

## The Westfield Leader

— Established 1890 —

**The Official Newspaper of the Town of Westfield and the County of Union**

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## WF Mayor McDermott Responds to Councilman Walsh's Letter, Editorial

It is not my policy as Mayor to publicly challenge one of my colleagues on the Town Council.

However, Councilman Kevin Walsh's recent letter to the paper inferring that I was seeking to keep the council in the dark on ongoing police contract negotiations merited a public rebuttal.

I believe his remarks were an inappropriate attempt to politicize a governmental process that, as *The Westfield Leader* editors noted, should remain devoid of "political hoopla."

Negotiating contracts in our town has never been a matter of party politics in the past.

To clarify nonetheless, Mr. Walsh should have known that copies of the revised police contract were made available to every member of the Town Council prior to our June 11, 2002 meeting. Our labor attorney, Rick Danser, had meetings with the attorney for the PBA back in December of 2001 and has advised the council of these discussions on February 5, April 30 and again on June 11th. The entire council will be updated again on July 30 to discuss the status of the PBA contract.

I know that council business can be time-consuming, but it did behoove Mr.

Walsh, given his position as chair of the Personnel Committee, to review these materials thoroughly and if necessary, raise any questions, concerns or suggestions he had on the issue at these meetings with either me, his colleagues on council or even, Mr. Rick Danser. None of us heard from Mr. Walsh until he chose to speak via letter to the editor.

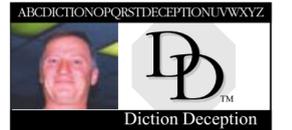
I can reassure the public that Westfield is progressing on its negotiations with the Police Department and I am optimistic that we will find a satisfactory conclusion to these ongoing negotiations. As Councilman Walsh should have known, arbitration has been scheduled for September 13, a date that was agreed on by the attorney for the PBA, the town's labor attorney and the arbitrator back on June 26.

I have confidence in Westfield's finest and in the town's legal representation that the needs of Westfield's police officers and the interests of the town of Westfield will both be met in the end. Westfield and the fine men and women who serve as our law enforcement officers both deserve our best — and unbiased — effort.

Gregory McDermott, Mayor of Westfield



Westfield Mayor Gregory McDermott



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. Yauld — Active, vigorous  
2. Querl — To coil or wind round  
3. Meed — Reward or merit  
4. Partan — Scottish for crab

**TOVARISCH**  
1. Unspoken; unthinkable  
2. Comrade in the Soviet Union  
3. A large cape, or short, full cloak worn in the first half of the nineteenth century  
4. A disorderly, unkempt, rough person

**TRAUJLISM**  
1. Roving idly; going astray  
2. Passing on unfavorable genetic traits  
3. Responding slowly to an external stimulus  
4. A stammering

**RUMAL**  
1. A handkerchief  
2. A small brook or rivulet  
3. In India, a peasant or tenant farmer  
4. A package in which pepper and other dry products are imported

**FRUMENTACEOUS**  
1. Occurring or growing in small, woolly or hairy tufts  
2. Of or made of cereals  
3. Producing smoke or soot  
4. Abundant; plentiful

Answers will appear in next week's issue.

### Erratum

Park Middle School in Scotch Plains reported that its Guidance Department accidentally omitted Katherine Doremus from the Sixth Grade Regular Honor Roll for the fourth marking quarter.

### Erratum

In the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Construction Update article in the July 25 edition of *The Leader/Times*, we mistakenly announced that Coles Elementary School was completely air-conditioned when it should have referred to School One. We regret the error.

See More Letters  
On Page 5

## Attorney General Made Smart Choices In Naming Romankow and Manahan

Last Friday, two important position changes occurred. Theodore Romankow was sworn in as the new Union County Prosecutor. Thomas Manahan left this post and was named as Director of the Office of State Police Affairs. Mr. Manahan assumed his new post in Trenton last Monday.

Over the last five years, we have had several dealings with Mr. Manahan, from difficult crime issues to simple person-to-person issues. On the tough issues such as rape, murder, drug dealers and fraud, Mr. Manahan and his staff operated at the highest level of professionalism. Further, they seized the initiative by implementing many new programs that helped reduce crime, assist enforcement and make our communities safer.

On a more personal level, we discussed Westfield High School sports. He is a big supporter and

lovingly followed the exploits of his son and daughter. We enjoyed exchanging articles and photographs with him.

The position directing state police affairs involves many things such as police reforms and monitoring racial profiling. It seems to require a person with good judgment and impeccable ethics. If so, Mr. Manahan is the right person for the job.

Mr. Romankow tells us that the transition went very well. He and his staff are ready to go. The position as County Prosecutor is a very big job and important to all of us. Our impression is that Mr. Romankow is a great choice. We look forward to working with him and his staff.

We think that Attorney General David Samson made two very good moves regarding Mr. Romankow and Mr. Manahan.

