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

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## Letters to the Editor

### Building of 3,000 New Units Is Ridiculous In Scotch Plains

Now that Scotch Plains has completed its Fairness Hearing and settled on its state-mandated affordable housing obligation with Fair Share Housing and the Union County (state) Superior Court, it is time to call upon our state legislative leaders to pass legislation that will make the affordable housing settlement process fairer for municipalities in future affordable housing rounds and protect the character of Scotch Plains.

First, let me be clear that I do not agree with the final settlement and the number of housing units the courts have imposed on Scotch Plains. While there is a need to provide affordable housing for low-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities, the amount of new housing units the courts want us to build is completely unrealistic and unfair to the taxpayers of Scotch Plains. The Township Council tried as best it could to reduce our affordable housing obligation, but we reluctantly had to settle with the courts with what we felt was the best possible outcome.

Fortunately, some state legislators have introduced legislation to reform the affordable housing settlement process. One example is, Assembly Bill A-1648, which will require the calculation of affordable housing requirements to take into account the population of a municipality, water supply, sewage capacity, school class sizes and services, public safety, public transportation and traffic when calculating the affordable housing obligation.

The bill requires a reduction in affordable housing obligations if maintaining approximately the same school class sizes would be a significant cost or if adequate school, public safety, and public transportation resources are not available or would be a significant cost to provide. A reduction would also have to be made if present traffic conditions would be substantially disrupted. The bill also provides for a population-based cap for these obligations so that affordable housing numbers cannot increase a town's population by more than 5 percent. These requirements would require affordable housing calculations to be a more holistic examination of the actual state of affairs in a municipality and the potential impacts of new development.

To comply with our settlement, Scotch Plains will have to implement zoning changes to allow for the "realistic opportunity" for the affordable housing units to be built. Not all the units will be built - that's up to the free market and the willingness of private property owners to sell or develop their land. Still the fact that the courts can force Scotch Plains to potentially allow for the building of around 3,000 new units is ridiculous.

The courts can come in and force us to change our zoning and the residential character of our town in order to allow for these units to be built, but the courts don't care about the potential impact on traffic, infrastructure, and the school system. That's unfair to our taxpayers who hardly get any

tax relief from Trenton at all. Passing legislation like this will protect Scotch Plains from further overdevelopment in future affordable housing rounds (Scotch Plains will have to go through this again in 2025). I call upon our State Legislature leaders to pass bi-partisan reforms to protect local taxpayers and the character of municipalities and I ask you to join me in this effort.

Al Smith  
 Scotch Plains Mayor

### We Appreciate Your Generosity And Help For the Westfield Foundation

On behalf of the Westfield Foundation, I would like to thank the community members who donated to our annual campaign. The Foundation Board and the dozens of organizations we help throughout the year appreciate your generosity. This year, the annual campaign raised almost \$44,000, placed into our unrestricted fund, and over \$75,700 for individual family funds. These family funds are a wonderful way to create a charitable legacy in Westfield, and we encourage anyone who is doing estate planning to consider including The Westfield Foundation in their plans.

I'm so proud to be a member of the Foundation's board, which consists of 15 active community members who volunteer their time and support the mission of the Foundation, which is to improve life in and around

Westfield. During my almost five years on the board, the Foundation has given over \$1.7 million in grants, benefiting many arts organizations, health related programs, social service agencies/programs, and education. It is my privilege to be part of an organization that does so much for the community where my family has lived for almost 20 years.

More information about the Westfield Foundation can be found at: www.thewestfieldfoundation.com. If you have not already done so, I hope you will consider making a donation or creating a lasting legacy of philanthropy with the Westfield Foundation.

Thank you again for your support and generosity.

Janet Sarkos  
 Board President  
 Westfield Foundation

### DEM Primary Thrust Upon Garwood

I read with disbelief and concern a letter from Robert Schilare in last week's edition about the primary that has been thrust upon the Regular Garwood Democratic Party (RGDP) by new ideologues. What concerns me is the apparent writer naiveté, and the inexperience of some off-line Democratic campaign supporters.

The letter - as well as the Editor's selected headline - purports to show cronyism on the part of RGDP because Mayor Lombardo works for Union County, and Vince Kearney works for Union County Sheriff, and that mayoral candidate Todisco is 'above' some imagined ethical impropriety. Has candidate Todisco not advised her supporters that County officials have walked with past Democratic Party candidates and attended past Democratic Party fundraisers? Or that former Sheriff Cryan kicked off a fundraiser two years ago for fellow Council members Jen Blumenstock and Mark Lazarow, as well as a 'Meet and Greet' for now Governor Phil Murphy? That Sheriff Peter Corvelli attended a previous fundraiser for Garwood candidates? Councilwoman Todisco was at all of those events; she helped plan some through her county connections. Councilwoman Todisco attended the inaugural gala of Governor Phil Murphy as a guest of the Union County Democratic Committee. Union County Sheriff Corvelli swore Sara into office in 2018. While Councilwoman Todisco may not work for the county, she has not shied from their past support; she is not as 'independent' as the writer wants readers to believe. She knows a positive relationship with County officials is important to her Council work and to her future political aspirations; she has a relationship with the county.

