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 and for Westfield, Mountainside, Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Cranford and Garwood

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Letters to the Editor

Bottom Line, When You Go to Sleep This Criminal Element Goes to Work

This is a subject which has been affecting Westfield, surrounding towns, and even surrounding states. Just very recently I heard a report of the same type of criminal activity being investigated in southern Connecticut - so this is just not a local issue.

I would like to add to and agree with the comments made by Jeff Bash in last week's issue. Over the past number of months, we have seen repeated entries in the "Police Blotter" of motor vehicle burglaries, and now more recently more frequent motor vehicle thefts. Also keep in mind that the "Police Blotter" is only providing a snapshot of weekly police activities - meaning that the volume of vehicle burglaries and/or vehicle thefts may well be greater than what we as readers see.

Residents must realize that just like locking your home and perhaps setting the alarm, the same routine must also be second nature when parking your car for the evening. To do otherwise is inviting either a vehicle burglary or theft of the vehicle altogether.

Just in last week's issue there are four entries of either motor vehicle burglaries or motor vehicle thefts. This criminal activity is not isolated - it has been consistent over a lengthy period of time now - this should be a wake-up call - make it a habit to lock your vehicles!

Some may think that this activity is just kids messing around - I beg to

ABCDIJKLMNOPQRSTUDEFLECTIONUVWXYZ



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. Rog - To shake
2. Tilbury - A two-wheeled carriage for two persons
3. Tascio - A sort of clay for making melting pots
4. Yukkel - The green woodpecker

AMBLOSIOS

1. A condition causing swelling or bloating of the abdomen
2. Abortion or miscarriage
3. Sleepwalking
4. Alcohol poisoning

TRIBADISM

1. Acting like a heroic champion; in a knightly fashion
2. The state of being worldly; mundane
3. Obesity
4. Lesbianism

DEDUIT

1. A formal promise or pledge
2. Delight; sport
3. To cheat or defraud
4. Diminish in importance

TREPHA

1. A kind of weak cider
2. Muddy, turbid, thick
3. Fearful, threatening sound
4. Food that is not kosher

Vulnerable Residents Do Not Get Summer Off From Struggles

Summer is perhaps the most celebrated of the seasons, defined by sunny vacations, outdoor pastimes and typically a slower pace than the remainder of the year. Yet for those coping with economic hardship, or vulnerable due to age or isolation, illness or disability, the warm weather months offer little respite from the challenges they face year round.

It can be easy for us to forget, especially during this traditionally upbeat season, that even within our affluent suburbs there exists individuals and families who go hungry on a regular basis, are without permanent housing, or are otherwise at risk due to any number of variables. They also may be unaware of how or where to connect with local resources that are available to them.

We tend to hear more about collections of food, clothing and further necessities, as well as other charitable endeavors, during times like the holidays. Yet our disadvantaged neighbors have the same needs 365 days a year. Additional challenges can arise during the summer as well, such as for children who receive free or low-cost meals when school is in session, but lose this benefit when school is out.

Multiple programs exist within our own borders to help the less fortunate. One particularly well known

in the area is the food pantry housed at the Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church in Westfield. The pantry, which serves some 125 families referred by social service agencies in Union County, is staffed by congregants of local houses of worship and members of the Westfield Service League. A listing of needed items is posted at the back of the church, where donations can be dropped off. Additional pantry volunteers are needed as well. For information, visit htccc.org/ministries_food_pantry.php.

Adults and children in need also are helped through the Mandy Reichman Feeding Program and Family Promise, both of which operate at Temple Emanu-El in Westfield and welcome volunteers. Information on these programs can be found at tewnj.org/social-action/.

Additional organizations that serve disadvantaged populations are the Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless, Bridges, Cranford Family Care, the Junior League of Elizabeth-Plainfield, Furniture Assist, Mobile Meals and the Community FoodBank of New Jersey, among others.

We can all do our part, every season of the year, to help those among us who are struggling, through donations of funds or goods, time spent volunteering, or simply reaching out to let our neighbors know their community is there for them.

Increased Interest Shown This Year In BOE Seats Is A Good Sign

With last week's filing for school board seats, there will be competitive board of education elections in Westfield, Garwood and Scotch Plains this fall. Despite the relatively low interest communities show in local school boards, their role is extremely important. The school budget is the largest of all local budgets, and getting a quality and well-rounded education, of course, is extremely important for success in today's business world.

