

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

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY BY WATCHUNG COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

Michelle H. LePoidevin <i>A&E and EDUCATION</i>	Horace R. Corbin <i>PUBLISHER</i>	David B. Corbin <i>SPORTS</i>
Suzette F. Stalker <i>COMMUNITY</i>	Gail S. Corbin <i>GENERAL MANAGER</i>	Fred K. Lecomte <i>SALES/SPORTS</i>
Paul J. Peyton <i>BUSINESS and GOVERNMENT</i>	Karen M. Hinds <i>OFFICE MANAGER</i>	Melissa Betkowsky <i>EDUCATION</i>

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

HUNG UPI!

Mother Encouraged to Seek 'Traditional' Form of Therapy

*By Milt Faith, Executive Director
Youth and Family Counseling Service*




Mental Health Therapists Are Not Portrayed Correctly In 'Sopranos'

A TV viewer writes:
Do you watch "The Sopranos"? What is your reaction to the depiction of Dr. Melfi and the other psychiatrists in the show? Are they portrayed realistically?
Answer: Tony Soprano's therapist is shown as a soft-spoken, professionally-skilled person who is attempting to help Tony tune into his anxieties, insecurities and conflicted feelings. She is zaffre in her responses, hoping to help Tony lower his defenses and identify his real feelings. At the same time, she has become aware of the potential danger in treating a manipulator and murderer. I find her too passive and insecure as she attempts to "treat" Tony, realizing that there will be limitations to changing Tony's personality. Her own anxiety and fantasies regarding this patient may immobilize her to be in effective control.

I never fear those mountains in the distance. Never settle for the path of least resistance. Livin' might mean takin' chances if they're worth takin'. Lovin' might be a mistake, but it's worth makin'.
"Don't let some hell bent heart leave you bitter."
When you come close to sellin' out, reconsider. Give the heavens above more than just a passing glance.
And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance, I hope you dance. I hope you dance.
Time is a wheel in constant motion, always rolling us along.
Tell me, who wants to look back on their youth and wonder where those years have gone? I hope you dance."

Letters to the Editor

True Purpose of Parking Deck Is Redevelopment of Westfield

Groundbreaking for a multi-level 825-car garage on Prospect Street is slated for January. The initial cost estimate is \$12.5 million. What the final cost will be is anyone's guess. The taxpayers of Westfield will be responsible for this debt, initially estimated at \$15,000 a space. Westfielders have been misled into believing that the deck is for their convenience.
The true purpose of the deck is the redevelopment of downtown Westfield including the replacement of existing structures with new ones. The new buildings will inevitably be larger and more intrusive than the original ones.
Wake up, Westfield! Think about East Broad Street. Consider how many mall stores have replaced other local businesses. How many more are coming? How many new office buildings? New apartments?
To implement the projected traffic increases from the garage, the T&M traffic study calls for "improvements" such as two traffic lights on Broad and

one on Mountain and Dudley.
Elm, Prospect, Dudley and Lawrence will be the service roads serving this "renewed" downtown.
Never has the character and pride of Westfield been so threatened. Once garage construction begins there will be no return.
The Town Council, encouraged by landlords, will proceed unless the residents speak out in numbers.
Consider what you want for Westfield and speak for yourself. No one else will. The best interest of the landlords in the Downtown Westfield Corporation and Chamber of Commerce is not necessarily the best interest of residents.
Your peaceful and lovely town can grow into a crowded city. The safety of your children and the value of your property will be sacrificed for the financial gain of the landowners downtown.
Say no to unwieldy redevelopment plans. Say no to the parking garage.

Lynn Barner
Westfield

AARP Thanks Organizations, Media For Promoting Tax Assistance Program

On behalf of the American Association of Retired Persons, the Internal Revenue Service, and the New Jersey Division of Taxation, I would like to thank the directors and staffs of the following organizations for the use of their facilities to allow our volunteers to give free assistance in preparing income tax forms for senior citizens and low-income families:
Scotch Plains Library, Westfield Community Center, St. Helen's Roman Catho-

lic Church Parish Center, Westfield Library and Scotch Plains and Westfield senior housing buildings, TV channels 34, 35 and 36 and *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood*.
Through their cooperation, we prepared over 1,300 tax returns and assisted over 900 senior citizens and low income families.