Do not misunderstand what I am saying - I am not finding fault in any way with Councilwoman Todisco or Mayor Lombardo. Much like reaching across the aisle, reaching up the party ticket is of great benefit to Garwood. Democrats should not be taken to task for asking for County assistance. We all love our small town, but sometimes we can't do it alone. We tried that in the past and look at the status of some of our equipment. The Republicans would do the same if they shared both levels of government.

Garwood Democrats have also received funding support from Union County Democrats in recent years. Since Councilwoman Todisco retained last year's campaign funds, she is using some county democratic support dollars in her campaign. It's not all a 'grassroots' funded campaign as the writer may think.

The purpose of this letter is not to malign any candidates' connections with Union County, but to recognize and embrace them, and to show that Garwood is better off because of the working relationship Garwood and Union County have developed - partially because of Mayor Lombardo. Union County DPW has provided road and utility line support, winter salt for our roads, large tree pruning and numerous other services to Garwood. We simply do not have the equipment to do such work, and the County has helped us. The County has supported Garwood with grants - senior citizen handyman and bus funding, and most recently for our Athletic Field Complex and Hartmann Park. Rather than try to show a negative with this relationship, as the writer did, Garwood residents should be thankful for it as it has saved us thousands of dollars over the years, and it will continue under Mayor Lombardo.

Despite what the writer wrote, Union County Democrats do not 'control' Garwood. No one who voted on the committee that selected Charles Lombardo to run on the RGDP ticket works for the county. As far as being 'progressive', Councilwoman Todisco and her running mates are not the only 'Bernie' supporters in Garwood. Many progressives - including I - support Lombardo-Kearney-Guerrero.

Yes, two RGDP candidates work for Union County. Neither has 'sold their souls to the devil'; nor intend to. Neither is under any county official's control. They earned their jobs through their work experience and education, not through cronyism. Their combined years of public service, knowledge of how borough and county levels of government can improve while working together, their positive County relationship, and their commitment to serve the public is, and will be, a benefit to Garwood.

William Nierstedt  
 Garwood

ABCD EFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
  
 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. Drawk - Coarse weeds growing in grain; wild oats  
 2. Fermillet - A buckle or clasp  
 3. Timbrology - The science or study of postage stamps  
 4. Imprecation - A curse

#### LAPIN

1. A sort of coarse canvas  
 2. Shiny; glossy  
 3. Rabbit fur used in imitation of more valuable skins  
 4. To whip or lash

#### LEFE

1. Friendly; likeable  
 2. In Scots law, a legal stay of proceedings  
 3. The head of a household in France  
 4. Loved one; a friend

#### PARGET

1. A grimace  
 2. Very pale or faded  
 3. Plaster or wall coating  
 4. An illustration for a book

#### MEAR

1. Topsoil  
 2. A boundary  
 3. An enzyme that assists a bee in making honey  
 4. A horsefly

## Letters to the Editor

### FB Posts Is Disturbing

I was very disturbed to read the personal attacks posted on Westfield's Facebook page against Councilwoman JoAnn Neylan. I understand she was one of two Council representatives that voted against the budget, as is her prerogative. For that stance, in one instance, she was criticized, not for her rationale, but for her appearance. Please, fellow Westfielders, let's not go down that road.

This is neither a Republican or Democratic issue; it's one of common decency. Our mayor and town council representatives donate hours of their day, every day, to making Westfield a better place to live. All for a dollar a year. They've all signed up to be criticized for supporting the budget, for opposing the budget, or for any legitimate issue facing the Council.

So, if you're going to post on Facebook, or any media outlet, please keep to the issues. Don't stoop to the level of personal attacks and name-calling we see too often in Washington. Westfield is better than that.

Linda Heroux  
 Westfield

### Classy Westfield

About 30 years ago, Jean Sawtelle served as Westfield Republican Municipal Chairman and as Republican Ward Leader of the First Ward. She was Westfield's classy lady; her entire life was a class act. Jean Sawtelle would never permit political lawn signs in Westfield; she regarded them as inconsistent with the classy community of Westfield. The Democrats agreed with her, so neither party put up political lawn signs.

In last year's General Election campaign in Westfield, political lawn signs appeared all over town. They gave the community a very trashy appearance. Thus, I recommend that in future General Election campaigns in Westfield, both Republicans and Democrats should agree to discontinue putting up political lawn signs, in order to maintain the classy character of the Town of Westfield.

Kenneth MacRitchie  
 MacRitchie

### Enraged Machine

I have read Garwood council candidate Mr. Kearney's response of April 19 to my original letter in *The Westfield Leader*. He uses untoward language toward a Garwood resident, which is not a good quality in a candidate.

