

## Local Letters to the Editor

### From the Mayor's Desk, Sara Todisco Of Garwood

Last Wednesday, I was deeply honored to be sworn in as the 34th Mayor in the history of the Borough of Garwood. I was truly moved by the tremendous number of people who packed Borough Hall to be there and all those who watched it live on the "Garwood Live" Facebook page. New Jersey's First Lady Tammy Snyder Murphy was even on hand for the beginning of the meeting where Councilmen Michael Ince and Sean Benoit were sworn in as well. She spoke eloquently about how through hard work, optimism, and compromise, we will be able to move New Jersey forward.

I am hitting the ground running in this new role and want all residents of Garwood to know I am there for you, to do my very best to serve you as your Mayor. In my address that evening, I laid out a vision for the future of our town and a number of initiatives to get us started, from seasonal community spirit awards to launching official Garwood social media pages. If you would like to read my full Mayor's address, you may find it on the borough website at [www.garwood.org](http://www.garwood.org) under "From the Mayor's Desk."

Also, you can find the community spirit award nomination form on the website or obtain paper copies, available at Borough Hall. I look forward to seeing the nominations as I know there are so many people who devote their time and go above the call of duty to make Garwood the great place it is.

Through the open application process, I received dozens of applications to our town's various volunteer committees, com-

missions, and boards. I was proud to fill all openings and to appoint such a diverse group of people to represent and serve our community at-large. In particular, I am excited to see the work of the members of the newly established Citizens' Advisory Panel.

Some may view our governing body "politically speaking," to be 5 to 1, but to me it is 6 to 0, as I am confident we all can and will work collaboratively and effectively together to serve the people of Garwood. Together, we will all share in our future success as a community. I appreciate the range of experiences and viewpoints each councilperson brings and I hope I have tapped into that when structuring our 2019 Council committees. The complete list of committee assignments can be found on the borough website under "Garwood Government."

As always, I am available to you by email, phone, or in person to talk about the issues that are important to you and to answer any questions you may have. Additionally, I will have the first one of my new Breakfast with the Mayor events on Saturday, February 2 at 10 a.m. at Borough Hall, which will be replacing the traditional, but sparsely attended, Mayor's Saturdays. I hope to see you there!

Together, we, as One Garwood, can ensure the best is yet to come for our great borough. Happy New Year!

Sara Todisco  
Garwood Mayor

*Probitas Verus Honos*

## Rink In The Middle Of A Residential Neighborhood On A Busy Street

In a September 20 letter to the editor, I expressed the concerns of the residents in the Gumbert Park neighborhood about the Westfield Ice Rink. I said I would continue to share our concerns once the rink was open. So here we are.

The rink has now been open for two months, enough time to take a hard look at its effect on our neighborhood. The traffic, noise and impact on local businesses have all wreaked havoc on a lot of people. The traffic is a nightmare, in part because parents ignore the no dropoff/no standing/no parking signs. Certainly, initially there was confusion; now, however, the temporary signage has been reduced to only directly in front of the rink on both sides of the street. Crossing guards either look the other way or, when they try to stop the vehicles from stopping, they are yelled at and told by irate drivers they have no authority. Buses and cars continue to idle for extended periods of time in the parking lot and on the street, although we were assured that would not be allowed.

We have been advised by the rink owner that the noise is typical "hockey noise" and nothing can be done about it. Of course, we knew before the rink opened that was going to be a huge problem, but often the noise has been even worse than we feared. For example, the sound of pucks slamming the boards frequently sounds like gun shots and can be heard for blocks. So can whistles and music.

Of particular concern is the negative impact the rink's presence has had on the retail businesses along North Avenue. Why? Because skaters continue to use the (convenient) commercial parking lot adjacent to the rink, preventing customers from parking and patronizing the shops. More than one shop owner has said their

business is down 20 percent.

Let me reiterate that no one objects to the rink concept and the opportunities it provides for ice skating fans to have a good time. But please understand that the Gumbert location is just wrong!

Mayor Brindle stated in an article she wrote summarizing "...Promises Kept..." for the December 27 Leader that she had accomplished many goals that "champion quality of life issues that impact all residents." Clearly she could not list the rink in that category. The rink needs to be in a safer location that is not in the middle of a residential neighborhood on a busy street.

We are counting on Mayor Brindle and the town council to realize that when it comes time to decide on renewing the contract for next year and find a more suitable location.

Christine Spear  
Garwood

## Literary Café at Library this Saturday

CRANFORD -- The library will hold its Literary Café on Saturday, January 12, from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Literary Café is a book chat program. The format is simple: Bring a few of your recent favorite books and tell the other members of the group what you like about them. If you don't have a copy of the book you want to talk about, that's okay, too. The books can be new or old, fiction or non-fiction, classic or contemporary. There is no required reading, and you will have the opportunity to learn about books recommended by other group members. Refreshments will be served, courtesy of the Friends of the Cranford Public Library. Registration is not required. Admission is free and all are welcome. Sessions take place in the Raddin Room at the Cranford Public Library, located at 224 Walnut Avenue.



**FIRST TERM...**Garwood Mayor Sara Todisco, center, poses with Westfield Mayor Shelley Brindle, left, and Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr during the Garwood reorganization meeting January 2, when Ms. Todisco was sworn in to serve her first term as mayor.

Paul Lachenauer for *The Westfield Leader*