouring of public support for a project benefiting the library. Williams Nursery donated virtu-

ally all of the landscaping materials, the shrubs, flowers, mulch, and topsoil. Other local businesses chimed in: Garwood Metal, Home Depot and B.J.'s, Ferraro's, Hershey's, Bagel Chateau, Shoprite, and Dunkin Donuts provided much needed nourishment and fluid for the workers. Speaking of workers, I had expected the Boy Scouts and parents of my Troop, Troop 72 at the Presbyterian Church, to help out: that's what Scouts do, but the turnout and their zeal for work turned what I had anticipated being five days of work into a little over three. Finally, and by no means the least, nearly 40 individuals contributed money to pay for the benches, the Belgium blocks, and other materials needed. The Friends of the Westfield Library were particularly helpful, providing funds for an entire bench. A special "thank you" to my parents, my grandparents and my brother and sister for all of their help and support.

Elijah Wagner
Westfield

Propriety Seems To Be A Disappearing Act Nowadays

Former President William J. Clinton stated to NBC News, "I gotta pay our bills... I spend a couple of hours a day just doing the research. People like to hear me speak." This from a man whose net worth is estimated by 24/7 Wall Street at \$55,000,000 and was paid \$104,000,000 for 542 speeches since leaving The Oval Office, including \$750,000 for a speech to telecom giant Ericsson in Hong Kong in 2011!

Mrs. Clinton told Diane Sawyer, "We came out of the White House not only dead broke, but in debt." How sad!

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the average private nonfarm payroll wage in April 2015 was \$24.87 seasonably adjusted and the median weekly income of 107,200,000 full-time wage and salary workers in the first quarter of 2015 was \$808 not seasonably adjusted!

Were Mr. Clinton's high speaking fees paid because people just loved hearing him or because his wife was the United States Secretary of State then?

Mrs. Clinton reported to federal election officials on May 15, 2015 that since January 2014 she received \$11,700,000 for 51 speeches, including \$335,000 for a speech to Qualcomm, Inc. in San Diego on October 14, 2014; \$325,000 for a speech to Cisco in Las Vegas on August 28, 2014 and \$325,000 to eBay, Inc. for a speech on March 11, 2015 in Las Vegas. The couple grossed \$25,300,000 for 104 speeches.

The *New York Times* reports that their speaking fees since 2001 total \$125,000,000!

Other former high government officials also have to pay their bills!
ABC News reported former Secre-

tary of the Treasury Tim Geithner commands \$200,000 per speech and former Chairperson of the Federal Reserve Ben Bernanke between \$200,000 and \$400,000!

Former President George W. Bush and former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, \$150,000. Former Secretary of the Treasury Larry Summers, \$135,000. Former Vice-President Al Gore and former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin, \$100,000. Former Vice-President Richard Cheney, \$75,000.

Former Presidential candidate Mitt Romney, \$68,000. Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, \$60,000. Former Secretaries of State Colin Powell and Madeline Albright, \$50,000.

The *New York Post* reported former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan was paid \$250,000 for a speech in Abu Dhabi in March 2006 and was paid \$250,000 by Lehman Brothers to meet 15 important clients!

Media Matters reported former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani received speaking fees of \$11,000,000 in 2006 and \$8,000,000 in 2002!

Nor do present high-ranking government officials do badly either!

Consider Senator Robert Menendez whom the federal indictment alleges was feted with a luxury resort in the Dominican Republic, international and domestic private jet flights, three nights at a five-star Paris hotel at \$4,934, greens fees at a West Palm Beach private golf club, and a meal at \$356.90 at West Palm Beach steak house after a round of golf.

Yes, propriety seems to be a disappearing act!

Stephen Schoeman
Westfield

Letters to the Editor

Flag Lots Have No Place In Township of Scotch Plains

What is a flag lot - and why should Scotch Plains residents be concerned about them?

A Flag Lot is basically a plot of land in the shape of a flag. The "pole" of the flag is a very long narrow driveway potentially bordering several adjacent properties. The "flag" is the parcel on which the houses are built.

Scotch Plains has a zoning ordinance prohibiting flag lots - but the Zoning Board of Adjustment and the Planning Board can grant a variance on the ordinance if they believe the community is not concerned about the negative impact a proposed flag lot will have on the neighborhood.

What are the problems with flag lots? Since the ingress to the flag lot property is a private driveway, as opposed to a "conforming" public road, it is not subject to town regulations addressing safety, environment, utility service, and neighborhood aesthetics. Of utmost concern is fire safety, which would be compromised by local modifications to Section 503 of the New Jersey State Fire Code; which precisely spells out the many requirements for a safe street. A conforming street must have a minimum width to accommodate fire trucks, as well as ancillary safety vehicles including ambulances, and police cars. Additionally, the street can have clearly designated fire lanes and "no parking signs" to ensure unfettered access at all times.

In contrast, a flag lot driveway is narrow and difficult to locate by passing emergency vehicles. And because the driveway is private - the homeowners can park their cars in any configuration.

Architect Should Be Ashamed of How He Conducted Himself

Last night, I attended my first [board of adjustment] meeting in Westfield. Me, along with several neighbors, attended to voice our objections to a neighbors' application for a variance to build an addition on their home. The application was denied, and we left the meeting chambers. Having never previously attended one of these meetings, I was pleasantly surprised by the civility and respect of those who spoke to the planning board members as well as the members of the board themselves.

