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Letters to the Editor

WTC Victim's Brother Commends United Fund of Westfield for Efforts

It has been just over a month since the attack on America. As the brother of a victim, I would like to commend the United Fund of Westfield for all they are doing to help the affected Westfield families. Whether families have needed financial assistance, counseling, information on available services and benefits, home or car repairs, or just a listening ear, the United Fund of Westfield has been there.

I want to thank all those who donated money to the United Fund to help us. The United Fund is coordinating any and all fundraising efforts to be sure the monies raised go to those with the greatest needs.

Thomas Walsh
Westfield

Ward Commission Needs to Restore Boundary for Cacciola Neighborhood

The Cacciola Place community is a vibrant, working-class, majority African-American neighborhood that has thrived in Westfield and adds much to our town. I venture to say that in many ways this community represents the best of Westfield.

But 20 years ago the Cacciola Place community was divided in half. The Westfield Ward Commission of that era saw fit to move the boundary between the Second and Third Wards from the historic railroad track boundary, which naturally bisects the North (Second Ward) and South (Third Ward) sides of town, to Cacciola Place.

This gerrymandered Ward boundary line is the only location in Westfield where the Ward boundary line dips below the railroad tracks, effectively diffusing the voting power of this distinct and historic African-American community.

One effect has been that the Westfield Neighborhood Council, a community center on Cacciola Place which serves the Cacciola Place community, is now in the Second Ward and is represented by Northside councilpersons — while those who live on the other side of Cacciola Place remain in the Third Ward and are

represented by Southside councilpersons. This inequitable diffusion of minority voting power must be changed.

The statistically insignificant difference between the number of persons living on the North side of Westfield as compared to the South side does not justify the gerrymandered election district boundary. The opportunity to fix this problem comes only once every 10 years when the Ward Commission meets following our national census.

On October 18, I call upon the five distinguished members of Westfield's Ward Commission to do what is right — to restore the Ward boundary to its natural geographic location at the railroad tracks and to end gerrymandering in Westfield.

Kenneth Rotter
Westfield

Washington School Principal, Staff Praised for Efforts During Crisis

In the midst of the September 11th tragedy, I would like to commend the Westfield school board and, in particu-

Time Has Come for Town to Move On Two Smaller Parking Decks

We implored you on July 27, 2000 in an ad in this newspaper to construct two, tiered parking structures, one on the South Avenue train station lot and one on the Prospect and Elm Street lots. We remember that 40 years ago the main concern of the Westfield Chamber of Commerce was the lack of adequate parking.

The train station would add 400 to 500 spaces and would be attractively land-

scaped. This deck would provide for current and future commuter demands and would keep Westfield the premier commuting town on the Raritan Valley Line.

The Prospect/Elm structure would also add 400 to 500 spaces. Parking garages can be attractive. The new Summit garage near the railroad station being a good example. It should be not overly large and not a traffic hazard. It would accomplish moving employee and owner parking off the streets and serve and expanding businesses, the restaurants and apartment dwellers. These tiered parking areas, both within the business district, will add to the quality of life of all Westfield citizens and will add to the residential values in Westfield.

The two parking areas, handling 400 to 500 each will cost more than one huge, ugly 1,000 to 1,200-car garage. They best solve the commuter-shopping needs and will be low-key and compatible with the surroundings. So "bite the bullet" on cost to attain satisfaction and quality.

Don't overreact to a few. Do the right thing for the whole. It is time.

William J. Shepherd
Lee M. Hale
Westfield

Walk Your Children to School Day Deemed Success By B.R.A.K.E.S.

Thanks to all who participated in Walk Children to School Day. The B.R.A.K.E.S. (Bikers, Runners And Kids Entitled to Safety) Group would like to thank all of the parents and children who helped make Westfield's second Walk Our Children to School Day such a success.

Over 2,000 people participated in the walk which involved all six elementary schools.

We would like to thank Mayor McDermott and the elementary school principals who allowed themselves to be raffled off as walking companions to the winners of each elementary school.

We would especially like to thank Captain Daniel J. Kelly and Deputy Chief Raymond Luck, Jr., of the Westfield Fire Department for filling in for Jefferson School Principal, Dr. Jordan Schiff, who was unable to walk that day.