In addition to the annual budget, board members are involved in decisions on school curriculum, negotiating employee contracts, including those with the teachers' union, conducting a performance evaluation of the superintendent annually and deciding school board policies. In an era marked by school shootings, school security also is an important issue faced by school districts. The National School Boards Association found that 63 percent of board members spend between 11 and 50 hours a month on board duties.

We find it encouraging that six candidates have filed for three seats on the Westfield Board of Education and that five candidates have filed for three seats each in Garwood and Scotch Plains. Three candidates filed for the three open seats on the Cranford BOE, with another two candidates running for a one-year unexpired term. The deadline to fill that the board vacancy is Tuesday, September 4.

Outside of this newspaper's coverage area, there is a lot of interest in school board seats in the more urban areas of Union County. Nine candidates have

filed for three seats on the Elizabeth BOE, seven candidates filed for three seats in Linden, and nine candidates filed for three seats in Plainfield, with another three seeking a one-year unexpired term in the Queen City.

In recent years, we have noticed a drop off in candidates running for school boards. Running for town council usually attracts more interest, but requires one to be "endorsed" by the local political parties to run for local office. There was a change this year in school board filings, where two or more candidates can now be bracketed together on the ballot. We did not see evidence of this on the listing of school board candidates released by the Union County Clerk's office, but perhaps it will appear on the General Election ballots.

As always, this newspaper offers all candidates the opportunity to submit letters to the editor weekly throughout the campaign. Letters should be no more than 500 words in length; we will not publish personal attacks on opponents. Letters are due Monday mornings. This is the opportunity to introduce yourselves to our readers and discuss why you are running for your local school board. Also, the Union County Clerk's Office has all candidates listed by town and address as well as e-mail addresses per a new state law, which offers an opportunity for community members to write directly to the candidates. This information is available on the Union County Clerk's website at <http://www.unioncountyvotes.com>.

differs - I believe this is a very organized form of criminal activity which originates elsewhere. These groups are looking for specific items or vehicles during their late night activities. By that I mean items which will lead to identify theft such as laptops, phones, or personal paperwork where such personal information is available. These thefts are not just about teens trying to steal pocket change - identity theft as most of us realize can lead to a host of serious problems which are often not easy to resolve.

In terms of the vehicles themselves - if you own a newer attractive car, protect it like you would your own home. There is no more sickly feeling than to walk out to go to work in the morning and have an empty driveway - don't let that be you!

The bottom line here is that when you go to sleep at night this criminal element I am referring to goes to work.

Recently on Hort Street we saw multiple vehicle burglaries and at least two motor vehicle thefts. This frankly, is the result of thinking, "it can't happen here," but it does and will continue to do so unless we take the easy step to lock our vehicles each evening and protecting our valuables! Believe me, this is not the work of local delinquents, but of an organized out of town area theft ring.

Michael C. Ince
 Special Agent FBI (Retired)
 Garwood

Mitigating the Obvious Abuses Of N.J. Redistricting Process

Your editorial in the August 2nd edition concerning legislative redistricting is timely, and Assemblyman Bramnick's efforts to restore competition to New Jersey's redistricting process are to be commended. The process of district formation is often referenced as "gerrymandering" and consists of politicians forming electoral districts that enhance their own chances of re-election or their party's dominance in a Legislature - a clear conflict of interest.

My doctoral dissertation at Rutgers involved a national study of how the many states have handled the problem of gerrymandering. Unfortunately, only a few states (California, Arizona, Washington and Florida among them) have addressed this issue in a forthright manner. My belief is that New Jersey should take a long and hard look at Florida's solution.

Florida adopted, by citizen ballot initiative, constitutional amendments for both its state and federal redistricting exercises. The simple, clear language adopted by Florida's citizens is as follows: "(Districting) may not be drawn to favor or disfavor an

incumbent or political party. Districts shall not be drawn to deny racial or language minorities the equal opportunity to participate in the political process and elect representatives of their choice. Districts must be contiguous. Unless otherwise required, districts must be compact, as equal in population as feasible, and where feasible make use of existing city, county and geographical boundaries."

My belief is that the insertion of this language into New Jersey's constitution will give firm direction to each of the state's redistricting commissions and will greatly mitigate the obvious abuses of our current redistricting process. New Jersey's constitution does not permit citizen ballot initiative; the Legislature must present any such constitutional amendment to the voters for approval and I implore our legislators to permit voters to select their representatives and not the other way around. It's time to do the right thing.

