

The Westfield Leader
— Established 1890 —
The Official Newspaper of the Town of Westfield and the County of Union
Member of:
New Jersey Press Association
National Newspaper Association
Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce
Periodicals — Postage Paid at Westfield, New Jersey
P.O. Box 250 • 50 Elm Street
Westfield, N.J. 07091
Tele: (908) 232-4407 • E-mail: press@goleader.com • Web: www.goleader.com • Fax: (908) 232-0473
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the offices of the newspapers at
P. O. Box 250, Westfield, New Jersey 07091

THE TIMES of Scotch Plains - Fanwood
— Established 1959 —
Official Newspaper of the Borough of Fanwood and the Township of Scotch Plains
Member of:
New Jersey Press Association • National Newspaper Association
Scotch Plains Business & Professional Association
Fanwood Business & Professional Association
Periodicals — Postage Paid at Scotch Plains, New Jersey
P. O. Box 368 • 1906 Bartle Avenue
Scotch Plains, N.J. 07076

Michelle H. LePoidevin
A&E and EDUCATION
Suzette F. Stalker
COMMUNITY
Paul J. Peyton
BUSINESS and GOVERNMENT

Horace R. Corbin
PUBLISHER
David B. Corbin
ASSISTANT PUBLISHER & SPORTS
Karen M. Hinds
OFFICE MANAGER

Fred K. Lecomte
SALES DIRECTOR
Michael Bartiromo
MARKETING & PRODUCTION
Melissa Betkowski
CLASSIFIEDS & LEGALS

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE
One-year — \$24 • Two-year — \$46 • Three-year — \$66 • One-year college (September to May) — \$16

Time Has Come for County Freeholders To Step Up to Plate on Ashbrook Ballfields

It's now been almost two years since Union County and Scotch Plains officials signed a letter of intent that would allow the township to lease about 20 acres of land in the county-owned Ashbrook Reservation and convert it into ballfields. Since then, the local government has spent more than \$100,000 on engineering and environmental studies to make sure the project was feasible.

The Township Council has also heard the concerns of local, neighboring and regional environmental groups, which have, at best, been very lukewarm in their support of the Ashbrook development for a variety of reasons — potential ecosystem damage, flooding concerns, disruption of historical artifacts buried on the site, noise, etc.

In short, the township has done its part to get this project rolling. Now it's time for the county freeholders to step up to the plate and help Scotch Plains gain some badly-needed playing fields. Two years is long enough for the freeholders to have delayed making a final decision on this matter. As Mayor Martin L. Marks told *The Times of Scotch Plains and Fanwood*

last month, the local government has, indeed, been very patient. "But we have a recreational community of residents whose patience is wearing thin," he said. While the county freeholders sit on their hands and do nothing regarding the Ashbrook development, the Scotch Plains government has been forced to hold off on other projects that could add more ballfields in town.

We're curious as to what the freeholders' thinking on this project is these days. Why has nothing been finalized? What is responsible for the delay?

From the reports of the experts, the project is feasible, won't harm the local ecosystem and won't increase the risk of flooding in neighboring communities.

Mayor Marks said he would like the county to make a decision — go or no-go — by the end of the summer. That seems only fair, given that this matter has dragged on for two years. The foot-dragging by county officials has not resulted in any additional ballfields in Scotch Plains. The township has done its part. Now it's time for the freeholders to do their part.

Education on Obeying Driving Rules Needs To Accompany Enforcement of Traffic Laws

In the past few years Westfield has had its share of tragic pedestrian accidents. But despite these widely reported incidents, it appears many drivers simply are not paying attention to basic driving rules: when pedestrians are in the crosswalk, they have the right-of-way.

The issue of pedestrian safety is not just a Westfield problem. It is a state-wide concern that needs to be addressed. Local towns cannot solve the problem by themselves. They need help.

Instead of wasting statewide mailings for driver registration and license renewals including products such as various license plate messages in support of everything from the Jersey shore to the environment, why not include a note on traffic safety rules? We have seen the effectiveness of selling New Jersey as a vacation spot; let's have a state PSA (Public Service Announcement) to educate New Jersey motorists of the importance of following speed limits and coming to a complete stop when people are in the crosswalk.

Do we need to start painting crosswalks bright blue, orange or red and post signs stating "Pedestrian Crossing Ahead?" While we hear so much nowadays about hand guns being dangerous weapons, perhaps the most deadly weapon of all is the automobile when not used properly.

Also, when the "Cross" signal turns to "Don't Cross" after a pedestrian has begun to walk, they continue to have the right-of-way.

Similarly, pedestrians need to be alert at all times when using the crosswalk and to stop crossing in the middle of the street. Always look for approaching vehicles.

The reaction to this newspaper's coverage over

the past few weeks involving pedestrian-car accidents has been negative. Readers questioned why they were included on the front page and why the name of drivers were mentioned. First of all, pedestrian safety is a major issue being discussed in town these days and thus is highly newsworthy in our opinion. *The Westfield Leader* has an obligation to cover such stories and print facts as reported by the local police department, which is responsible for traffic enforcement.

