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

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Paul Peyton ASSIGNMENT EDITOR	Horace R. Corbin PUBLISHER	Jeff Gruman SALES MANAGER
Suzette F. Stalker COMMUNITY	David B. Corbin ASSISTANT PUBLISHER & SPORTS	Michael L. Bartiromo MARKETING PRODUCTION
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Letters to the Editor

Hometown Hero Banners At Special Event In Scotch Plains

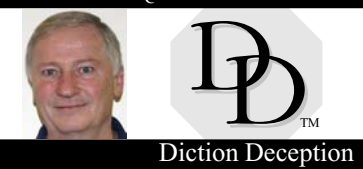
I want to applaud *The Leader* for its August 16th editorial support of the Scotch Plains/Fanwood Hometown Heroes Banner program, saluting living and deceased veterans from those two towns. As a Vietnam War area veteran myself, this local veteran recognition is well deserved.

GWACC is, in fact, raising money for the Hometown Hero Banners at a special event in Scotch Plains on September 7 at the municipal building. GWACC, in conjunction with the Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association, will be staging the Mayor's 0.5k Charity Fun Run with registration at 6 p.m. and the "race" to begin at 7 p.m. This is a family fun event and the course is only 547 yards long with a mandatory rest stop at the half way point to imbibe in some cookies before continuing on for the last 250 yards. All children will receive a three-ounce cup of ice cream and adults will receive an age appropriate beverage.

Anyone interested in participation and helping to raise funds toward the purchase of these Hometown Hero Banners, please visit our website, www.gwaccnj.com and go to "Upcoming Events."

Gene Jannotti
GWACC Executive Director
Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce

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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. Intima — The innermost layer of the wall of an artery
2. Sbirro — A member of the police force in Italy
3. Prink — To dress for show
4. Sonly — Lucky, pleasing

TYPHINIA

1. Coughing up or spitting
2. A disease of the gums characterized by bleeding or hemorrhaging
3. A relapsing fever
4. An infection causing pernicious clotting of blood

JUSTE AU CORPS

1. A soldier, especially an infantry man
2. A close fitting coat
3. A decree or sentence of the court
4. An ethical or moral code

THPHLOSIS

1. An uproar; clamor
2. Vomiting blood
3. Blindness
4. Whooping cough

DEDOLENT

1. Feeling no compunction or regret
2. Lacking muscle or muscular strength
3. Untidy or dirty
4. Apathetic; disinterested

Should Garwood Be Forced to Merge Either Borough or Schools?

Garwood is one of some 188 towns in New Jersey that could be eliminated under a bipartisan group empaneled by State Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3rd, Gloucester). The proposal calls for all towns with populations of 5,000 or less to be eliminated. Winfield is the only other Union County town that would be forced to merge if this mandate sees the light of day. Winfield's population is 1,471.

If Garwood was eliminated it would seem that the borough would be joined to either Cranford or Westfield. But both of those towns have paid fire departments in addition to paid police departments. And what about the tax rates? Is there any guarantee that merging with another town would lower taxes in Garwood? If the Garwood K-8 school district is to be absorbed into Clark Public Schools, where Garwood teenagers currently attend Arthur L. Johnson High School, or David Brearley High School in Kenilworth or even Cranford High School, would school taxes go down?

The Union County Regional High School District No. 1 was dissolved by voters in the mid 1990s over a dispute regarding equitable financing of the district. Forcing Garwood into a K-12 district does not guarantee any cost savings will occur. Garwood had

previously shared its school board business administrator with the Mountainside Board of Education. The Borough of Garwood shares a public works supervisor with Fanwood in an effort to save tax dollars. Garwood also has a shared-service agreement with Cranford for construction code services, with all building permits generated out of Cranford.

Some of the other towns in New Jersey that would face forced mergers are the Jersey Shore towns of Avon-By-The-Sea, Barnegat Light, Beach Haven, Bradley Beach, Cape May City, Cape May Point and Point Pleasant Borough; and Flemington in Hunterdon County. Interestingly, both Cape May Point and Flemington are county seats. And of course shore towns' populations explode during the summer vacation season. Will lawmakers take that into consideration?

State lawmakers need to instead focus on reining in pension and health benefits costs rather than forcing a one-size-fits-all approach on smaller communities. People moved to Garwood for a reason. There are plenty of large communities in New Jersey, but people choose to live in Garwood, the "Small Town With A Big Heart."

Are there any takers should Garwood merge?

Cranford and Garwood Leaders Must Confer On Development Issues

After reading the cover story in last week's paper "Cranford Forms Subcom. On Garwood Housing Project," I immediately picked up the phone and called fellow elected official Cranford Mayor Tom Hannen. He answered right away and filled me in on why the subcommittee is being formed and its purpose.

Just as some Cranford residents are curious as to how the future development in Garwood may impact Cranford, some Garwood residents are wondering the same, in reverse, with the proposed developments in Cranford.