He attempts to rebut my support for Ms. Todisco's challenge to the Garwood Regular Democrats' slate for mayor and council. Mr. Kearney is a Regular Democrat candidate and of which I referred to his party as being part of a "political machine." I find his letter is just a brand of spin. I have two items for Mr. Kearney. One is a question: Why do we have primary elections? If he could respond for the readers' information? And two is a request: If you are not manipulated by your job at Union County as you state, then you will stand by my side to publicly voice outrage at the Union County Freeholders in hiring the new county manager from outside the county and without any interview process. These are both in violation of the county's own procedures and laws. Anything short of that, will show Mr. Kearney is afraid and, thus, is certainly manipulated by the county Democrat machine.

Letters attacking Ms. Todisco's perfectly legal challenge, his stating there should be no other challenger, and the others stating she should "wait her turn" certainly smacks of an enraged "political machine." I rest my case.

Bruce Paterson  
 Garwood

## Thank You, Mr. Banks, For Over 30 Years of Music and Memories

St. Paul's Episcopal Church will bid farewell this month to the man who for more than three decades has deftly blended spirituality and song at the Westfield parish, enhancing worship and concert experiences for congregants and visitors alike.

Director of Music Charles Banks is set to return to his native North Carolina after capping a distinguished, 32-year career with St. Paul's as conductor, choirmaster and organist. He will lead his final Spring Concert with the St. Paul's Choir at the church this Sunday.

Since joining St. Paul's in 1986, Mr. Banks has led concerts showcasing some of the most illustrious pieces of music ever written. Composers from Mozart and Bach, to Handel and Hadyn, to Verdi and Vivaldi, to Leonard Bernstein all have been well served on Mr. Banks' watch.

During his tenure, Mr. Banks has conducted over 100 works for choir, soloists and instrumentalists, including members of the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera and New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (NJSO), among other stellar ensembles. In addition to so many other events, his talents have enriched the church's annual Festival of Lessons and Carols to ring in the holiday season, along with its yearly Spring Concerts and its Triduum and Easter services.

A milestone during Mr. Banks' career with St. Paul's Church occurred between the years 2003

and 2005, when he oversaw the purchase, construction and installation of the church's pipe organ. Mr. Banks himself has played this grand instrument, which features four manuals, 55 pipe ranks and 114 digital voices.

Beyond his conducting and organist duties, Mr. Banks also has been an integral part of the success of St. Paul's music programs through his long-time fund-raising endeavors on behalf of the Friends of Music at St. Paul's, notably the group's Annual Giant Book Sale.

Additionally, Mr. Banks is known for his rapport with senior citizens through his participation in a monthly service held at the Westfield Center Genesis HealthCare facility.

We encourage everyone to attend Sunday's concert at St. Paul's, beginning at 7 p.m., for the opportunity to appreciate Mr. Banks' conducting prowess one more time and to give him a final, well-deserved round of applause. Entitled "Handel'd with Care," the concert is sponsored by the Friends of Music at St. Paul's and will include NJSO musicians. A reception will follow in the church hall. Additionally, we join together with the staff and congregation of St. Paul's, along with the entire Westfield area community, in thanking Mr. Banks for more than 30 years of magnificent music and memories. Maestro, you will be greatly missed.

## We Celebrate Our Town Clerks And the Vital Role They Serve

The first person one encounters when they do business with their local town hall is usually the town clerk. They are the gatekeeper of town records, the person who ensures governing body meetings run according to state statute, and they serve as the town's chief election official. New Jersey will honor our clerks during the 49th Annual Municipal Clerks Week, which will take place from May 6 to 12.

This annual event is an opportunity to promote as well as educate the public regarding the important role municipal clerks play. The International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC) has sponsored Municipal Clerks Week since 1969. In 1984 and again in 1994, Presidents Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton, respectively, signed a proclamation officially declaring Municipal Clerks Week the first full week of May and recognizing the essential role municipal clerks play in local government.

The municipal clerk serves as the "secretary of the municipal corporation and custodian of the municipal seal and of all minutes, books, deeds, bonds, contracts, and archival records of the municipal corporation," according to state statute. The municipal clerk "provides the professional link between the citizens, the local governing bodies and agencies of government at other levels," according to a sample proclamation available at the IIMC website.

The town clerk has a great deal of responsibility, from preparing agendas and taking minutes, to maintaining ordinance and resolution files and the town's historical records. The clerk also is responsible for ensuring that ordinances and other public notices are published in newspapers in a timely fashion. Additionally, they handle all dog and cat licenses as well as applications for licenses and permits such as for florists, limousines, restaurant liquor licenses as well as for raffles.

We are lucky to have professional clerks in the towns this newspaper serves: Tara Rowley in Westfield, Eleanor McGovern in Fanwood, Bozema Lacina in Scotch Plains, Patty Donahue in Cranford, Martha Lopez in Mountainside and Christina Ariemma in Garwood. Ms. Rowley recently replaced Claire Gray, who retired, and had been clerk in Cranford for many years.

At the county level, Joanne Rajoppi has been county clerk for many years, where she is the custodian of all land records in Union County and is the chief election official. Also, James E. Pelletiere serves as the clerk to the Union County Freeholder Board.

We congratulate all our dedicated and hard-working town clerks as they ensure that our records are managed and archived, as these municipal records will be a part of our history.

