

The Westfield Leader

— Established 1890 —

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

Member of:
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National Newspaper Association
Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce

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Letters to the Editor

Resident Opposes Parking Decks, Calls For Non-Binding Referendum

Residents of Westfield, do you want to pay higher taxes for the next forty years to subsidize two parking garages for the benefit of the few landlords that own the real estate downtown?

The train station has 649 parking spaces. If the town council passed a resolution requiring two commuters per car; bingo, you now have 1300 spaces available, less traffic, less pollution, less maintenance and less real estate taxes. A number of single commuter spaces can be reserved for the handicapped.

I feel that the taxpayers of Westfield are intelligent enough to have the opportunity to decide their own future. Why won't the council members and the mayor put the parking garages on the ballot as a binding or non-binding referendum

question and let the people decide their future? Maybe the majority of people in Westfield want to subsidize the parking garages. Come to the town council meetings and express your opinions or forever hold your peace and pay the price.

Election time is coming. If you are against the garages, vote the current members out as a protest vote, even though the new candidates may be in favor of the garages.

Most governments are trying to cut expenses, not Westfield. The state legislature requires a referendum for all school budgets, why not a referendum for all bond issues over a million dollars: politicians can take a town broke.

Bill Brown
Westfield

New Traffic Changes Questioned On Streets Surrounding Rahway Avenue

Over the past few weeks I have read letters printed in your newspaper regarding the traffic "calming" fiasco on Rahway Avenue. It is obvious that the traffic may be "calmer" but the taxpayers are not. I confess to not having paid attention to the Council meetings in which the issue was discussed. However, it never occurred to me that the final plans would actually make matters worse. There is not sufficient space at the intersection of Rahway and Clifton for two mid-size cars to make turns. This road is especially dangerous as the school year approaches when to the mix of cars, SUVs, walkers, runners and cyclists, we add children on their way to and from Tamaques Elementary School, Edison Middle School and the High School. At the very least, the bumpouts should be painted with a reflective coating to make them more visible. The same goes for the bumps.

I am writing this, because I realize that the same outrage that has been perpetrated on Rahway Avenue is being planned for other parts of town. It seems to me that instead of wasting money to

aggravate those of us using town roads, other devices could be chosen. For example, on South Avenue and on Terrill Road, the streets have been narrowed with the use of paint (from what I hear, cheaper than bumpouts). The visually narrow road forces motorists to follow a single line, yet there is ample space for emergency vehicles, walkers, runners and cyclists.

I have noticed fewer cars on Rahway Avenue at the same time that I have seen an increase in the traffic on Boulevard and Summit Avenues and other roads that parallel Rahway Avenue. The measures taken on Rahway Avenue have been draconian, to say the least. They have forced people to use other ways to get around. Any student of Physics would have said that if you restrict flow one way, it will find another path. To the residents of Boulevard and Summit this physical law presents a problem. Will the town "Rahway-ize" Boulevard and Summit as well?

MariaLuisa Rios Candelore
Westfield

Cell Phone Users Warned About VoiceStream's Lack of Area Service

Prospective VoiceStream users beware. I have a VoiceStream cell phone, but I can't call out or receive calls in or around my home. Often I cannot send or receive calls and sometimes get cut off in mid-conversation elsewhere in the Scotch Plains/Fanwood area or surrounding region, as well as further out in New Jersey.

VoiceStream says this is because its nearest station does not adequately cover our area. But the company refuses to cancel my 12-month contract without a

\$200 penalty. It points out that the contract says, "VoiceStream makes no warranties, express or implied, regarding the service or equipment." In other words, VoiceStream says it may not be able to provide you the service you signed up for, and if it doesn't provide that service, that's too bad—but you still have to pay for the service you are not receiving. Talk about a Catch-22.

Nick Gicas
Scotch Plains

Temporary Disability Challenges Policy at Westfield Public Library

I would like to draw attention to a policy of the Westfield Public Library that prevents me from taking out books and tapes due to my temporary disability.

I am a resident of Springfield and am paying an annual fee of \$45 for my Westfield library card. Recently I underwent surgery, which prevents me from leaving my home for several weeks. This is the time when I really need the library! I was told by the Library Director that only I, in person, can take out library items for myself unless the person I ask for help also possesses a Westfield library card.

This policy is both absurd and discriminatory against persons with dis-

abilities. I think that the library should accept a proper proxy for a disabled person, in the spirit of Federal and State laws that protect the disabled. Furthermore, this policy discriminates against persons who pay for their library privileges: their neighbors cannot be of any help, as suggested by the Library director, since they usually don't have Westfield library cards.

I enjoy your library but resent the inflexibility of this policy. I hope that the Library's Board of Trustees will find a way to allow me, and others in my situation, to take advantage of the library's resources.

Sharon Bard Rulf
Springfield

Resident Not Taken by Surprise With Graffiti at WF Train Station

I am writing in response to your two articles in last week's issue, August 8, on the train station: graffiti and a strong-arm robbery. I am not shocked by these stories at all. I have had one bike stolen from the station and another two vandalized.

