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## Redistricting Has Created A Lot of Confusion In County

By PAUL J. PEYTON

Constituents in the 21st and 22nd Legislative Districts will need a scorecard to keep up with who is representing them in Trenton.

Redistricting of New Jersey's 40 legislative districts has not only resulted in a widely changed political landscape, but has left a lot of confusion close to home.

Here in Union County some constituents, who have seen a change in local officials due to resignations, will see another change in representation in Trenton come January - regardless of whether Republicans or Democrats are victorious.

Let's look at the 22nd District. Persons calling Assemblyman Tom Kean Jr.'s office in Scotch Plains, will find that if they reside in Scotch Plains and Fanwood and five other towns, they will be getting a new voice in Trenton. Mr. Kean's hometown of Westfield has been redistricted into the 21st District. He just replaced Scotch Plains resident Alan M. Augustine, who resigned on Saturday, March 31, due to cancer.

The new 21st District includes Berkeley Heights, Cranford, Garwood, Mountainside, New Providence, Roselle Park, Springfield, Summit and Westfield in Union County; Millburn in Essex County; the Morris County towns of Chatham, Harding, Long Hill and Madison, and Warren and Watchung in Somerset County.

The new 22nd district includes the

cities of Linden, Plainfield and Rahway along with the suburban towns of Clark, Scotch Plains, Fanwood and Winfield.

Want some more confusion? The 21st District, which currently includes five Union County towns, had been represented for years by Republican Senator C. Louis Bassano of Union. Mr. Bassano recently resigned to take a job with the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority. He was replaced by Kevin O'Toole, who moved up to the Senate after having served a few years in the Assembly. But Mr. O'Toole will only serve in the upper house until January. You see his home town of Verona in Essex County has been moved into the 40th District, one represented by veteran Republican Senator Henry P. McNamara. Mr. O'Toole, thus, took the safe route by joining the GOP ticket in that district as an Assembly candidate.

More confusion? Mr. O'Toole was replaced in the Assembly by trauma surgeon and Summit City Councilman, Dr. Eric Munoz, who will join Senate candidate Richard H. Bagger of Westfield, a state Assemblyman, and Mr. Kean on the GOP ticket in the new 21st District. Only four of the 13 towns he will represent until the end of the year will be in his newly-redesigned district.

Just think, we can do it all again next year when New Jersey's 13 Congressional Districts are reapportioned.

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Paul J. Peyton is a political editor for The Westfield Leader and The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood.



### ACELDAMA

Acelandama - In the New Testament, Judas was the apostle who betrayed Jesus Christ to the priests and elders for 30 pieces of silver. Judas' family name, Iscariot, probably came from the Latin word *sicarius* meaning "murderer."

Judas belonged to an anti-Roman terrorist group called the Sacarii. The Sacarii were similar to the Zealots of which another apostle, Simon Zealotes, was a member. It was the Zealots, a word that comes from the Greek word *zelos*, meaning "zeal," who defended themselves from the Romans at Masada in AD 66-73.

In Acts 1, 18, it is said that Judas "bought a field with the reward of his wickedness." The field so purchased was known as Acelandama, a word that came from the Aramaic language and means "field of Carnage, slaughter, or butchery." It was here that Judas is said to have thrown himself down upon the rocks and killed himself. Acelandama was used as a burial place for foreigners. Today, despite Judas' duplicity, Acelandama is used as a metaphor for bloodshed or slaughter because of its ancient and original Aramaic meaning.

**More Letters to the Editor Page 5**

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## Political Rumlings In New Jersey Have At Least Entertained Public

Those who follow politics or are directly involved in the process probably can't recall such a tumultuous period in New Jersey politics as has been experienced in recent weeks. And what made it even more incredible was that the tumult affected — and in some instances, continues to affect — different branches, different levels and different political parties of government.

Late last month, we saw Acting Governor Donald T. DiFrancesco of Scotch Plains suddenly withdraw from the gubernatorial election contest, 72 hours after he had declared, in formally kicking off his campaign, that he was in the race to stay. His withdrawal climaxed several weeks of revelations in the press about some of his business and financial dealings as well as some of his actions when he served as Scotch Plains Township Attorney. Mr. DiFrancesco may have seen the writing on the wall during his campaign kickoff on April 22, when the expected crowd was not as large as anticipated and only a handful of county chairmen showed up to publicly boost his effort. Whatever his reasons for getting out of the race, Mr. DiFrancesco has served this area well, first as a State Assemblyman and then as a State Senator, in a career that spans a quarter of a century.

The end of the Acting Governor's candidacy brings former Congressman Bob Franks of Berkeley Heights back into the political arena, less than six months after his narrow loss to Jon Corzine of Summit in last year's U.S. Senate election. Mr. Franks is well-known to area voters, having served the Seventh District for four terms in the House of Representatives after a stint in the State Legislature. And, it sets up not only an interesting primary race next month with Westfield native and Jersey City Mayor Bret Schundler, but also a fascinating general election campaign this fall with Woodbridge Mayor James McGreevey.

