

## The Westfield Leader

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## Letters to the Editor

### Mr. Thomas Remembered for Work In Creating Westfield Foundation

As President of the Westfield Foundation's Board of Trustees, I am writing to express our sincere sadness at the loss of one of our founding fathers: H. Emerson Thomas.

We recognize the historic importance of his actions more than 25 years ago when he and five associates formed a community foundation and nurtured it during its founding years. If it weren't for Mr. Thomas, there wouldn't be a Westfield Foundation - a community foundation that has provided more than \$2.5 million in financial assistance to more than 105 non-profit organizations over the years.

H. Emerson Thomas's end of life here

in Westfield should propel the beginning of a new resolve for each of us to lead our lives with the same commitment he had to help Westfield and Westfield residents. This commitment is best stated in our mission: "to promote the betterment of the community and the enhancement of the quality of life for all of its citizens."

If it weren't for Emerson Thomas, Westfield would not be the community we cherish today. Westfield will be an even better place if we all take to heart Emerson's generous spirit of volunteerism.

Gerald J. Glasser, President  
 The Westfield Foundation

### Shackamaxon, Rahway Corner Should Be In 'Guinness Book' For Accidents

I feel compelled to write this open letter because of what I have been witnessing in Westfield for the last 11 years. You see, I live on the corner of Shackamaxon Drive and Rahway Avenue, or if you prefer, "accident corner."

I have seen more accidents in the last few weeks than most other corners in town experience in years. I am shocked that whoever has control over our Westfield pedestrian and motor vehicle safety hasn't banned this corner from further use. This corner should be written up in the "Guinness Book of World Records" for accident frequency.

While there are many contributors for accidents at this corner, I'll just bring up a few, like speeding on both Rahway Avenue and Shackamaxon Drive. This never ceases to amaze me for both streets are clearly marked as 25 miles per hour streets and everybody routinely travels them at 35 and above. Let's look at Rahway Avenue first, the more traveled of the two, and try to figure out why people would exceed the speed limit and who should we blame.

How about those brand new drivers from Westfield High School, surely they are to blame and quite frankly some of them are. I have seen some high schoolers exhibit some very careless driving around Shackamaxon. However, I have seen many more older every day people exhibit worse driving than our children, business people late for work to mothers taking their kids to school.

All day long, "speeders" go through the curve turns on Rahway Avenue leading to the infamous corner at Shackamaxon Drive. They have no idea that they are putting themselves and others in jeopardy.

These speeders get to the Shackamaxon intersection so quickly that they routinely catch cars crossing through the intersection at an alarming rate. No one is immune; in fact we just had a very serious accident involving a police car. We have residents and non-residents speeding through here, town vehicles, and garbage trucks and, well, you name it. Everyone's playing this "real life Russian Roulette" game.

Even when I travel up and down Rahway Avenue I have to make a conscious effort not to speed. I have to think about the fact

that there are three major Westfield schools on this road and three elementary schools one block back from Rahway Avenue, and then this road has my undivided attention.

Now as for Shackamaxon Drive, it just seems to be one of those streets that invite speeders maybe because it is a straight run to Lamberts Mill or the absence of stop signs. Maybe motorists don't see all of our children that are out there from one corner to the next or maybe they just do.

Now other contributors like blowing through the Shackamaxon and Rahway stop sign doesn't help and neither do those ever-popular rolling stops to make a right turn onto Rahway, not to mention drivers talking on cell phones. I don't know all the reasons but something has to be done. I will put together a petition for all those concerned to sign to show whoever is overseeing our public safety that enough is enough.

Richard Wilson  
 Westfield

### SP-F Schools Get Off to Good Start Despite Lack of Contract Settlement

*Editor's Note: The following letter was written to the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education and to Scotch Plains Fanwood Education Association President Ed Leonard.*

\*\*\*\*\*  
 School got off to a good start this year, despite the absence of a contract between the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education and the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Education Association, and we appreciate it. It is a marked improvement from the dismal atmosphere that accompanied the opening of school three years — the last time school began without a settlement in place.