I believe both towns will benefit from working together and sharing information. Mayor Hannen and I speak with one another frequently on an informal basis, but we both believe this would be a good practice for mayors to do on a regular basis. For example, planned quarterly meetings would help us ensure effective communication and collaboration on issues that affect both of our communities.

Redevelopment and flooding would undoubtedly be some of the top matters discussed. By sharing knowledge and resident feedback with one another, we could better inform our respective communities and form alliances to put up a united front on issues that impact our residents.

As I seek election this November to be the next mayor of Garwood, I pledge that if elected, I will make sure these formal meetings are scheduled and reported back to the public. I'm confident that ideas and opportunities for mutually-beneficial initiatives will arise out of those meetings allowing us to bring them back to our full governing bodies to consider. We must recognize that none of our towns exist in a bubble and we will get more accomplished through more communication and collaboration.

Councilwoman Sara Todisco
Garwood Mayoral Candidate (D)

Letters to the Editor

Keep Our Schools Secure Each Election Days, A Priority

As a parent of children in the Westfield School District (who attend a school with polls), I have long supported the need to move the polls out of our schools. The foremost reason is security. I can remember not too long ago when the doors were thrown open on election days and the public entered the building at will. Gradually, the PTO set up a table to monitor the stream of voters. Finally, after the schools became locked down due to the prevalence of school shootings, a single police officer was posted.

Keeping our schools secure each day, including election days, should be a priority for the students in our schools. Allowing streams of strangers into our schools makes zero sense. Further, utilizing the gym for polls displaces the students for gym class and lunch in our already overcrowded buildings. Certainly, there are enough public buildings to replace the few schools currently being used.

As far as the churches and synagogues in your closing statement are concerned, places of worship are often quiet on Tuesdays when voting occurs as services are on the weekend. Tents should not be necessary after all.

Tricia Brown
Westfield

Alert! Residents Must Show Keen Interest In Local Meeting Agendas

Over the next several weeks, local municipal panels have on their agendas items with the potential to dramatically and permanently shape the communities in their jurisdiction. This follows on the heels of the Garwood Planning Board's August 8 endorsement of the redevelopment plan for the Paperboard property on North Avenue, which was introduced at the borough council's August 14 meeting and is scheduled for a public hearing and vote when the governing body meets on August 28.

The Cranford Planning Board currently is hearing an application by Hartz Mountain Industries to have 750 Walnut Avenue — located near the Cranford-Clark border — rezoned from commercial to residential in order to accommodate 905 apartments contained within five buildings. The hearing is set to resume on Wednesday, September 5, with an additional special meeting on the matter planned for the following Wednesday, September 12. The concept has been met with strong public opposition based on concerns about the development's impact on traffic, school population and infrastructure.

In Scotch Plains, the Downtown Redevelopment Committee is expected to approve the Phase I redevelopment plan for the township's central business district next month, after which the plan will be directed to the township council for consideration at its Tuesday, September 11 meeting.

Meetings of local governing bodies, planning

and zoning boards do not generally draw a packed house. However, we urge residents to take an interest in the meetings of these and other municipal entities and their agendas as part of staying connected to their communities. Such public participation is particularly vital as towns deal with issues such as the large-scale and long-term development initiatives currently under review in Cranford and Scotch Plains, but it also is important for residents to stay informed and involved in municipal and school board matters throughout the year.

We encourage residents to regularly attend meetings of their local governing body, boards and commissions — not just during budget season or when high-profile projects are on the table — and to become familiar with those who serve on them and their positions on key issues affecting the entire community. Furthermore, we advocate that residents provide input at these meetings during public comment opportunities.

As we have noted in this space in the past, the towns in which we live belong to all of us, whether we be elected or appointed representatives, property owners or tenants, newcomers or having roots in the community for generations. Each of us therefore possesses a right and a responsibility to know what is happening within our borders, how it will affect us as citizens and taxpayers, how decisions are being made and to have a voice in the process.

Mainstream Press Are Incapable Of Change Like Dracula Avoids Garlic

When Donald Trump called the mainstream press the "Enemy of the People," the press went ballistic. Three hundred newspaper editorials condemned the remark, with the *Boston Globe* leading the way. Some of the editorials accused Trump of being "a Demagogue," a "Wannabe Dictator," a "Tyrant," a person who is "hostile to freedom of the press."

The question I have has nothing to do with the mainstream press' response, but whether or not accusation has some truth to it. Sadly, I believe it does.

When journalists, editors, news executives, news producers and publishers omit information because of bias or other, then yes, he or she is the enemy of the people.

When journalists, news executives, news editors, news producers and publishers go into collusion with a person seeking political office, and reports stories favorable to that candidate, and does not report any negative baggage or concerns, then yes, he or she is the enemy of the people.

When journalists, editors, news producers and news executives neglect to report on certain communities that are not positive, all to curry favor with a journalistic or political interest group, then, yes, he or she is the enemy of the people.

When journalists, editors, news executives and news producers and publishers doctor information like recordings, video, documents or other out of context for the purpose of controlling a narrative, then yes, he or she is the enemy of the people.