Well, that all quickly changed once we were out of the meeting room and in the hallway leading out of the building. One of my neighbors, a senior citizen, was verbally attacked by the Westfield architect representing the neighbor whose variance was just denied! He just kept badgering her, telling her she had no right to say what she said. I guess when you don't "win" and your request is denied you feel that another person's right to speak at a public hearing should be denied! To make

A fire truck can be stopped dead in its tracks by just a single parked car, not to mention by the many other unsafe and unsightly obstructions that one often sees in driveways - such as motor homes, boats, dumpsters, storage containers, tractors, commercial trucks, lawn mowing equipment, firewood, etc. And of course, safety vehicles are not the only vehicles that must negotiate a long and narrow flag lot driveway. Garbage, recycling, delivery, moving, service, and postal vehicles will also create many disturbances.

Flag Lots have a negative impact on the environment due to the loss of trees, foliage and soil, altered drainage patterns, and violated buffer zones. The 2007 Scotch Plains Master Plan Reexamination Report is admirably dedicated to sustaining our beautiful "suburban forest," in addition to the "preservation of neighborhood quality." Flag lots are an insult to this objective.

The elected officials, appointees, volunteers and employees of Scotch Plains earnestly endeavor to maintain and enhance the special quality of life in our town. However, the Planning Board can only make its decision based on the evidence and testimony presented by concerned residents. The best way to be in the loop is to visit scotchplainsnj.gov and register for e-mail notices regarding upcoming Planning Board meetings. The *Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* at goleader.com is also a source of information. Scotch Plains is a beautiful town - let's all work to keep it that way!

John Zarelli
Scotch Plains

matters worse, the architect continued to verbally assault not only our elderly neighbor, but followed us out into the parking lot and continued his assault on the rest of us, to the point that now one of the applicants was also yelling at us.

I am saddened to think that this is how a "professional" architect treated people because he "lost." To scream at and berate people because they don't agree with you is unconscionable. We wouldn't tolerate this behavior from the losing team on a soccer field in this town, so why are you behaving this way, as an adult?!

I and my neighbors, followed the rules and spoke in a civil manner during the meeting. We followed the law. "Mr. Architect" you should be ashamed of yourself and how you conducted yourself.

Marie Guarnuccio
Westfield

Health Board Discusses North Jersey Collaborative, Inspections

The Westfield Board of Health met on June 1, 2015.

The board met with members of the boards of health from Garwood, New Providence and Roselle Park to discuss mutual concerns. Chris Kirk, phd., of the Atlantic Health System, spoke about the development of the North Jersey Health Collaborative, www.njhealthmatters.org/, of which the Westfield Regional Health Department is a member. The Collaborative has developed data resources which will assist Westfield to better plan and focus our programs for health promotion and disease prevention.

Cats and dogs must be licensed and protected by vaccinations against rabies, which is present in Union County. You can obtain the license application through the Town Clerk's office, which can be reached at (908) 789-4030. If you care for your cat or dog, take care of this soon, since the health department will aggressively enforce these licensing requirements.

Increasing numbers of environmental complaints concern rats and other rodents. Although this is expected during the summer, we can lessen it. Please make sure that your trash is in a covered hard can or receptacle impervious to animals. Also, please do not feed stray animals, since the food will promote rodent activity in your neighborhood.

The new Greater Westfield Mental Health Coalition is a town-wide collaborative effort. It is developing resources to improve community mental health services and better meet the mental health needs for our residents. For more information, please contact Laura Scanlon, RN, the public health nursing supervisor, at (908) 789-4070, extension 4074, or lscanlon@westfieldnj.gov.

In May, 42 retail food establishments were inspected or reviewed for pre-operational approval, including those for Spring Fling and the Farmers' Market. All were satisfactory except one, which received its third conditional satisfactory and will be the subject of a board hearing on August 1. The department also inspected four public pools, three of which were satisfactory and one is pending water quality results.

Eight pre-school, three public school and one parochial school immunization audits were completed in May. All 467 public and 109 parochial school children were properly

vaccinated. The school nurses were congratulated for their excellent work. The preschools had compliance rates of 78 to 99 percent and all were counseled. Re-audit compliance rates were 100 percent for three of the preschools and the others will be re-audited in June.

The health department is sponsoring health screenings with Overlook Medical Center at the Overlook Downtown Center, 357 Springfield Avenue in Summit. Bone density screenings will be on Monday, June 22 and July 6, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and cholesterol, blood pressure and diabetes screenings are every Monday. There is a \$10 charge for bone density and cholesterol screening each and the other screenings are free. For more information and to register, please contact the Overlook Community Health Department at 1-800-247-9580.

Information about all of the health department's activities is available on its website, www.westfieldnj.gov/health. The complete minutes of the June 1 meeting will be posted after review and approval at our Monday, August 3 meeting, which starts at 5:30 p.m. in the municipal building. The public is invited to attend.

Lawrence D. Budnick, MD, MPH
President
Westfield Board of Health

Bramnick on Supreme Court Pension Ruling

WESTFIELD - Assembly Republican Leader Jon Bramnick issued the following statement after the state Supreme Court ruled the government is not required to make additional contributions to the public employee pension system:

"The Supreme Court decision was one of common sense. The Legislature and the governor can now begin to work on reforms to save the pension system. We must recognize the need to fix our system as stated in the findings of the bipartisan blue ribbon panel."



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