We would also like to thank Captain Compton of the Westfield Police Department who took a walk down memory



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 sarcane words.

1. Anabamous — Having the ability to climb
2. Liotrichous — In anthropology, having smooth hair
3. Deipnosophist — A meal table philosopher
4. Graupel — Soft sleet or hail

VALGUS

1. Inflammation of the spleen
2. Hepatitis; jaundice
3. Deviation of the spine laterally
4. Knock-kneed

HELMINTH

1. A parasitic worm such as the tape-worm
2. A medieval cannon on wheels
3. A catapult for hurling rocks
4. A lecher or lewd person

DRECCHÉ

1. Feeling of nausea due to excessive eating
2. Deep feeling of remorse, guilt
3. To annoy, torment or delay
4. Extreme fear; dread

ASTEISM

1. Extreme doubt, disbelief
2. A polite and ingenious manner of deriding another
3. Proficiency in avoiding controversy
4. Hesitation; stuttering

Answers will appear next week.

Putting Emergency Preparations In Place Is No Reason for Public to Be Alarmed

Last month's attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and the more recent anthrax scares amid fears of wider bio-terrorism, have brought home a sobering new reality: no one is completely safe, whether they're at work or at home. Not that we want to scare people, but it's important for all of us — residents and our local governments — to make sure we're as prepared as possible in the event something threatens our area.

We're not calling for bomb shelters to be dug in backyards or 1950s-type air raid drills in schools or a general paranoia about everything and everyone.

Rather, we just want to make sure we're ready to respond if we need to do so. And the preparations don't have to be something to dwell upon daily or obsess over. Instead, they can be planned much like a family's approach to escaping a fire in their house: develop a plan, make everyone aware of it, rehearse it periodically and make refinements as needed. And, in the meantime, we can go about our daily lives.

The American Red Cross has compiled a useful set of recommendations for dealing with threats like those that have occurred in the past five weeks.

These suggestions include the creation of an emergency communications plan in which families choose an out-of-town person to be contacted in the event of a disaster; the establishment of a pre-determined meeting place for family members, and the assembly of a disaster supplies kit to be used in the event of an evacuation. The recommendations also urge keeping

copies of important documents in a place outside the home and checking on the school emergency plan for any school-age children.

The Red Cross also advises families to listen to local authorities in the event of a crisis. And our local governments certainly need to make sure they are adequately prepared in the event of any emergency. If the anthrax scares that have been scattered throughout the country were to hit home, do our towns have a plan to address such a situation and ease the fears of residents?

Are plans in place, both locally and at the county level, to ensure that public safety officials and organizations can do their jobs as smoothly as possible in the event of an emergency? All such plans and contingencies do not necessarily need to be laid out for the public in great detail. Rather, we just need to be reassured that these things are being thought about and discussed. Perhaps it might be a worthwhile idea for our towns to use the local cable television stations to periodically inform their residents about emergency preparedness efforts and what families can do to be prepared.

Again, it shouldn't be the intent of anyone to alarm people. But in the same way we use seat belts to protect ourselves while driving or teach our children how to dial 9-1-1 in the event of a family emergency, it's important for everyone to be prepared in some way, just in case some of the events of recent weeks hit home.

Westfielders Thanked for Helping Family of World Trade Center Victim

I would like to publicly thank some local Westfield residents for coming to the aid of my cousin after the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center in New York City.

My cousin, Maureen Olson, died in the attack. Her younger sister, Jr., was in Kansas on September 11, adopting a beautiful baby girl.

The baby was three weeks early, otherwise Jr.'s husband, Charlie, would have also been at his job in the World Trade Center. They were finally able to get home on Saturday, September 15, but because of New York adoption laws, would not be able to bring the baby home to New York for 30 days. That left them with nowhere to live for the two weeks following her sister's memorial service.

My longtime friend, Terry McKeever, immediately offered them her home in Westfield. That would enable Jr.'s husband, Charlie, to go to work in New York City, something he needed to do as over 40 people in his company were missing in the World Trade Center attack. It would also mean that my cousin wouldn't be in a hotel room for two weeks with a newborn and a 3-year-old.