Edward C. Evans
Scotch Plains

Northside Deck Opponents Deserve Open Forum Before Town Council

Editor's Note: The following is a copy of a letter sent to Westfield Mayor Gregory S. McDermott. It has been edited per letter requirements.

I attended the Town Council meeting on April 17th and was interested to hear the discussion of the Edgar/Codding Road issue and the parking garage.
The Town Council respectfully listened to Edgar Road residents explain how their land parcels were an important part of their assets and retirement plans. At the conclusion it appeared that their claims would prevail. In a peculiar gesture of generosity, the council suggested that the new street be blocked at some point to prevent annoying school traffic from detracting from the enjoyment of these new homes. This would also, of course, increase property values.
When the discussion turned to the "concerns" of those residents impacted by the traffic study and parking garage a very different attitude prevailed.
Hundreds of cars every day, traffic lights, one-way streets and a mammoth structure will be placed in our midst. The

value of the homes on Prospect, Elm, Dudley, Orchard and Lawrence will all be negatively affected by increased congestion. Future development of the downtown will dramatically increase the number of cars entering and exiting the garage streets. There is no large, multi-story cement structure housing cars that could be aesthetically acceptable in a neighborhood of 90-year old colonial houses.
These homes are the significant assets of these residents who also would like to retire one day. Is the Town Council unaware of the investment and hard labor of the working people in this neighborhood?
Mr. Mayor, your response to a request for an open forum on the parking garage was that people "get too emotional" and repeat themselves.
I would submit that the Town Council owes as much respect and consideration to the many homeowners on Dudley, Elm, Prospect, Orchard and Lawrence as they give to the developer of Codding Road.
These homeowners and residents of Westfield have earned that respect.

Dolores McDermott
Westfield

Westfield Resident Questions Pricing At Supermarket

The Stop & Shop Supermarket in Westfield on Elm Street seems to have a high price problem! Last week, I purchased a bag of potatoes listed on the shelf for \$1.99. When the cashier rang it up, they registered as \$3.99. I brought the price problem to her attention and she found the computer price to be incorrect. Two days later, I purchased Brawny paper towels. The shelf price was \$2.98 and registered as \$3.19, which was incorrect. Can someone please inspect the store, because the customers shouldn't have to.

Norma Keats
Westfield

Park Middle PTA Staff Acknowledges Staff During Teacher Appreciation Week

The Park Middle School PTA would like to publicly acknowledge the entire staff of Park Middle School, as we celebrate National PTA Teacher Appreciation Week, May 7th through May 11th.
Park Middle School is a special place where students receive attention and encouragement from a dedicated group of professionals. The middle school years are very challenging and the students at Park are fortunate to have this group of adults to accompany them on their educational journey. The staff helps to instill in our children a love of learning and a positive attitude about themselves that they will carry with them throughout their lives.
On behalf of every member of Park's

family, the PTA would like to thank each member of the staff, our Principal, Rocco Colucci; our Assistant Principal, Theresa Elias; the teachers, the secretaries, aides, cafeteria staff and custodians for making a real difference in our children's lives. We also thank them for fostering the caring and concerned atmosphere that makes Park a wonderful place to spend the middle school years.

Celeste R. Roberson
First Vice President
Park Middle School PTA
Scotch Plains

Another Letter on Page 5

Views Expressed to Council on Deck Should Be Done in Dignified Manner

Over the past few months, a group of citizens have begun to attend Westfield Town Council meetings in an effort to kill the town's plan to build a parking deck on existing surface parking at Elm and Prospect Streets.

While their cause is reasonable, the manner in which many deck opponents have approached this elected body of volunteers has been at times arrogant and condescending, if not mean-spirited. Passions often fly during a heated issue such as the proposed 800-space parking deck, but cool heads need to prevail if the Town Council is truly to take into account the important information as stated by deck opponents.

For instance, one resident spoke in favor of a deck at last week's council meeting, and a member of the anti-deck group quickly responded that maybe this person's house should be torn down to make room for the parking structure.

