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STRAIGHT ON!
“Scotch Plains Is All Wet,”
Declares Fire Chief!

By **BILL SHEPPARD**
Specially Written for *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times*



ABCDICITIONOFQJSTDECEPTIONUWVXYZ



Diction Deception

Fire Departments from all parts of New Jersey and New York “turned out” with a few thousand residents last Saturday for the Scotch Plains Volunteer Fire Department’s “wetdown”, celebrating the arrival of their new apparatus, Engine 23.

Forty or more fire trucks, numerous Chief’s cars and rescue vehicles lined Martine Avenue outside the Southside station. The fire crews took turns using hoses to spray the jubilant crowd throughout the hot afternoon, keeping everyone cool. There was water, water everywhere from cannons, hoses and balloons dropped from 100-foot ladders. They allowed me to ride atop the 100-foot ladder, then tested the range of their hoses on me from all angles. It was truly a “wetdown!”

There was great food, beverages and entertainment at the “wetdown” from noon to 6 p.m. The Union County Police and Fire and Drum Corps paraded about. Mayor Martin Marks and members of the township council joined in the celebration.

Firefighter Dana Christianis and Captain Michael Gilliam of Somerset’s Community Volunteer Fire Company were proud to be named “First Unit to Arrive” as they were presented with an Engine 23 participation plaque from the SPFD. Department Chaplain, Father Donald Hummel, christened Engine 23. In private, a man from FDNY was overheard saying as he placed his hand on the side of the truck, “God Bless Truck 23 and all those she carries.”

As the “wetdown” celebration concluded around 6 p.m., a smiling SPFD

Chief said to *The Leader* and *The Times*, “Scotch Plains is all wet. Mission accomplished.”

Over 40 area fire departments participated with Scotch Plains at the “wetdown.” They included Community Fire Company, Laurelton Fire Company, Berkeley Heights Ladder Company, Piscataway New Market Engine, Avenel Fire Department, Hopewell Engine Company #1, East Franklin Fire Department, Garwood First Aid Squad, Clark Fire Department, Winfield Fire Department, Garwood Fire Department, Roselle Park Fire Department, Fanwood Fire Department, South Plainfield Fire Department, Colonia Fire Department, Rexelsville Fire Department, River Road Fire Company, Holmes Marshall Fire, Millington Fire Company, Mountainside Fire Engine, South Amboy Fire Department, Kearsburg New Point & Comfort, Rockaway Township Fire, North Brunswick Fire Department, North Centerville, Washington Valley Tanker, Warren Township Fire, Volunteer Ambulance Corps, Swartswood Volunteer Fire Department and the Westfield Rescue Squad. Members of the New York City, Staten Island, Irvington, Union and Kenilworth fire, police and rescue units also attended.

The Staten Island firemen said New Jersey covered us with over 30 departments responding during 9/11. Scotch Plains came to Staten Island. Now, we’re here to cover you.

It was a great day for the Township and for the men and women of service — “StraightOn!”

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. Tursio — A large dolphin of the North Atlantic having few teeth
2. Stingo — Strong beer or ale
3. Pistareen — Concerned with petty affairs
4. Astragalus — The anklebone

OUZEL

1. The European blackbird
2. A calcareous deposit found in the sacs of the ear
3. A type of Greek alcoholic beverage flavored with the seeds of the anise plant
4. A concealed dungeon with a trap door at the top

LUGUBRIOUS

1. Playful; sportive
2. Muddy; turbid; thick
3. Pertaining to a freak of nature; a monstrosity
4. Excessive grief; very sad

LALLATION

1. The ejection of the small, glassy igneous rock from a volcano
2. Imperfect pronunciation of the letter “R” making it sound like “L.”
3. Playing lightly over a surface without burning it; flickering; said of a flame, etc.
4. The act or sound of yodeling

DEXIOTROPIC

1. Having whorls that rise to the apex in counterclockwise spirals
2. Readiness of mind in managing operations; mental adroitness
3. Turning or turned to the right
4. Pertaining to the east coast of a country, continent or large island

Answers will appear in next week’s issue.

Westfield Resident Thanks DWC for

Downtown Atmosphere
Last evening my 15-year-old son and I had some errands to run, and decided to stop for dinner in town. We ate outside, listening to the sounds of a wonderful jazz band and, after dinner walked around town listening to three or four other jazz groups and enjoying the pleasant atmosphere.

Hundreds of people were listening to the music, enjoying the great food in our town, and talking with friends. I took the opportunity to tell my son that he was very lucky to live in such a great community, and that not all communities have so much to offer.

I just wanted to thank the Downtown Westfield Corporation for sponsoring such events and giving us the opportunity to enjoy them.

Gwen W. Kealy
Westfield

Sports Section Should Include Photos of Winning Teams

I was born and raised in Scotch Plains and look forward to reading your paper each and every week. Now more so, since I am half way across the country - living in Dallas. Thank goodness for the Internet!

I can’t tell you how disappointed I am in your photography pertaining to the story on page 13 of the August 8 issue regarding the game between Fan Tran and Benzmaniac. Where are the pictures of the winning team? Fan Tran wins, and you have photos of the losing team?