## WF Police Chief Praises Officers; Contests Councilman Walsh's Letter

As I approach the completion of my second year as Chief of Police I would like to thank the men and women of the department for their dedication and hard work.

The accomplishments of the department can be measured in a variety of ways, a lower crime rate, a better response time, accident and injuries are down and we have not experienced a fatal accident during my tenure. I believe these accomplishments are a result of the diligent work of the officers who understand that a fair enforcement of the law can result in a safer and more secure Westfield.

These labors also resulted in a significant increase in revenue to the town. The efforts in community policing may be more difficult to measure, however in my view equally important.

The police department has expanded the DARE program, established a sub-station, created the Westfield Police youth academy, a police and youth basketball program, developed liaison programs to the alternative schools located in Westfield and a program for the protection of our seniors. We have partnered with town organizations such as the Westfield Downtown Corporation, the Westfield Y, the BRAKES Group, and our religious community. This year we will introduce a full time school resource officer at the Westfield High School and an Internet safety program for our elementary and middle schools. Many of my officers donate their time in the development and execution of these programs. Programs including organizing and coaching PAL football, girl's basketball and softball are strictly volunteer and unpaid.

The Westfield PBA has also adopted this community policing philosophy. The PBA sponsored and funded fishing derby is a great example of how our officers give their time in establishing a strong relationship with the Westfield community.

I do not believe words exist to tell you how proud I am of the relationship my officers developed with our victims of the 9/11 tragedy. These men and women displayed the highest in human compassion and sensitivity.

I also want to thank Mayor Gregory McDermott for being there time and time again in support of all these endeavors. This Mayor has never failed to physically appear when possible. The Mayor has always written letters thanking and congratulating my officers for their achievements. The Mayor has also recognized my officers at open council meetings and other public displays. This support goes a long way in keeping morale high in the department. Mayor McDermott is a true leader, who we can all be proud of.

A letter to the editor by Councilman Kevin Walsh dated July 25, 2002 came as quite a surprise and left me bewildered. I have been present for two council conferences sessions when Fredrick Danser, the town labor negotiator, has given extensive and comprehensive pre-

sentations regarding the PBA contract negotiations. These presentations have included data regarding the expired contract and the present conditions of police contracts including how Westfield police pay fares with surrounding and similar departments.

Mr. Danser also clearly and precisely explained the town's available options in their proposals to the PBA and the PBA responses. This letter is also disturbingly misleading, as I believe Mr. Danser has brought back to the negotiating table the direction that the town council had given him, as he should.

I have worked closely with Mr. Danser on this and other personnel matters and I believe Mr. Danser is a gentleman negotiator who is well informed, extremely experienced and a fair minded and moral person. It is my hope that the Westfield Town Council will rely on Mr. Danser's credentials and allow him the leeway to present the Westfield PBA a contract that is mutually negotiated and mutually acceptable devoid of political posturing or interference.

Bernard Tracy, Westfield Police Chief



Westfield Police Chief Bernard Tracy

## Government Should Have E-mail Emergency Notification System

The use of e-mail for emergency notification of local affairs has proven to be a powerful and effective tool based on the few things that we've been able to achieve. We have been operating such a system for several years and many of you have asked us why local government hasn't put such systems in place.

We have an Internet site that can be updated quickly and we have two emergency e-mail systems — one which is strictly limited to those of you who sign up, and a second one which is a compendium of the thousands of e-mails that we receive over the course of our business. The first system is a user sign-up list, the use of which we limit to a few times a month for notice of key updates of the newspaper on our website. We carefully avoid "spamming" our subscribers.

The second system can be thought of as a "doomsday" list. There were three situations in the past where we felt that it was necessary for us to use this one: Hurricane Floyd, 9/11 and the 2001 water supply crisis. Hurricane Floyd, in September of 1999, was the first time we activated this system.

As a result of our experience with Hurricane Floyd, we suggested in a 1999 editorial that the Office of Emergency Management and local governments develop and maintain such a system. E-mail emergency communication was particularly useful during the day of 9/11. Cell phones were inoperative and there was considerable confusion. We manned

our e-mail and Internet systems continuously — answering questions about the best routes out of Manhattan, forwarding emergency announcements, gathering facts and publishing the information.

We don't believe that government yet has emergency email and Internet systems in place. We think that they should. To do so, they will need to install the necessary capabilities and provide trained personnel.

Government will need to overcome obstacles of bureaucracy, such as jurisdiction disputes and fear of lawsuits. For the most part, government offices operate 9 to 5 for five days. Emergency response requires 24/7. Initiative must be allowed and encouraged to enable quick response.

There are other concerns. The state sells social security numbers to marketers. The emergency e-mail list must not follow the same course. The emergency system must not be used for any other purpose; otherwise, its usefulness will become diluted.

Then, there's system design, construction and operation. Government has difficulty doing things itself. It needs to debate about the funding, obtain a consultant, prepare bid specifications, award a contract and hire personnel. This process could take years.