Looking ahead, we expect teachers' full participation in upcoming Back-to-School Nights around the district as we cannot overemphasize the importance of this program for parents and for teachers. Parents want to get to know their children's



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. Vellicate — To twitch
2. Acheron — Fabled river of hell
3. Fodient — Adapted for digging or burrowing
4. Prodition — Treachery; treason

#### RIXATRIX

1. A mass of carapels in a single flower
2. An expert in cutting precious stones
3. A club or a stick
4. A scolding woman

#### POLYPRAGMON

1. In math, a problem which can be solved several different ways
2. A busybody
3. Said of gods, having the form of an animal
4. A place or apartment reserved for women

#### GYASCUTUS

1. Reeling; unstable
2. An imaginary animal of gigantic size with legs long on one side for walking around hills
3. Intestinal infection caused primarily from eating raw seafood
4. Alcohol poisoning

#### DIASKEUAST

1. A doctor who specializes in intestinal disorders
2. One who revises; an editor
3. A magician
4. One who dissects, such as a coroner or biologist

## Americans Need to Be Patient And Patriotic During Long Battle Ahead to Defeat Terrorists

The level of patriotism exhibited by people across the nation in the two weeks since the terrorist attacks has been nothing short of inspiring. When have so many American flags been seen — hanging from store windows, front porches, antennas of cars, building fronts, bicycle handlebars, backpacks, lamp posts and good old flagpoles? The September 11 tragedies in New York City, Washington, D.C. and Shanksville, Pa. galvanized the nation, uniting it behind a single cause like no other event since the seizure of American diplomats by Iranian revolutionaries back in 1979.

But, if the U.S. is now entering a war against international terrorism, how can the wave of patriotic fervor we're experiencing at the moment be sustained in the months and years to come? The attacks that destroyed the World Trade Center towers, severely damaged the Pentagon and resulted in the deaths of nearly 7,000 people were the most heinous crimes ever committed against America, and, as the Bush Administration has been saying, will require a long, sustained and costly effort to ensure that something similar is never repeated.

If our military is fortunate enough to eliminate someone like Osama bin Laden, that alone would not eliminate the threat. Instead, military strikes will need to be repeated again and again — over the course of months and years — in order to restore any semblance of security to the U.S.

This first war of the 21st century is not going to be over by year's end or next summer or the next presidential election.

Thus, one of the biggest tasks for our leaders is to keep the American people, who are not known for their long memories, focused on the matter at hand. We'd hate to see the American citizenry lose interest in the battles to come as their lives return to some normalcy and other, more immediate matters become priorities. Not that our families and our jobs and our personal lives should be shunted aside so

we can focus our attention 24 hours a day on this national crisis. That would be impossible and unhealthy. Rather, we just want to make sure Americans continue to remember the horrors of September 11, when we may have lost family members and friends in the stunning attacks that darkened that sunny late summer morning.

Will the American flags now decorating our towns still be flying three months, six months, a year from now? Will the longer lines at our airports, now embraced by a fearful public, still be tolerated next summer?

Will the security checks at tunnels and bridges leading to New York City become too much of a nuisance at some point? Will the checking of workers' ID badges at the base of office skyscrapers be as gratefully accepted as they are today once the weather turns bitter cold? Will we grow impatient for immediate results as U.S. military retaliation gets underway? And how will we react if our sons and daughters are sent off to fight in a far-off part of the world?

The coming effort will make the Gulf War a decade ago seem like a video game and will make some of the previous larger conflicts in which we were victorious look like the textbook war-fighting that they mostly were. In the coming conflict, there will be no driving back a single enemy or encircling our foe and then cutting him off. It's not going to be pretty or easy or simple or quick — which is why it is so important to maintain the level of patriotic fervor and zeal for defeating this scourge.

Keep the flags flying. Don't forget those who perished. Remember the brave men and women, including those people from our area, who went into Lower Manhattan and made heroic efforts to save lives. Support our military personnel who will be risking their lives to protect ours. And, most importantly, be patient and never let that awful September morning — when we watched the twin towers slide away into history — fade too far into our memories.

## Actual Size of Lower Manhattan Disaster Is That of Westfield's Business District

On a map, ground zero in Lower Manhattan — the site where the World Trade Center towers stood until 16 days ago — looks like a fairly small area. And it is, in relation to the overall size of the borough. Manhattan County is, perhaps surprisingly, the country's smallest county in terms of square miles, just 23. Driving or walking through the most famous of New York City's five boroughs can seem, at times, like an unending journey, but the truth is, the island stretches barely two miles between the Hudson and East Rivers.

Anyone who has seen "ground zero" up close and in person can't help but be startled at the size of the affected area — small as it may be in relation to the rest of the city — and the level of destruction wrought by those two airplanes on September 11. Put matters into local perspective and one gets a better idea of how horrific the events earlier this month were.