The day after Mr. DiFrancesco's announcement, the State Assembly Speaker, Republican Jack Collins, announced that he would not proceed with impeachment hearings against State Supreme Court Justice Peter Verniero, who has been accused by some of being misleading, during his tenure as state Attorney General under former Governor Christine Todd Whitman, with investigators looking into the racial profiling controversies surrounding the State Police. Racial profiling is a serious issue that has been a topic of discussion in New Jersey for several years. And it certainly is difficult to watch a justice on the state's highest court be dragged into the matter, to the point where his veracity is seriously questioned.

Even though the DiFrancesco and Verniero matters appear to be closed, or nearly closed, the controversies swirling around Democratic Senator Robert Torricelli continue, with recent reports of questionable contributions to his 1996 Senate campaign and allegations of influence peddling.

Investigators will likely continue to look into the Torricelli matter, and it appears that questions surrounding the Senator will continue into next year, when Mr. Torricelli will be running for re-election.

The tumult in Garden State politics can even be widened to include former Governor Whitman. Now the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, she, too, has had a rough time of it in her three months in Washington. It's hard to tell who speaks for the Bush Administration on environmental matters, with Mrs. Whitman repeatedly being undercut by other officials when she tries to speak with authority on matters within her purview.

All in all, it hasn't been the best of times for New Jersey's politicians.

But for those who look at politics as a spectator sport, it has certainly been entertaining and compelling.

## Flying Stars And Stripes Is The Least We Can Do To Remember Fallen Heroes

*Editor's Note: The writer of the following letter is a retired social work supervisor, author and freelance writer.*

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As Memorial Day approaches, I am reminded of the armed forces men and women who died so that we may live in a free democratic nation. In remembrance of these heroes the least we can do is to proudly display the American flag on patriotic holidays. The stars and stripes should be flown on:

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, third Monday in January; Lincoln's Birthday, February 12; Washington's Birthday (President's Day), third Monday in February; Peace Officers Memorial Day (half-staff), May 15;

Armed Forces Day, third Saturday in May; Memorial Day (half-staff until noon) last Monday in May; Flag Day, June 14; Independence Day, July 4; National Korean War Armistice Day (half-staff), July 27; POW/MIA Recognition Day, third Friday in September; Constitution Day (Citizenship Day), September 17; Columbus Day, second Monday in October; Navy Day, October 27; Veterans Day, November 11; Thanksgiving Day, fourth Thursday in November; National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, December 7.

I believe that there should be an additional holiday to honor Native Americans.

Every town has its share of people who state that they do not have to display the American flag to prove their patriotism. They enjoy holidays without a thought regarding what we are celebrating. American service people died so that malcontents can have the freedom to burn the American flag in effigy and demonstrate against our government regarding injustices.

This country isn't perfect yet, but people throughout the world endeavor to come to the United States of America whenever the opportunity arises.

If you are one of those who insist that there is no need to fly the flag on patri-

otic holidays, I suggest that you not share that opinion with Gold Star mothers. These beautiful ladies sacrificed their children to reduce the need for future mothers to suffer the same losses in the defense of our freedoms. The stars and stripes are a painful but important symbol to them.

You may not find it convenient to strictly observe the flag raising dates I have listed or consider them all appropriate. However, I am sure that you are able to determine those that are of utmost importance.

Maurice Fenichel  
Fanwood

## Willow Grove Pastor Thanks Carriers For Foodstuffs Donated to Church

*Editor's Note: The following letter was sent to the Scotch Plains Postmaster and the letter carriers.*

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On behalf of our congregation family, and the individuals we serve, thank you for the foodstuffs you delivered and we received May 12. I know this added extra stops, additional heavy carrying, and time taken from other responsibilities. Your good will, your courtesies, and your help have made the day's experience a wonderfully successful time. Your individual efforts and the support of your postal customers resulted in an overwhelming amount of canned goods and foods. When all was said and done, there were over 100 very bags of groceries, overflowing, bursting at the seams. Thank you.

Some of the foods were delivered to a single mother, marginally employed, who

had unexpected surgery. Unable to work during her recovery, she will have food in her apartment. The baby foods, milks and products were given to an unemployed single mother with a newborn. Some foods were delivered to an elderly retired couple who do not have any retirement incomes. Additional food were given to a family moving into an apartment after being homeless. They will have a full pantry in their new home. And some foods were given to refugees from both South American and Eastern Europe.

Thank you again. I don't know how we can thank your postal customers, but at least we thanked them in our heartfelt prayers on Sunday, May 13.

Rev. Kenneth G. Hestel  
Pastor  
Willow Grove Presbyterian Church  
Scotch Plains

## Rearranging Furniture May Produce Some Relief for Downtown Parking

A solution to the parking problem in Westfield may be as simple as rearranging the furniture.

Do we really need 800 new parking spaces in Westfield?

Do the majority of Westfield residents really want a parking deck and the problems associated with it?

I do not think so. Perhaps we should take a vote and see.

