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Letters to the Editor

Latest Version of Home Occupation Bill Gives Towns Full Power on Local Zoning

I am responding to your recent editorial, which invited my views about Assembly Bill No. 1193 which, was passed by the General Assembly on June 28, 2001, and which I supported.

A-1193 is the "Family Home Occupation Act." It classifies certain home occupations as accessory uses needing no use variances in a residential zone. It also authorizes municipalities to limit or exclude certain home occupations altogether.

It establishes guidelines for municipalities pertaining to self-employed individuals and entrepreneurs who work from their homes, and allows municipalities to set their own standards for a variety of issues. The bill permits self-employed individuals to work from their homes only if they meet specific threshold standards enumerated in the bill and abide by ordinances of the municipality.

The bill has been amended many times for the past two sessions and in this session of the Legislature as well. I opposed it prior to the current amended version because of my concern for protecting local zoning standards. The following provisions in the bill give municipalities full control over home occupations.

A provision added by the New Jersey Senate and included in the current bill as Section 5a provides that municipalities may limit or prohibit, by ordinance, any home occupations, including but not limited to those involving manufacturing, warehousing, retailing or providing services, which it deems would be incompatible with the residential zones in which they are located.

Another provision added by the Senate and included in the current bill is Section 6. It states that the provisions of this act shall not be construed as limiting in any manner the powers of a municipality to protect the health, safety and welfare of its residents, including the investigation and elimination of nuisances.

On June 21, 2001, the Assembly amended the bill to add Section 5b, which specifies that a municipality may ban any or all family home occupations by adopting a municipal ordinance.

Section 4a provides that a municipality may establish standards, which will apply in residential districts concerning



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. Valgus — knock-kneed
 2. Helminth — A parasitic worm such as a tapeworm
 3. Drecche — To annoy, torment or delay
 4. Asteism — A polite and ingenious manner of deriding another
- VEVICATORY**
1. Porous; leaky
 2. Tending to have a sharp taste and a pungent smell
 3. Valueless; barren
 4. Tending to cause blisters
- VIMINAL**
1. Pertaining to twigs
 2. Speedy; quick
 3. Lasting only for a short time
 4. Occurring once every six years
- CESPITOSE**
1. Murky and filthy
 2. Growing in tufts or clumps
 3. Containing grooves
 4. Having a dull or faded appearance
- PICULET**
1. Insignificant
 2. Fussy, petty
 3. An extra seat on a motorcycle behind the driver's seat
 4. Any woodpecker

Richard H. Bagger
State Assemblyman
Westfield

Developer's Lawyer Says Leader Story Amounted to 'Character Assassination'

I am writing this letter as the Attorney representing Michael Mahoney in response to a recent front-page article in the issue dated October 11, 2001, concerning his property located at 750 East Broad Street.

Unfortunately, your article amounts to character assassination by inference and I believe may severely damage Mr. Mahoney's ability to do business in this town in the future.

I note that your article did not mention any names of those neighbors who allege that Mr. Mahoney somehow misled or deceived Mr. Thorne in connection with the purchase of the property.

In addition, many of the statements contained in the article are not correct. For example, Mr. Mahoney contracted with Mr. Thorne in 1996 to purchase the property not in 2000.

At that time, Mr. Thorne indicated to Mr. Mahoney that the Temple had approached him to buy the property, but they did so shortly after his wife died and he felt that was inappropriate and thereafter declined to deal with the Temple.

Mr. Mahoney indicates that Mr. Thorne never spoke to him with any request that he not sell the property to the Temple, nor did he put any restrictions on the transaction except that the house should be demolished and that no one was to be permitted to reside there. Mr. Thorne wanted to continue to reside there for the balance of his life and although the contract did not require that arrangement, Mr. Mahoney agreed.

The properties in the neighborhood, which your article alleges have sold for many times the amount Mr. Mahoney

Charles H. Brandt
Westfield

Park Middle School Fields Project Example Of Government Entities Working Together

Two months ago, the prospects for additional ballfields in Scotch Plains looked a bit bleak. The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders had just rejected the township's proposal to develop a small portion of the Ashbrook Reservation into ballfields and soccer fields; the county's decision came two years after their initial and enthusiastic backing for the plan and dealt a blow to Scotch Plains' plans to add badly-needed fields.

But last week, the township, with help from Fanwood and from the two towns' joint board of education, was awarded county grant money to expand the available ballfields at the Park Middle School. The project — which is being funded under the county's recently announced Field of Dreams initiative — will entail a reconfiguration of the existing layout of the present fields, which

will allow for additional ballfields and soccer fields to be added.

It was only two weeks ago that all three entities — the Scotch Plains and Fanwood governments as well as the board of education — passed resolutions allowing the grant request to be submitted to the county. They all deserve credit for moving so swiftly on this matter. The project is also a result of the three entities' shared services committee, which was set up early last year to explore ways to share common local government services in an effort to save taxpayers some money.

The Park Middle School ballfields project is a concrete example of how well this shared services concept can work. All the members of that committee deserve credit for their hard work and creative thinking.

Why Haven't Local Libraries Applied For Funding From \$45 Mil. State Bond?

Seventy-three communities in New Jersey will soon be receiving nearly \$45 million in public library construction aid from the state government — the largest amount ever awarded.

These bond funds, which were set aside two years ago by then-Governor Christine Todd Whitman, will be used for new, expanded and renovated library facilities.

These funds represent positive and forward-looking thinking on the part of the state government.