Judy GaNun of Coldwell Banker in Westfield, upon hearing of the couple's dilemma, arranged for a pass for Charlie to park in the Coldwell Banker parking lot near the train station for the two weeks he'd be in Westfield.

She also supplied some baby items that they hadn't had time to purchase.

Judy and Terry then organized activities for my cousin's 3-year-old daughter so that my cousin could take care of her baby and get some rest. During this time, my cousin and her husband were attending services for numerous coworkers of Charlie's that had also died in the World Trade Center attack.

Judy and Terry were always on hand to babysit for the children.

What do you say about people who offer their home, their love, their time and go to considerable trouble to help those in need — thank you! We are all overwhelmed by their generosity! If Terry McKeever and Judy GaNun are any indication of the kind of people in your town, Westfield has got to be a great place to live and raise a family.

Dorothy Slovak
Alpharetta, Ga.

Placing Cacciola Back In Third Ward Would Correct Incongruity From '81

What constitutes a neighborhood? First, our neighbors, those folks we see every day. Then it's our streets, our children and our associations. We talk and play together, get into one another's business (usually unintended). Our schools, our lifestyles, and our friends.

A few years ago (1981, we're told) a line was drawn through the Cacciola neighborhood, effectively splitting it into two wards, the second and third. We can only speculate as to why this was done. One cannot reasonably conclude that this was just an arbitrary act.

There must be a reason and assumptions abound: Perhaps, to more equitably divide the town's population into its four wards; thus, the apportioning of more from the third to the second; Perhaps, to better serve, from a governing perspective, constituents in both second and third wards; Perhaps, to satisfy a political goal. Who knows the real answer?

It's best not to go back to 1981 and try to determine why the Cacciola area was so divided, but rather to consider the present reality.

The Cacciola neighborhood demographically can be described as ethnically/racially mixed folk who live to-

gether, play together and, generally get along with each other very well. Economically, this neighborhood cannot be compared to the second ward Wyckwood neighborhood. Not much of what goes on in the Cacciola neighborhood is of much interest to Wyckwood citizens and vice versa. Children in the Cacciola area now go to south side schools, mostly Jefferson and Tamaques. In essence, they are Southsiders who, for the most part, live, play and socialize with southsiders. They share common interests and concerns and common geographical boundaries.

To split this area into two political wards that for the most part share nothing else in common makes no sense to us. Geographically, the Cacciola area belongs in the third ward where it once was. The residents of this area believe the third ward to be their rightful domain. Can anyone outside this area know better and reasonably contend otherwise?

Not too long ago, after many years of forced desegregation, children in the Cacciola area were finally allowed to attend their neighborhood schools. It is now time to continue the process of showing respect for this community.

We suggest, that as this once every 20 years opportunity draws near (October 18), that the Ward Commission appointed to execute this important activity act to redefine the Cacciola neighborhood. It (in totality) rightfully belongs in the third ward; and it is time to place it there, where it once was. The Cacciola residents want this and will appreciate the actions of the Commission in correcting this incongruity.

What constitutes a neighborhood? The people of the Cacciola area. Why should the line that splits this neighborhood into two wards be redrawn to put them back into the third ward? Because it restores a fractured neighborhood to its rightful position in our community and restores trust, now lost, in our governing body. Besides, it's the right thing to do.

Donnell Carr
Rev. Leon Randall
Westfield

See it all on the Web!
www.goleader.com

Labor Day Committee Thankful for Support

The Festival Committee for this year's St. Bartholomew's Roman Catholic Church Scotch Plains-Fanwood UNICO Chapter Labor Day Festival would like to thank everyone who participated.

We would especially like to thank those who found time to volunteer either during the festival to run a game, sell pastries, 50-50 raffles, soda, ride tickets, or work behind the scenes to set up, restock or break down.

Because of your efforts and the generous participation from all who attended, UNICO and St. Bartholomew's Church will again be able to contribute to so many worthy charities.

See you next year.
Thank you again.

Labor Day Festival Committee
Scotch Plains