As the BRAKES Group of Westfield (an acronym for Bikers, Runners And Kids Are Entitled to Safety) states, traffic enforcement officers must increase ticketing of motorists who fail to yield to pedestrians. We suggest that anyone who blows their horn at a motorist who stops for a pedestrian should also be pulled over by police.

A group representing business owners in town also expressed concern of why the Quimby Street pedestrian accident was covered. They also were not happy that we included a front page photograph of a tractor trailer which unsuccessfully negotiated a left turn off East Broad Street onto Elm Street, taking down a traffic light in the process. A group of nursery school children were sitting on benches just a few feet from the intersection.

We guess these type of stories might not be "good press" in bringing new business to town, but *The Leader* is not in the marketing or public relations business. We are in the news business and will continue to report the facts as best as we are able. The fact is, whether the result of increased congestion or disregard for others, traffic accidents occur in the downtown too frequently to be ignored.

The Presidency of Bush Is Most Invisible Since Coolidge

By FRED ROSSI

Is it time to send out the bloodhounds? The U.S. may have a unique situation on its hands: a missing presidency. Is George W. Bush still in office, or have we pulled a collective Rip Van Winkle and it's now really 2005 or 2009 and his time in power is actually over? If not, we're witnessing one of the most invisible, passionless, bland reigns of power since perhaps Calvin Coolidge, who, I'd wager, probably had more to say in his day than the current White House occupant.

Where is the Bush Administration? Where is the President, for that matter? Does he ever meet the press anymore? Remember the days when Presidents held full-scale news conferences once or twice a month and were compelled to talk about their policies and proposals in full paragraphs, not simple sentences?

Can President Bush take the heat of questions whose answers may require him to think past the genial banalities of campaign slogans? Granted, Bill Clinton was on television so often one might have thought he had his own show, but where is President Bush, besides appearing in staged events or heading off to Camp David or his Texas ranch? There must be some sort of a balance between omnipresence and invisibility.

The President is not the only one in his Administration who is shielded from public view. It's kind of humorous that most folks in the Garden State can probably name a member of the Bush Cabinet, but that's only because she used to be our governor. Can anyone name the Secretary of Defense? Treasury?

I'd bet more people know the names of the Bush twin daughters than the First Lady's name. Even Vice President Dick Cheney, the much-touted brains behind the throne, has been hidden from view. This Administration made it known from the outset that it wouldn't be flashy and full of braggadocio. But sometimes, even just for pure political gain, it's worth it to puff out one's chest a bit. Tax cuts, we were told all winter and spring, were just what the economy needed to get back on track.

This was the new President's first big initiative and first big test with an evenly-divided Congress. Once the biggest tax cuts in 20 years were approved and ready for the President's signature, one expected a grand ceremony to maximize the political mileage from that victory. So who in the White House was responsible for having the President sign this significant piece of legislation into law on a Saturday, in the middle of the Memorial Day holiday weekend, when just about no one was paying any attention?

And where is the Administration's fervor regarding some of its other proposals? A few months back, we were told the country was in the midst of severe energy crisis — and that the only way to get out of it, according to the Administration's friends in the oil and gas business, was to drill for more oil and gas. The Vice President unveiled the much-ballyhooed plan, crafted in secret, and then retreated into silence.

Well, Mr. Cheney has spoken up at least twice on the energy issue — to criticize the virtues of energy conservation and then to ask the government to pick up the entire electricity tab at his

official residence. The bottom line, though, is that if this program is so important to the nation, why is no one out there beating the drums in support?

The same goes for the Administration's education reform proposals, its plan to funnel federal money to religious charities, its space-based defense plan, its rejection of the global environmental treaty, its Iraq policy, and its plans to reform Social Security. Teddy Roosevelt's bully pulpit — used so effectively by Ronald Reagan, for one — seems to have been stuffed into storage.

Again, if these issues are so important, and they must be important because they form much of the raison d'être for the Bush II Administration, why are people like Rod Paige, Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul O'Neill not out there playing the salesman role that Cabinet officials are, in part, supposed to play? Quick quiz: Name the departments these three men head.

Perhaps this is why so much of President Bush's agenda has run into trouble. It's not just the expected opposition from Democrats that is creating problems for the White House. Moderate Republicans, long ignored by the Administration, are increasingly refusing to toe the party line in the House and Senate.

Administrative arrogance cost the GOP control of the Senate and there isn't much room for error in the House, where the GOP holds a razor-thin majority.

What is truly important to this Administration. Exactly what, if anything, will it fight to the death for? The fact that some pundits are saying Mr. Bush's forthcoming decision on stem cell research will define his Administration speaks volumes about the dearth of energy, passion and enthusiasm in this — so far, anyway — invisible presidency.

Fred Rossi covers Scotch Plains municipal government for The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood.