Public libraries are one of the real treasures in a town, and any improvement to those facilities is a welcome one. This type of funding does not come along often. The last time the state provided construction money to libraries was 1990, and that amount was only \$500,000.

The last time libraries received aid from Washington was in the early 1980s.

So how did our towns' libraries fare? How much will Westfield receive?

Zero, it appears. Scotch Plains? Zero. Fanwood? Zero. Mountainside? Again, zero. Are the libraries in these towns completely up-to-snuff, fully satisfied that their facilities are entirely adequate and in no need of state aid? We'd like to hear those in charge of our local libraries explain if they ever applied for assistance and, if not, why not.

Demand for this assistance was apparently overwhelming, leading the state's Public Library Construction Advisory Board to grant about 83 percent of the amount each facility sought. But it seems that every public library that applied will be provided with something.

Assistance — whether in the form of outright aid or matching grants — is money that local taxpayers won't have to come up with.

Did local leaders drop the ball on this one? Or are they satisfied with the state of our libraries and see no room for improvement? We'd be curious to hear some answers.

Roosevelt Students Help Raise Funds For Sept. 11th Fund

For our sixth grade public speaking class at Roosevelt School, we had a project to do to change the world. We decided to sell candy at soccer games and donate the money to the United Way's September 11 Fund of Westfield.

We had a table set-up with candy and a donation box. We also walked around Memorial Field and went directly to the people watching the games. In two hours and 15 minutes, we collected \$111.69. We also received another \$80 of generous contributions from our families. We learned that when everyone comes together in the community, we can all make a difference. We want to thank everyone who helped us to raise this money!

Brandon Heroux and Eric Zagorski
Westfield

Courage of Local Families Affected By Trade Center Disaster Praised

Editor's Note: Andrea McDermott is the wife of Westfield Mayor Gregory S. McDermott.

Since the horrific attack on our nation, I have had the opportunity to work with the United Fund Of Westfield's September 11th Committee, and have personally visited with each of the Westfield families affected by this tragedy.

The women I have met have given me great strength. They have been gracious and most appreciative of all we have done for them. I admire their courage and determination.

I have also been touched by the overwhelming response of our community. The support of the community has enabled us to help the families continue to keep their lives as comfortable as possible, as they are going through this very

Action Needed by Council to Allow On-Street Student Parking at WHS

Editor's Note: The following letter written to Westfield Third Ward Councilman Neil F. Sullivan. The letter was signed by Westfield High School Parent Teacher Student Organization Board members Cynthia Goldman, President; Sheraine Arbustman, Vice President; Karen Reed, Treasurer; Laura Brockway, Recording Secretary; Lucille Davie and Sharon Maines, Corresponding Secretaries.

We write this letter to advise you, Mayor McDermott, and the other members of the Town Council of the problems that are resulting from the actions taken by the Town Council to restrict parking in the vicinity of the high school.

As you are aware, construction is to begin on an addition to the high school in January, 2002 - several months away. Any traffic spaces that were utilized by

Cacciola Neighborhood Once Again Insulted by Westfield Town Politics

Once again, the people of the Cacciola area were insulted by local politics. How so? By (politics) influencing the Ward Commission to reject a proposal to restore the area to its original (and proper) third ward position in our town.

After listening to all the arguments from those representing this often disrespected area, the Commission cast its (obviously) predetermined vote against the people of Cacciola, opted to go with a so-called "Republican Proposal" and once again demonstrated the incompatibility between politics and moral courage.

Despite the needs and neediness of this area, it appears to be the usual politics. We shall now see if the locally elected officials visit this community and listen to their concerns and take note and act. We shall see if they are speaking untruths when the express that they are just as concerned with the concerns of these people as they say they are.

We shall see if they really will practice the equanimity of which they so

Dr. Choye's Decision Not to Allow Choir To Participate In Show Was 'Horrendous'

I am writing to you in order to express my disdain in the decision made by Dr. Choye concerning field trips. I am especially addressing the cancelled field trip for Terrill Middle School concerning their choir participation *A Christmas Carol* at Madison Square Garden.

I am a parent of one of the students and I also work at 140 Broadway, one block from Ground Zero. I want to state that the decision by Dr. Choye, as an American and an educator, is horrendous. She stood up in front of parents and the Board of Education and spoke of how she, as an American, is traveling to Boston and New York as not to let the terrorists win.

I feel as an educator, she obviously supports the curriculum that is taught to our children of what it means to be an American. In history, people like Paul Revere, Benjamin Franklin, Theodore Roosevelt and others stood up to oppression and war. There's the Boston Tea Party and other events that demonstrate how Americans stood up to tyranny.

Today, our government, from President Bush down to Mayor Giuliani, is strongly telling everyone to maintain a normal lifestyle.

In speaking to parents on Tuesday, October 16, she was looking for our input, even though I got the feeling by her comments that her decision was made up prior to this meeting. In discussions

Donnell Carr
Westfield



In order to remedy this pressing problem, we offer the following suggestion: the Town Council should adopt a resolution designating the streets near the high school as areas where students may park until such time as the high school lot and the Armory become available again.

In order to assist the police in identifying cars of high school students, the town or the school could issue a window sticker identifying the car as that of a WHS student. We remind you that as the months pass the situation will become worse as juniors begin to drive to school.

Parent Teacher Student Organization, Executive Board
Westfield High School, Westfield

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General News - Friday 4pm
Weekend Sports - Monday 12pm
Classifieds - Tuesday 2pm

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