So, in the end, government projects can end up being very expensive, often delayed and built with the purpose forgotten. Even so, we believe that the local and county emergency email and Internet systems should be built.

## Letters to the Editor

### Resident Says Traffic Calming Creates Danger On Rahway Ave.

I have watched in utter amazement over the last few weeks as crews have worked to make Rahway Avenue a dangerous street to bike, jog or drive on. As someone who grew up in Westfield, my children now traverse Rahway Avenue as I did when I was their age. It has never been a dangerous road, and except for the intersection with Shackamaxon Drive, serious accidents have fortunately been few and far between.

I have always taken pride in the intelligent minds that seem drawn to govern our town. Be they Democrats or Republicans, their ranks are often filled with professionals who have chosen to share their talents in law, budgeting, accounting etc. to help keep Westfield the fine town that it is. Even when I have disagreed with those elected to run our town, I could never call them stupid, until now.

It is hard to ponder what on earth our council members, mayor, and town engineer were thinking when they came up with this project. To make a smooth, clean, safe intersection like Clifton Street and Rahway Avenue into a dangerous, narrow and constricted mess defies explanation. As a biker I find it horrific that numerous "bump-outs" force me close to passing cars while traveling down Rahway Avenue. Indeed, when my newly licensed son came home from college for the summer I immediately warned him to avoid taking Clifton Street and Rahway Avenue to get to town. It's just not safe!

When I spoke to Kevin Walsh, one of my councilmen, about this disaster a few weeks

ago, he mentioned that he had gotten numerous calls about the situation. He sought to reassure me that the fire chief had taken a fire truck down Rahway Avenue to see if it could make the turn onto Clifton Street. He also informed me that parts of the project near Willow Grove Road were scaled back due to the public outcry. How much money was paid to the RBA Group to design this disaster? Wasn't it their job to think of fire trucks and the like?

In a recent edition of *The Westfield Leader*, I read that more traffic calming is on the way. Fortunately for my neighbors and I they're attacking the North Side now. The RBA Group wants \$30,000 just to design the concept for Gallows Hill Road and South Chestnut Street. That's amazing. Suggestion to my elected officials: Make it a fourth or fifth grade project. A town wide competition for the kids. One thing's for certain—they will come up with something better than we got on Rahway Avenue!!

Jim Black  
Westfield

### Reader Thanks County Manager Devaney

I would like to thank George Devaney, Union County Manager, for taking the initiative to cut the expense to be incurred by county officials and employees for the upcoming League of Municipalities Conference in Atlantic City this November. It seemed that every year, more and more county officials and employees attended at the taxpayers' expense.

But not this year! From the memo that Mr. Devaney handed to me after the last Freeholder meeting: "Please be advised, that attendance at the 2002 League of Municipalities Conference (being paid for or reimbursed from county funds) will be limited to the Department Director plus one staff member. Requests for additional staff attendance will be considered on an individual basis. All such requests must be submitted in writing to myself with detailed justification as to the specific need of the employee to attend. If you have any additional questions, please let me know."

Thank you Mr. Devaney for acting on this matter.

Vincent Lehotsky  
Rahway

### Westfield Resident Cringes At Council Session Acrimony

Have you ever been invited to someone's home for dinner only to find yourself sitting through a horrible family fight? That's what it felt like Tuesday night when I attended the Town Council working session. Town Administrator Jim Gildea invited me because the council had scheduled to discuss the merits of a major revision to the Tree Preservation Commission ordinance of which I am a member.

Unfortunately, the council's schedule became side tracked after Mayor McDermott raised questions about Councilman Walsh's recent letter to this newspaper about the state of contract negotiations with the Westfield Police. I cringed, as did other members of the community, who, like me, were invited guests asked to comment on legislative matters that were intended to improve the quality of life in this town. Unfortunately, like polite dinner guests, we watched helplessly as the bitter interecine political strife that appears to have marked this years council sessions emerged yet again. Ladies and gentlemen of the council,

remember that you are serving and representing all the people of Westfield. I applaud and admire your countless hours of dedicated hard work that have clearly created and helped maintain a strong and vibrant town.

I have worked with many of you, from both political parties and am in awe of your collective energy and stamina in dealing with the issues that must be dealt with to keep this town running as effectively as it does. But last night's persona, vitriolic and intensely partisan remarks about what was essentially a "who said what when" argument merely reinforced all those stereotypes about politics.

I had once considered joining your ranks because I believe in public service, but last night's rancorous display likely dispelled any notion of entering the fray.

I'm certain you will all act responsibly and will treat the police and all the municipal workers fairly. But your words and actions have created a climate of hostility that is becoming both troubling and tiresome.

Michael Snizek  
Westfield



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Classifieds - Tuesday 2pm  
Ad Reservation - Friday 4pm  
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