Or consider this:

Maximize the existing parking lots throughout the town by being efficient.

Remove some fencing around existing parking lots so that we can add more space in these lots.

Remove or lessen the space that existing concrete medians take up in these lots. Even if it means removing the parking meters.

Reduce the width of painted spaces to squeeze in more cars. I work in an office complex that has reduced the width of their parking spaces a few inches to help squeeze in more automobiles. It is sometimes a tight fit, but it works.

Repave existing lots in town and repaint with narrower parking spaces.

Not only would we be adding, in my estimation, 100 to 150 new parking spots, we could be saving taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars. We would also be repaving our current lots and help give Westfield a more finished appearance.

It may only be a temporary solution, but I have to admit, on most days I do manage to find a place to park in town. Let's keep Westfield the charming place we all fell in love with when we first moved here. Let's work with what we have.

Ken Zierler  
Westfield

## Parking Problem Affects Commuters, Not Shoppers

Resident shoppers seem to be able to find parking spaces in our municipal lots. The commuters cannot. We do indeed have a parking problem — for commuters.

How in the world did we squeeze 30,000 people into downtown during Spring Fling?

Commuters don't park — they store their cars for eight to 10 hours. A commuter storage space worth \$15,000 generates an annual income of \$720. A return on investment of only 4.8 percent.

A black market in commuter permits can develop if the system is not run properly. There was very little NIMBY talk — it was all about no garage. Keep Westfield a small town — not a city. It's "back to the drawing board" again. More consulting.

A consultant is a person who can look at your watch and tell you what time it is. The idea of hiring a parking administrator was well-received. This person will probably need an administrative assistant — a deputy assistant — enforcement people etc. A whole new bureaucracy — for commuter storage.

Dexter Force  
Westfield

## Cooperation of Government, Common Sense Will Help In Fight Against Spread of West Nile

It's back, apparently. It being West Nile Virus, the mosquito-borne disease that was first detected in our area in 1999. Last week and then again this week, state health officials identified several dead crows as being infected with the virus, which came into contact with a number of people in the past two summers, killing a handful. Infected birds were found in Union County in 1999 and 2000.

A year ago, we urged state and local officials to begin working with each other, and with other officials, on ways to best contain the problem. And keeping local officials in Westfield, Scotch Plains, Fanwood and Mountainside up-to-date on developments will make life easier for local residents as well as cut down on rumors, unintentional scares and actual emergencies.

Like last year, we have some early warning this year, and it's our hope that everyone — local residents as well as state, county and local officials — will do their respective parts to ensure that the threat from the virus

this summer is limited and doesn't turn into something serious.

Residents should heed the advice of those who tell us that now is a good time to rid their properties of places where standing water could provide a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Gutters at the base of the roof of a house, old water-filled tires in the yard, uncovered swimming pools and areas of poor drainage are just a few of the spots that can easily turn into a mosquito maternity ward.

Granted, West Nile Virus is not a health threat on the scale of, say, the Black Plague. But it is making a mosquito bite potentially more than just a summertime irritation. With cooperation between Trenton, Elizabeth and local municipalities, as well as surrounding areas, and precautionary steps from residents and, especially, parents, we should all be able to enjoy the coming spring and summer months without excessive fear for our health.

## Letters to the Editor

### Is Town Redefining Consultant's Parameters on Building A Deck

The cover story on May 17 regarding the parking situation begins to move the process into the ethereal, the unbelievable. What's decided is undecided. What's done is undone.

The simple fact is that even though the parking situation was initially and repeatedly defined as a downtown problem, the northside of town does not want any more parking. And yet, it cannot be any clearer that increasing parking at the train station on the southside will not, in any way, relieve the downtown parking problem. Just look at the southside station lot on any weekend. Plenty of spaces!

Are we now redefining the consultant's parameters? Sounds like it. Why don't we just tell them that the

council's goal is to build a deck on the southside that will not cure any downtown parking problem but will attract more commuter parking to Westfield with the added benefit of a large empty structure that will attract who knows what every weekend?

The consultant just has to make that sound like a good idea. Considering that we seem to be paying them frequently, that's the least we should request. Of course, we do have the fallback of building two decks immediately so that everyone is upset at the same time and the town is firmly in debt. What's wrong with this picture?

Robin Fry  
Westfield

### Westfield Mayor, Town Council Need To Refund 'Exorbitant' Meter Fees

The ordinance to set up a funding source for the design phase of the parking deck has been voted down by Mayor McDermott, Councilmen Echausse, Betancourt, Albano and Councilwoman Weinstein. It is now incumbent upon the Town Council and the mayor to issue Westfielders a corrective refund on the exorbitant parking meter rates we have been charged specifically to support this fund.

I propose that the mayor and Town

Council reimburse their constituents through free downtown parking at all meters for the same period of time that the doubled rates existed.

While I felt it was my duty as a citizen to pay 50 cents an hour to help cover the cost of a parking deck design phase, it is clearly the Town Council's duty to return this money to us at this time.

Lenore Davis  
Westfield