I don’t get it.
Mary Ann Graham
Dallas, Texas

Leader/Times Should Follow up on Articles

I am writing in response to the article published in the August 15 edition, “Commerce Bank Coming Branches”.

In this day and age - to print an article off the Internet, without proper follow up, is very disturbing. As the owner of Norris Chevrolet, who has owned and operated this business in the town of Westfield for the past 25 years, and the Norris name has been in town for some 75 years, I can’t believe you just go ahead and print erroneous facts in a matter of he said, she said. It’s quite upsetting when our local newspaper publishes information that is wrong, especially after checking with a local merchant who explained that the information was wrong.

Let me make this point, Norris Chevrolet is not selling or moving from our location on 433 North Avenue. We will continue to do business in the town of Westfield, selling & servicing GM vehicles.

Mitchell Friedman,
Owner
Westfield

Editor’s Note: This newspaper stands behind the accuracy of the article published on August 15. The *Leader* and *The Times* contacted Fred Grosiano, Senior Vice President of Commerce Bank, located in Flemington, N.J., at the request of Mr. Friedman. Mr. Grosiano told this newspaper that Commerce Bank had a written agreement with Mr. Friedman that contained a 60-day contingency clause where either could back out. Mr. Grosiano said that he understood that Mr. Friedman was considering another site for his business that didn’t happen. That was months ago. Mr. Grosiano said unfortunately, we know how to put things on the website, but we don’t know how to take them off. The newspaper checked Commerce Bank’s website this Tuesday afternoon and the street address in Westfield for the coming branch has been removed.

Education on Taxation Needed Before Voting to Get Rid of Property Taxes

No one likes taxes, especially property taxes — the most unfair of all the assessments that government has at its disposal. This November, Scotch Plains residents will have an opportunity to express their opinion about property taxes, specifically whether a state constitutional convention should be convened to consider reforms to the property tax system, in a non-binding ballot referendum.

A few months ago, it looked as if voters around the state would be voting, in a binding vote, on whether to convene such a convention. But, the State Legislature decided again to bail out on the matter and continue to ignore the growing problem of runaway property taxes and its effects on property owners, especially those on fixed incomes, and community stability.

We applaud the Scotch Plains government’s decision last week to give voters a chance to voice their opinion on property tax reform and we would urge other towns to follow suit — if not for the fact that the county’s deadline for getting such a question included on the November ballot has all but passed.

At least in Scotch Plains’ case, we would urge those on both sides of the issue to educate township

voters on the ramifications of property tax reform. It is very likely that lower property taxes would mean an increase in other taxes, such as the state income tax or sales tax. Are people prepared to pay less of an onerous tax in favor of one that is based more on one’s ability to pay? How would a reformed property tax system affect local education? Which types of towns would stand to lose under a reformed system? And which ones would benefit? Would higher levels of state education support mean more Trenton bureaucracy?

An informed debate about all of the effects of property tax reform is very important so that the November referendum doesn’t turn into an overly-simplified “Don’t you hate property taxes?” question that would likely be supported by a near-unanimous majority. There are many questions to consider before voting and we urge those with an opinion on the matter to speak up. And in the meantime, we again call on our local state legislators to speak up as well so we know where they stand and, equally important, where they stood back in the spring when legislation allowing a statewide referendum on a constitutional convention was still alive.

We Hope Lack of Unity Doesn’t Turn ‘Field of Dreams’ Into a Nightmare

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education took a surprise position last Thursday on the shared services “Field of Dreams” project by disagreeing with its partners — the Borough of Fanwood and the Township of Scotch Plains.

The board’s action caught everyone off guard, including Mayor Louis Jung of Fanwood and Mayor Martin Marks of Scotch Plains. The Board of Education acted without the presence of or a prior conference with the project design consultant, Killam Associates.

There was a closed-door meeting at press time yesterday, August 21, between all parties in an attempt to work out the differences. After 10 months of work on this popular project, we’re surprised at the 11th hour acrimony caused by the Board of Education.

On October 25, 2001, it was published in *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood* that the Union County Freeholders had approved the matching funds of \$300,000 through a shared services agreement to go with \$100,000 each from the Borough of Fanwood, the Board of Education and the Township of Scotch Plains. There were all smiles at the time.

Last October, Freeholder Chairwoman of the Union County Trust Fund Public Advisory Committee, Linda Stender, said that this was the first shared services project to fund ballfields in Union County under this grant. It was promised that priority would be given to applications that promoted shared services between communities or organizations.

The Field of Dreams grant program was designed to expand current usage or acquire additional playing fields for Union County’s 21 communities. The

Freeholders allocated \$2.1 million in matching grant dollars for acquisition or expansion of recreational playing fields.

“The rocky roads of the past are behind us now,” said Mayor Marks.

“The Field of Dreams Program seeks to promote shared services projects to create a greater benefit to communities through partnerships,” said County Freeholder and Trust Fund Committee member Mary P. Ruotolo.