It is a disgrace that teenagers are allowed to loiter at the station. Commuters at the tail end of a long journey home are now faced with kids blocking the steps, cursing, smoking, and bikes strewn across the sidewalks. This is unacceptable behavior! The residents of Westfield work too hard, earning money to pay for top-notch schools and beautiful parks, to face this every night.

I have witnessed parents dropping their kids off to play at the station as if it

were a skateboard park. What sort of liability will our town incur if someone is seriously injured?

When we moved out of Manhattan, the only town we looked at was Westfield. This was based on recommendations from co-workers and lifelong residents who love the town. Don't get me wrong, we are very happy with our choice to live in Westfield. We love it too! But if our first impression of Westfield was stepping off the train and seeing what I see now, we would have had to consider other options.

Thank you for giving me the space to voice my opinion.

Joseph B. Dougherty
Westfield

Health Care Colleagues Asked to Post Practice Statistics for Patients

A patient asked why I post statistics about my practice in the waiting room. She indicated she'd never seen this in any other professional office. My answer was simple: "It's a good thing for patients to know."

In the current wake of corporate greed and blatant disregard for reporting a company's true financial picture, I am asking my colleagues in the mental health profession to disclose their records. Of course, I'm not proposing that we name patients or hand out copies of tax returns. I suggest that we disclose, say every year or two, statistics that are pertinent to patients. Perhaps we can publish the figures in the public notice section of the local newspaper, as well as in our offices. These are the statistics I track, and am

glad to share with patients: the number of people I treat by diagnostic code, the percentage of people who reach it, my fees and the results of patient satisfaction surveys I administer. Why shouldn't every healthcare professional share this and other pro-consumer information? We can sign off on this information, which can include a statement such as: "I swear that these statistics are true."

It appears that CEO'S are going to have to personally sign off on financial and other disclosures. Let's do the same. It'll limit doubt, and perhaps make it a little more difficult for the few bad apples to stretch the truth about their success as healthcare providers.

Ronny Glassman, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Mountainside

Master Plan Meeting Scheduled

The Westfield Planning Board will conduct a Master Plan work-session open to the public on Thursday, September 5 at 8 p.m. in the Council Chambers in the Municipal Building at 425 East Broad Street. The Master Plan establishes land use, zoning and development criteria for the town over the next several years. The public is urged

to review the documents and to provide their comments.

The update to the Master Plan is on file at the library, in the Town Clerk's office in the Municipal Building, and at the office of the Secretary of the Planning Board. Much of the information is available at www.goleader.com/features.

Students Forge Ahead in Career Goals Through Newspaper's Intern Program

The Student Intern Program of *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood* newspapers, which is under the supervision of Michelle H. Le Poidevin, A&E and Education Editor, has just finished a banner year, and the program for next year shows great promise. It's gratifying to see our young people grow and succeed. However, just like the high school football coaches Steve Ciccotelli of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Raiders and Ed Tranchina of the Westfield Blue Devils experience each September, it's time to start all over again with new kids.

Last year, we had a couple dozen high school students writing for the newspapers. Over the summer, we had several great college students such as Tracy Evans at Notre Dame, Michael Pollack at Gettysburg College and Seth Augenstein at Boston University.

Most were from Westfield, but we had students from Scotch Plains, Fanwood and Mountainside too. This coming year, a senior from Summit intends to join the group. The high school students meet, get to know how to work with each other and have a team leader. The students are given real assignments, and they do a great job. They are on the firing line from time to time, and they come through. Miss Le Poidevin enjoys helping the team.

A couple of years ago, a young man walked into the office and said he wanted to work for the newspaper. I looked down over the counter to be able to see him and asked if his parents knew he was here. I also suggested that he come back when he was 16. He told me he was 16 — "sort of." I sloughed him off — but he kept coming back. Now Steve Krakauer drives to the office and looks down over the counter to see me. Steve has written over 80 articles since that time and has been part of local television productions and our Internet operations. When

I told him he was a promising writer but a lousy photojournalist, he solved that too. Next week, he's off to Syracuse University to study journalism and media communications.

So, thank you team leader Steve Krakauer. Goodbye and good luck. Next week, Jeremy Lipstein becomes team leader. He's a senior at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School. Contact Jeremy if you're interested; he's well prepared and capable for the job. He may be reached at editor@goleader.com.

We hear from our past interns. They are doing well and engaged in interesting things. Maria Woehr of Westfield is in Billings, MT as a newscaster for an ABC-TV affiliate. Steve Chiger of Westfield is in Chicago and will complete graduate school in journalism from Northwestern this September. Jasmine Vasavada of Scotch Plains graduated from Harvard, spent a few years in Paris and is now in the Trenton area working on clean air and toxics issues for the New Jersey Public Interest Research Group. I received a much-appreciated "thank you" note from Rob Freundlich, a graduate of Westfield High School's Class of 2002, who's off to Johns Hopkins University to study International Relations. A summer intern for six years, Lauren Gruman received her B.S. in business from Delaware. We're happy she is now a full-time employee with the newspaper.