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. Bleb — A small blister or swelling on the skin or plants
2. Cleronomy — Inheritance, heritage
3. Superalimentation — Excess Eating
4. Atheroma — An encysted tumor, containing cheesy matter

GLOSSOPHOROUS

1. Well-organized, neat
2. Provided with a tongue
3. Very flammable
4. Boisterous, boastful

DAPIFER

1. A steward of a royal or noble household
2. A deep cut or gash
3. In water technology, a clouding agent
4. Trivial, lighthearted

PODAGRIC

1. Massive warfare, immense with destruction
2. Stuffy, snobby
3. Afflicted with gout
4. Anything that moves by creeping

SAECULUM

1. Organized in columns
 2. Mass confusion; chaos
 3. The four bones of the lower back; tailbone
 4. A long period of time
- Answers will appear in next week's issue.

Letters to the Editor

How Does Victoria's Secret Fit With Colonial Character of Town?

Editor's Note: The following is a copy of a letter sent to Mayor Gregory S. McDermott and members of the Westfield Town Council.

The expression in commercial real estate is "location, location, location," and the executives at Victoria's Secret seem to know it well. They have leased what is probably one of the most visible locations in Westfield.

Everyone traveling north on Central Avenue must stop at East Broad Street and look to the left while waiting for a break in the traffic. As they turn, they will see the two large, brightly lit display windows of Victoria's Secret (the view is similar to the one shown in the Downtown Westfield Corporation Website).

As I drove up Central Avenue this past Sunday morning with my wife and chil-

dren, we all saw both windows filled with what seemed like two dozen highly polished silver mannequins, as yet undressed, positioned near the glass in the windows. I can only imagine what this will do to the flow of traffic at this already troubled intersection once these mannequins are clothed in what I assume will be the standard window dressing for Victoria's Secret that one sees in their mall stores.

Don't get me wrong, I am not a prude, and Victoria's Secret has the legal right to open a store wherever they want to, but can't they tone things down a bit? After all, they are surrounded by child-friendly stores — KayBee Toys and Barron's Drug Store on either side, and Gap Kids and the Rialto Theater across the street.

How will this storefront fit in with the Colonial style that Westfield is known for? The Downtown Westfield Corporation has proposed many enhancements to the downtown area, including period lighting and "Colonial-style telephone booths" (*The Westfield Leader*, Sept. 2, 1999). The new Union County Police Headquarters "would be constructed in keeping with the character of the town" (*The Westfield Leader*, May 10, 2001).

So tell me, how does Victoria's Secret fit into the Colonial scheme of things? Are they going to have a display of whale-bone corsets?

Additionally, with Westfield's increasing popularity as a TV location, both for programs and commercials, this storefront cuts down on the sightlines for filming. After all, who would want a picture of bras and panties in family-friendly Westfield?

Again, Victoria's Secret has the legal right to be there and sell what they want, but can't they be asked to please keep their display windows toned down? After all, everybody knows what they sell.

Thank you for your attention on this matter.

Jeffrey Messing
Westfield

Motorists Must Model Considerate Driving Skills or Nothing Will Change

Editor's Note: The following is complete statement from THE BRAKES (Bikers, Runners and Kids are Entitled to Safety) Group of Westfield per a story in this week's Leader on recent accidents involving pedestrians.

We are most disturbed by the incidents in town recently especially since the summer is often a "quiet" time in Westfield when many residents are on vacation.

The majority of the pedestrian-vehicle accidents that we are aware of as well as the majority of the close calls (near-hits) have occurred when a driver is turning and violating the pedestrians' right-of-way. It has become necessary to continually look to ones' right, left and behind while crossing to ensure that a turning vehicle is aware of ones' presence in the intersection.

The BRAKES Group was most pleased to support the police efforts this spring to reduce speeds of drivers by stepping up enforcement. However we believe that the stepped up enforcement must be consistent and complete. It is clear that drivers in Westfield have short memories and a temporary enforcement effort changes their behavior for a very short time.

Furthermore, the traffic officers who patrol the downtown area must increase their ticketing of drivers who fail to yield to pedestrians. Clearly the traffic officers who are directing traffic can not leave their posts to issue tickets.

However the officers who are patrolling the sidewalks and handing out parking tickets could be helping to improve the pedestrian environment by ticketing drivers who fail to yield.

Former-Mayor Tom Jardim coined the strategy to address traffic-pedestrian issues as the "Three E's; Engineering, Enforcement, Education." THE BRAKES Group helps in the education and Awareness arena. The engineering plans are good but being implemented far too slowly for our liking. The enforcement piece is the most effective of the three for immediate change, but over the long run is quite expensive since it involves person-power. THE BRAKES Group believes that strategic enforcement and an acceleration of the Engineering enhancements that will improve the pedestrian

Advertised Piano No Longer For Sale

In 1997, you ran an ad for us in the newspaper. You must have also put it on your Website. We sold the piano over three years ago and no longer have it. We keep getting people asking about it. Would you please cancel this from your site so we do not have to answer all the inquires? Thank you.

Judith MacLellan
Westfield