As of this week, the number of persons listed as missing and presumed dead in the rubble in Lower Manhattan stood in excess of 6,400. Add in the nearly 300 already confirmed as dead and the casualty figure exceeds 6,700 — close to the population of Fanwood. The total number of persons injured in the attacks was also well in excess of 6,000 — close to the population of Mountainside.

The size of the immediate area of destruction in lower Manhattan is roughly the size of downtown Westfield, with a larger zone that is closed off to the public extending several thousand feet in each direction. Imagine the central business district in Westfield being inaccessible from as far away as the Mountainside border to the north, the Shackamaxon Road neighborhood to the south, Crossway Place to the west and the Garwood border to the east.

The pictures on television and in newspapers and magazines may give us some idea of the amount of rubble created by the

collapse of the twin towers, but the extent is mind-boggling. The television and radio antenna atop the North Tower apparently ended up impaled in the Trinity Cemetery several blocks away. Papers from the offices in the towers drifted to Brooklyn a few miles away. Nearby apartments have been littered with dust, debris and papers from the towers' implosion. Some two billion pounds of steel and glass and concrete are piled in a mound nine stories high at ground zero — that's higher than the steeple of The Presbyterian Church in Westfield on Mountain Avenue. Picture a million or so automobiles piled 70 or 80 feet high in downtown Westfield and you might get a clearer picture of what the brave search team and rescue workers have been up against the past two weeks.

It's been more than a century since there was a war zone in the continental United States; the zone in lower Manhattan is breathtaking in its size and enormity. We pray we never have to look at another such scene of carnage and destruction in our lifetime.

### Democracy, Like American Spirit, Cannot Be Broken by Terrorism

With the tide of tragedy that has risen around us, the upcoming elections at the state, county and municipal level seem too absurd to contemplate. Our hearts are focused on rescue and recovery. Citizens have rededicated themselves to our nation in significant ways — standing in line to give blood, donations of money, food, clothing and medical supplies.

There is something else Americans can do for their country. Participate in your government. It will be tough to shift gears and vote. But voting, like rebuilding, is an essential step in the process. In exercising our choice for elective office, we reaffirm

our faith in the democratic process.

This is not only a call for all Americans to register to vote, but also a call to all candidates, at every level, to come out to speak — tell us your position of the issues that face the office to which you hope to be elected. Speak about the process we now see so clearly, and hold so dearly.

We urge all voters to take the next step, let your voice be heard by exercising your right to vote. Democracy, like the American spirit, cannot be broken by terrorism.

Merry C. Wisler  
 Union County League of Women Voters

### Park Middle Teachers Respond To Letter to Editor From Parent

*Editor's Note: The following was submitted by the teachers of Park Middle School after it was read to them at a faculty meeting.*

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 The content and tenor of Mrs. Rigano's letter (September 20<sup>th</sup>) to the editor regarding teachers at Park Middle School compels us to respond publicly as a staff. Although we appreciate that Mrs. Rigano's actions arose from her zeal to protect her daughter, it's clear to us that she made no attempt to investigate this incident and contacted no one at the school to at least balance the version she received which differed significantly from what actually occurred.

To set the record straight, we, the teach-

ers at Park Middle School were congratulated by our administration for our handling of the crisis on Tuesday and in the ensuing days. We all met and decided on a course of action that would enable our students to deal with their emotions and also learn the facts about this horrific tragedy.

It was talked about in English and History classes, or whenever a teacher sensed a need. Counselors were standing by to meet the individual needs of children.

Regarding the T-shirt "incident," we do have a school wearing policy in place. When a student wears an inappropriate T-shirt to school, (i.e. advertising alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, or an inappropriate saying) we will ask them to change their shirt or turn it inside out.

The shirt in question read, "Who p— in your cornflakes this morning?" All teachers and administration found it offensive. There was no confrontation, no screaming, no one was humiliated. The student was asked quietly to go to the ladies room and turn the shirt inside out. After the second time, she complied, without much ado.

At Park, we consider ourselves a family. Our students' well-being will always come first. We work with our parents to ensure a positive environment for our students. Let's keep working together and keep the lines of communication open.

Teaching Staff of Park Middle School

### Community Forum On WTC Cancelled

WESTFIELD — A community forum on the World Trade Center tragedy and its aftermath that had been set for Monday, October 1, at St. Helen's Roman Catholic Church in Westfield has been cancelled due to observance of the Jewish holiday.

The event was to have been co-sponsored by the Union County Human Relations Commission and the Union County Prosecutor's Office. No new date had been set as of press time yesterday.



Karen Benovengo  
 PTA President  
 William J. McGinn  
 Scotch Plains

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