Mayor Marks, addressing the public at an October 17 conference, said that shared services was a way to save tax dollars and will be the protocol of more future projects. He cited the increasing numbers of field users, both young and old, numbering in the thousands, who would benefit from these improvements. “The joint project between Scotch Plains and Fanwood has set a new benchmark and is a model for future shared services projects,” Mayor Marks said.

Also present at the press conference was Mayor Jung, then Board of Education President Dr. Donald Sheldon, Freeholder Chairman Alexander Mirabella, Vice Chairman Lewis Mingo, Jr., Freeholder Daniel P. Sullivan and Scotch Plains and Fanwood council members.

Everyone had hopes then that shared services would be a way for the communities to get things done at lower cost and minimum taxes. Well, taxes haven’t gone down and there is concern about the viability of sharing when all parties don’t seem to understand the concept. We think the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education is a little out of step with the rest of the community on “The Field of Dreams.” We hope it doesn’t become a nightmare.

Letters to the Editor

Georgia Reader Corrects Spelling; Tells of Growth and Southland Golf

Regarding your photograph of the young golfer in your office printed on Page 12 in the August 1 edition of *The Westfield Leader*, please note that the correct spelling is Newnan, Ga. — not Newman, as captioned under the photo. I live in Peachtree City, Ga. Our town is next to Newnan in the next county.

Newnan is a traditional southern town that is suffering from growing pains and the “northern influx.” However, the

county commissioners and other property owners and developers are making a killing in the real estate market from the northerners moving in. It is a “love-hate” relationship.

Golf is big around here. Peachtree City has three courses within city limits, and Newnan is following suit.

Honey Corbin Dancz
Peachtree City, GA

Resident Honors the Families Affected By the Tragedies of September 11

Our world stopped on September 11, 2001. Lives were changed forever as ordinary men and women became heroes.

James A. Nelson, a Port Authority police officer from Clark, New Jersey, is one such hero. On the morning of September 11, 2001, he kissed his wife Rosanne good-bye and headed to his job in Jersey City. Little did his family know they would never see him again.

Local Woman Thanks Police Officers for Help

I wish to express my grateful thanks to the two officers who came to my aid the night of August 2 when we lost our power.

The officers came to my house very promptly. Because I use a chairlift, I was stranded downstairs. These officers put me on a chair and carried me upstairs. I’m ashamed I didn’t get their names, but they know who they are. God bless them and keep them safe.

Jennie Jordan
Westfield

When the call came in, after the first plane hit the World Trade Center, Jimmy left the safety of his office to do what came naturally to him - help those in need.

But, unlike other times when he put his life on the line...this time he would not return.

He perished saving the innocent men and women in the burning tower. But, as heroes died, others were born.

Surrounded by family and friends, Rosanne and her two daughters, Annie and Caitlin, have spent the past year trying to rebuild their shattered lives by honoring Jimmy and struggling, together, to move forward.

Rosanne, Annie and Caitlin are my heroes. Finding love and strength from one another, they are an example of determination and courage for us all. As we pause to recognize September 11, may we not only remember those we lost, but honor the families who have survived the nightmare.

Pamela S. McClure
Westfield

Scotch Plains GOP Picks Sorge To Replace Celentano

Former Mayor Bill McClintock, Chairman of the Scotch Plains Republican Committee, has announced that lifelong resident Carolyn Sorge has been unanimously selected to replace Guy Celentano on the slate of Republican candidates for Township Council in this November’s election. Mr. Celentano recently withdrew from the council race and resigned the balance of his council term because of personal and professional commitments.

Ms. Sorge was raised in Scotch Plains by her mother, Phyllis, and her late father, Ed Sorge, Jr. Mr. Sorge was a former president of the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad. As have other Sorge family members, Ms. Sorge followed in her father’s footsteps by joining the rescue squad in 1988. While still an active member of the rescue squad, Ms. Sorge became Scotch Plains’ first female volunteer firefighter in 1997. Although subsequently trained and employed as a registered nurse, Ms. Sorge worked as an administrative assistant in the township offices of the Mayor and Municipal Manager for several years. She is also currently a member of the Scotch Plains Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Mr. McClintock hailed the addition of Ms. Sorge to the Republican ticket. “Carolyn’s experience in local government really complements that of her running mates, Deputy Mayor Frank Rossi and Nancy Malool, a former Planning Board member and Chief Legislative aide to the late Assemblyman Alan Augustine and Assemblyman Tom Kean, Jr. When you add in Frank Rossi’s years on both the Fanwood and Scotch Plains councils, the Republican slate of Rossi, Sorge and Malool really presents an impres-

sive array of experience in state and local government.”

Ms. Sorge stated that while her experience in local government, the rescue squad and the fire department are important assets, “I feel that my status as a lifelong resident of this community is perhaps more relevant. My family and I have deep roots in Scotch Plains and that has taught me more about what is important to our residents than anything else.”

In accordance with state statute, the Scotch Plains Republican Committee forwarded the names of Malool, Sorge and Planning Board member Ken Greenman to the Township Council as potential replacements for outgoing Councilman Celentano for the remaining four months of his term. The council will select one of the three names at its September 3 meeting to be Mr. Celentano’s immediate replacement.