So, in September, our new team will be out in the field to engage in the games. As always, we have confidence that the new kids will rise to the challenge and prepare for the world ahead. September is also the birthday of *The Westfield Leader* — 112 years young!

It's astounding that the community sustained a local newspaper all that time. And this newspaper is still young. But, it's even more remarkable to see the outstanding character of our young adults today.

West Nile Deaths in Louisiana Raise Area Concerns; Residents Advised on Protection

The seven deaths in Louisiana this summer and the nearly 90 other cases diagnosed in 34 other states have again brought to the forefront the potentially fatal health risks associated with the West Nile Virus, the mosquito-borne disease that was first detected three summers ago in this region.

Although our immediate area has thus far been spared this summer unlike the past few years the risks are far from over, some health officials are warning. The highest occurrences of encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain caused by the virus, are seen between now and September.

It's been a hot and, at times, rainy summer making for a perfect breeding environment for mosquitoes. As we've done in previous years, we urge state and local officials to work with each other, and with other officials, on ways to best prevent any problems. 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.

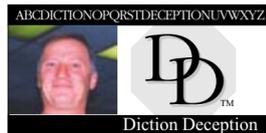
The West Nile Virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that carries the virus by feeding on an infected bird. The virus is not directly transmitted from birds to humans or from person to person. West Nile Virus generally causes flu-like symptoms, but the elderly are at higher risk of more severe reactions to the

disease.

Union County's West Nile Virus Task Force is working to alert residents and educate them about the danger posed by mosquitoes, and the county is urging residents to report any sightings of dead birds, especially crows or kestrels.

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. In addition, people, when outdoors, should wear clothing that covers the skin and use recommended insect repellent on exposed skin. They should also avoid outside activity at dawn, dusk and during the evening, and avoid mosquito habitats, including areas with heavy underbrush.

Granted, West Nile Virus is not a horrific health threat. But it is turning a mosquito bite into potentially more than just a summertime irritation. With cooperation between Trenton, Elizabeth and local municipalities as well as surrounding areas such as New York City, and precautionary steps from residents and, especially, parents, we should all be able to enjoy the remaining weeks of one of the hottest summers in recent memory without excessive fear for our health.



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 **Dictionary Deception**.

Answers to last week's arcane words.

1. Thirling — The act of boring, drilling, etc.
2. Defecate — To purify or remove impurities
3. Tridder — A species of sandpiper
4. Sagene — A fish net

TURSO

1. A large dolphin of the North Atlantic having few teeth
2. Unsubstantial, slight or flimsy
3. A genus of acridian grasshoppers; a cicada
4. A sharp spear used in harpooning sea turtles

STINGO

1. A stem, stalk or support
2. Limit; restraint
3. Strong beer or ale
4. In mining, an inclined trough for washing ore

PISTAREEN

1. A former Spanish gold coin
2. A basin with a drain, near the altar of a church, for the disposal of holy water
3. Concerned with petty affairs
4. Resembling a pea in shape and size

ASTRAGALUS

1. Faulty secretion by the sebaceous glands
2. The anklebone
3. The act of binding fast, or confining
4. Relating to the genesis or evolution of the stars

Answers will appear in next week's issue.

Assemblywoman Invites All To Enjoy The Jersey Shore

I invite everyone to enjoy the warm water and beautiful New Jersey beaches. The legislature works hard to preserve the shoreline, keep beaches clean and protect public access to beaches. The state promotes the public's right to know about beach water quality. As a result, New Jersey's beach-lovers can be assured of enjoying the Jersey shore.

The shore is the most valuable tourist attraction in New Jersey. In 2002, the state recorded more than \$16.6 billion in travel-related expenditures. To help maintain the quality of this important asset, legislation (A-2506) was signed into law July 1. This law allocates one-half of all boater registration fees in 2002, and three-quarters of these fees in 2003 to dredging and beach replenishment projects.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) also works to insure safe, clean beaches through programs such as the Cooperative Coastal Monitoring Program (CCMP). This program assesses water quality and investigates sources of pollution. The removal of floatable material such as wood, garbage, recyclables and medical waste from tidal shorelines is a priority.

New Jersey is one of the first states to partner with two environmental organizations, Oceana and Earth 911. These groups provide visitors with up-to-date beach water quality information and a map of public access points along the shore. This information can be obtained at www.njbeaches.org.

Asw. Linda Stender
Fanwood

Library Director Seeks To Serve the Disabled

Regarding the letter from Mrs. Rulf of Springfield, I offered her several solutions, including meeting her in the parking lot on her way to or from a doctor's appointment or allowing her husband to use her car.

I know that the Springfield Library has delivery to the homebound, just as Westfield does. That might be an alternate, short-term solution for her.

The Westfield Library was designed with accessibility for the disabled in mind. It certainly is not our intent to make it more difficult for anyone to use either the building or the materials inside.

Barbara Thiele
Director

Erratum

In the August 8 edition of *The Westfield Leader*, entitled, "Westfield Parking Director Resigns; Council Agrees to Settlement," Madison Avenue resident Robert Buccino was misnamed as Robert Casino. We regret the error.

Deadlines

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

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