When news producers, news executives, editors and journalists report on controversial issues of the day like abortion, gun control, affirmative action, climate change or other, they seek out voices that portray arguments in their favor making sure he or she is articulate and intelligent, whereas "the other side" is portrayed as an extreme, fanatical, backward, and unappealing, ignoring reasonable voices so they can perpetuate a stereotype and confirm their prejudices. The press has been using this tactic for over 50 years.

When journalists, news executives, news producers, editors and publishers fail to do research on their stories, thereby being lazy and not doing any grunt work, and depend on someone else to do for them, like a fact checker, for example, in the pursuit to be first and not accurate, then yes, he or she is the enemy of the people.

And, finally, when journalists, editors, news producers, news executives and publishers think that America consists only of the northeast corridor, the west coast, Manhattan, Montclair, Trenton, Washington, D.C. and Malibu, and the rest of the country does not matter like the midwest or the south, not only is the press being racist and bigoted, but he or she is the enemy of the people.

For over 30 years, I have stated that the mainstream press needed a literal cleansing. That they had to get rid of journalists and others who have an ideological or other bias and replace them with people who would be fair, thoughtful, careful, prolific and hard working. The mainstream press will never change. To change requires taking inventory, looking within, listening to critics, and admitting errors. The men and women of the mainstream press are incapable of that. They avoid that like Dracula avoids seeing a cross or garlic. The only thing left to do is read, watch and listen defensively.

Alex Pugliese
Kenilworth

Murphy Signs Kean Bill Encouraging 30 College Credits Per Yr. for Students

TRENTON — Governor Phil Murphy has signed legislation sponsored by Senate Minority Leader Tom Kean (R-21st, Westfield) to help New Jersey college students graduate on time by directing college campuses to encourage students to enroll in 30 credits per year.

"We want our college students to have the motivation to shoot for the moon from the moment they first arrive on campus," Senator Kean (R-21) said. "Studies show that students who enroll in 15 credits, instead of taking the bare minimum, are more likely to graduate on time. This law will encourage them to take that leap. We are blessed with some of the best and brightest young people in the country and we will continue to do everything we can to support them as they pursue a college degree or career."

Mr. Kean's legislation, S-767, directs the Secretary of Higher Education to establish a communications campaign, including billboards, brochures, and electronic resources, to encourage students to enroll in 30 credits per year.

The bill also directs that those communications must reach students directly during course registration for the academic semester, and requires institutions of higher education to report to the secretary on strategies and incentives to accomplish this goal.

According to a study from Columbia University, college students who enroll in 15 credits in their first semester are more likely to graduate, and graduate on time, than students who only take the minimum of 12 credits that's necessary to be considered a full-time student for federal financial aid.

S-767 is part of a package of bills sponsored by Mr. Kean, and legislators on both sides of the aisle, to address the crisis of college affordability in New Jersey.

"Too many college students are graduating with six-figures of debt, wondering how they'll ever pay it off," Senator Kean, a longtime member of the Senate Higher Education Committee said. "As we work to bring the cost of college down, we also have to do a much better job at giving these kids, and their families, the tools and information they need to make smart choices about their future. S-767 will help us do that. I am glad to see it signed into law today."

Letters to the Editor

Leader Missed An Opportunity To Trash Trump

I was disappointed but not totally surprised that the editor of *The [Westfield] Leader* did not join the more than 300 newspapers around the country which published editorials denouncing Trump's assault on the free press.

Trump, or perhaps more accurately King Donald of Orange, recklessly hurls insults and uses bombastic language against any media outlet he perceives to be against him. The result has been violent outrage on the part of his supporters emboldened by Trump's vitriol, and numerous physical confrontations.

A free press is a cornerstone of our democracy and the institution deserves our respect and wholehearted support. I had hoped that Mr. Corbin and his team would have expressed such support for this bulwark of freedom that is being threatened.

Bill Gottdenker
Mountainside



State LD-21 Sen. Thomas Kean, Jr. (R) 425 North Ave. E. Westfield, N.J. 07090 (908) 232-3673 Asm. Jon Brannick (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	State LD-22 Sen. Nicholas Scutari (D) 1514 E. Saint Georges Ave. Linden, N.J. 07036 (908) 587-0404 Asm. Jim Kennedy (D) 34 E. Cherry St. Rahway, N.J. 07065 (732) 943-2660 Asw. Linda Carter (D) 17 Watchung Ave. Plainfield, N.J. 07060 (908) 561-5757	7th Congressional District 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]
LD-21 includes Westfield, Mountainside, Garwood, Summit and Cranford.	LD-22 includes Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Plainfield, Clark, Rahway and Linden.	12th Congressional District Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D) 850 Bear Tavern Road, Suite 201, Ewing, N.J. 08628 (609) 883-0026 [Fanwood, Plainfield and most of Scotch Plains are in the 12th Congressional District]

senkean@njleg.org, senscutari@njleg.org, asmbrannick@njleg.org, asmunoz@njleg.org, asmkenedy@njleg.org, asmgreen@njleg.org