A little more than a year ago, it was the commuters who, while angry at times, presented their arguments in a reasonable fashion. Also, residents of Codding Road, in trying to stop the town from removing the thoroughfare as a "paper street" — undeveloped land that appears as dotted lines on the town's official map to indicate future development — did so in an efficient and professional manner. They even brought a timer to ensure that they did not exceed their time allotment at a recent council conference meeting.

With the lines being drawn between north side residents and the business community, which has long supported a deck, perhaps the governing body might want to place this major issue before voters in November, if the council can't come to some consensus on its own.

A report submitted by Rich And Associates, which completed a comprehensive plan for the town, supported two decks — one on Lots 1 and 8 and the other on Lot 3A on South Avenue at the Westfield Train Station. Just think of the debate that would have ensued if both decks were now being considered?

The council, led by Republicans, opted to build on 1 and 8, reasoning that a deck on South Avenue would only be used during the day — not in the evening, on weekends or on holidays and, thus, would not be a regularly-used town asset.

Opponents and proponents of a deck should take into account that a number of long talked about options to develop more parking capacity are close to being implemented. These include a jitney and creating additional parking through a valet service, where cars would be parked into the existing South Avenue lot. Plans are also in the works to create additional parking at Cacciola Place and Central Avenue under a lease arrangement with a private developer. That deal, however, is a short-term stop gap.

In our view, the council has not yet made a final determination on a deck. All they did last summer was knock down the prospective sites for a deck to one.

When considering the design of the deck, we believe the council should look strongly at the aesthetics of the structure which, in our judgment, are right up there in importance with the environmental impact of auto emissions.

This is likely to become an even more heated issue for the council during the local election this fall. In the meantime, we hope residents representing both sides of this issue will express their concerns in a respectful and dignified manner.

Scotch Plains Residents Shouldn't Rush To Judgment on State of Affairs of Town

Before residents are tempted to jump to premature conclusions about the state of affairs in the Scotch Plains government, perhaps some perspective is in order on matters that have arisen in recent weeks.

Granted, no community wants the kind of publicity that Scotch Plains received last month. First came revelations in the media about Acting Governor Donald T. DiFrancesco's activities as Township Attorney in the latter 1990s and allegations that he had violated legal and ethics rules and been threatened with dismissal from that post due to his lobbying of local government officials on behalf of his family.

The leaking to the news media of confidential documents pertaining to Mr. DiFrancesco caused a good deal of concern among township officials and were certainly a factor in Mr. DiFrancesco's decision last week to pull the plug on his fledgling gubernatorial campaign. And it wouldn't be surprising if the revelations caused township residents to wonder just exactly what was going on behind closed doors at the Municipal Building.

Two weeks ago, four African-American men filed a lawsuit against the township police department, alleging that they were the victims of racial profiling when the car in which they were traveling was stopped by four white Scotch Plains police officers a year ago. The police department is already the target of a reverse discrimination lawsuit filed by the four officers against their African-American superior officer.

Then, a week ago, came the arrest of Township Finance Director William Polidoro on charges that he embezzled \$150,000 from township accounts and used the money to purchase luxury items, including a Mercedes-Benz, for himself.

A disturbing pattern or just a coincidental aligning of unfortunate events?

It's our view that there is no real reason for residents to be overly concerned. These three developments are separate, isolated events. The events surrounding Mr. DiFrancesco occurred several years ago and, further, there is no indication of any underhanded cooperation between Mr. DiFrancesco and others in the local government regarding his family's affairs. Similarly, the lawsuits against the police department center around one event, not a pattern of alleged behavior. And let's hold off final judgment on this matter until the cases are heard in court. Likewise, the embezzlement charges last week were filed against one individual; there is no indication that others were involved.

The unwelcome news concerning the Scotch Plains government should not be taken as a sign of widespread problems at the Municipal Building. Both its elected officials and the professional staff are hard-working, diligent individuals with little or no connection to the problems that have arisen in recent weeks. These developments were more an unfortunate confluence of unrelated events than a sign of bigger problems in the township government.