John Lesher
 Westfield

Senior Citizens, An Ageist Label

Senior Citizens, who came up with that label? What is the connotation by people, government and business to use the term senior citizen? Why does it seem necessary to label people in their sixties and beyond as senior citizens, separating us from the rest of the population?

Personally, I find that term demeaning.

Since I hit my sixties, I began noticing how in everyday life the dismissive and condescending treatment I receive from the merchants and the public in general.

Then there is the medical profession, bullying us, sending us for this test that test, on and on and on. If you don't comply, the fear of eminent death may be near. These same doctors are filling our medicine cabinets to overflow with useless medications. The Hippocratic Oath states 'do no

harm' but the medical profession treats us like a human money farm. My friend has a calendar on the wall, it is crisscrossed with medical appointments, it looks like the New York Giants play book.

Even corporate America shows its greed, such as the hoveround scooter, saturating the airwaves with a necessity of their product, causing some of us to weaken and believe their hype. They then become virtual invalids.

The American people have to recognize that people of 60 years and plus are no lesser a person than you. We are strong, intuitive and an asset to the American way of life. So the next time a person with grey hair passes your way, show them the respect that you expect for yourself that day.

Walter Sosnosky
 Kenilworth

Letters to the Editor

Maintenance Is A Good Sign In Town

I am writing to compliment the town management, and specifically the public works staff, for the absence of flooding problems in Westfield following our recent heavy rains. Good maintenance and preventative work is extremely important, rather than deferring these expenses until they become emergencies (and end up costing more- and inconvenient- the public.).

I know that it is tempting for politicians to defer routine preventative maintenance in order to keep short-term operating costs lower - but it never pays in the long term. The absence of problems is a good sign, even though it may not be obvious.

Steve Rothman
 Westfield

Bramnick Demands Answers On NJ Transit Delays, Cancellations

TRENTON, N.J. - Assembly Republican Leader Jon Bramnick [Westfield] has called on the Murphy administration to respond to delays and cancellations of NJ Transit trains.

"These cancellations have created nightmares for commuters and residents," said Mr. Bramnick (R-21st, Westfield). "The Murphy administration must respond to these problems immediately."

Mr. Bramnick's district is serviced by the Raritan Valley line, which will be shut down in September.

Gov. Is In Italy



Sen. Kean on Passing Of Sen. Bill Schluter

WESTFIELD - Senate Republican Leader Tom Kean, Jr. released the following statement on the death of former Senator Bill Schluter, who passed away on August 6 at the age of 90.

Senator Kean said Sen. Bill Schluter was everything a public servant should be.

NEESMANO '18
 THE LEADER/TIMES

Congressman Lance Backs Sen. McCain Defense Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Leonard Lance (R-7th, Westfield) has supported the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (H.R. 5515) in an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 359 to 54.

Contained in the final package is

legislation Mr. Lance authored creating a commendation for military working dog handlers lost in service to the nation. The following New Jersey military working dog handlers have been killed in action:

Charles Paul Brown, Army, South Amboy; Alden John Bullwinkel, Army, Dunellen; Christopher Zeno Czarnota, Army, Perth Amboy; Robert William Elliot, USMC, Woodbury; Richard Edward Ford, Army, Surf City; Claude Joseph Gaspard, Army, Short Hills; James Allen Jonson, Army, Jersey City; Benjamin Mason, Jr., USMC, Piscataway, and David Alan Nudenberg, Army, Caldwell.

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Asm. Jon Bramnick (R)
 251 North Ave. West
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Asm. Nancy Munoz (R)
 57 Union Place, Suite 310
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LD-21 includes Westfield, Mountainside, Garwood, Summit and Cranford.

State LD-22
 Sen. Nicholas Scutari (D)
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Asm. Jim Kennedy (D)
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 Rahway, N.J. 07065
 (732) 943-2660

Asw. Linda Carter (D)
 17 Watchung Ave.
 Plainfield, N.J. 07060
 (908) 561-5757

LD-22 includes Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Plainfield, Clark, Rahway and Linden.

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 Representative Leonard Lance (R)
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 [Westfield, Mountainside, Garwood, Summit and Cranford are in the 7th Congressional District]

12th Congressional District
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 [Fanwood, Plainfield and most of Scotch Plains are in the 12th Congressional District]

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