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## A Look Back at Westfield's Master Plans Since 1964

By LAUREN S. PASS  
*Specialty Writer for The Leader/Times*

Sometimes when writing articles, we at *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood* have to do a lot of research in order to report. Most times this research becomes a history lesson.

A new master plan for the Town of Westfield is set to be unveiled at a special public meeting of the planning board on Monday, June 24, at 8 p.m. As I began to look at the proposed new version of the master plan for Westfield, I quickly realized that I needed to look at the last version, done in 1991, and, more importantly, the original version.

Although there may have been a master plan done in the 1920s or 1930s, it was either never formally adopted, or lost. The first master plan in existence is from 1964.

Between 1960 and 1964, Westfield lost its last 0.2 percent of farmland and really became the suburban community we are all familiar with today.

When the zoning was reviewed in 1964, most properties were zoned for 100 feet wide, 12,000 square feet. As the planning board looked into this, it found that more than 75 percent of the lots in town had widths of less than 100 feet.

In 1964, traffic and congestion were already a problem, and a traffic plan was included. Not to anyone's surprise, the South Avenue Circle was already a major traffic problem.

The town was, however, still underdeveloped; a good portion of the southwest corner of town was nothing but paper streets. The development on Orinda Circle was not completed and there was a street named Netherwood with homes on it where Brightwood Park now exists.

The land use breakdown has changed significantly over almost 40 years. In 1964; 2 percent of the land was vacant, 85.6 percent was residential, 2.9 percent was apartments, 9.2 percent commercial and 0.3 percent industry. By 1991, those figures had changed significantly: 2.6 percent was vacant, 62.72 percent was residential, 2.8 percent was commercial, 0.27 percent was industry, 19.91 percent was public/semi-public use and 12.01 percent was transportation.

A comparison between the 1960

and 2000 census figures shows that the population of Westfield declined by almost 2,000 people over the last four decades.

A lot of changes have occurred in the past 10 years, since the last master plan. We have seen major changes in the downtown and new homes being built in the area. Many streets have been added or expanded throughout town and some projects are still ongoing. We also have the addition of the Second Westfield Senior Citizens Housing Unit on nearly nine acres of land.

The land use chapter of the plan was amended in 1977 and revisions were made to the housing section in the late 1980s. The 1991 master plan's housing section was revised in 1992 after the town was involved in a lawsuit regarding low income housing.

The new proposed master plan's key theme is to keep stability within our almost fully developed community. Most of what is incorporated into the new master plan is the re-zoning of several areas in town. This will change not only what types of things can go there, such as homes and businesses, but also the sizes of the lots and the structures built on them. The plan additionally calls for further traffic calming measures, a historic preservation plan, a community facilities plan and a housing plan.

*The Leader/Times* is currently working with the Department of Public Works and the planning board to get the new master plan onto the Internet for everyone to review.



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. Atokous - Producing only asexual offspring
2. Perduellion - Treason
3. Athanasia - Immortality
4. Clepe - To call or address a person

**PARULIS**

1. A boil of the gums
2. The act of bringing forth or being delivered of young
3. Stingy or miserly
4. Evenly formed on both sides; bisymmetrical

**ACROLEIN**

1. Very pale of faded
2. A genus of flying marsupial, including the opossum mouse
3. Yellowish or colorless liquid used as tear gas
4. A daredevil

**CARROW**

1. Fat; blubber
2. In Ireland, a gambler
3. Careful or anxious
4. The decay of teeth or bones

**GALYAK**

1. A flat, glossy fur made from the pelts of lamb
2. The Russian wolfhound
3. Thick soup prepared from barley
4. An Eskimo medicine man

## Congratulations To The Class of 2002, The Leader/Times Wishes You All The Best

The class of 2002 will be graduating from area high schools this month, and our congratulations go out to all of those students many of whom probably thought that high school, for better or worse, would never end.

High school is that short interregnum between childhood and adulthood-where you are increasingly treated and expected to act as an adult but are still supposed to be home by curfew and subjected to rules and limitations. You have a great deal of freedom and yet most of you had dinner on the table every evening, a roof over your head, a place to sleep and a rightfully assumed sense of security.

This year's graduating high school seniors will be entering an adult world full of more uncertainty than any high school class since, perhaps, the heights of the Vietnam War. The class of 2002's final school year literally began with the painful ending of a long national slumber that had been generated by a booming economy and the belief of many in a world where America was immune to the globe's troubles. The September 11 attacks shattered that idyll and changed many aspects of our lives. Coupled with a mixed economy, a case can be made that those graduating seniors getting ready for college, jobs, marriage and the world beyond; should be anything but optimistic about their futures.

We disagree, though. There is still a big world out there to explore and experience. Granted, it is somewhat tenser than it was a year ago. Security concerns are more important than they used to be. Jobs may not be as overly plentiful as they once were. Parents, always secret worriers when it comes to their kids, will likely worry a bit more as their children leave home for their own lives. But a changed and less-than-perfect world should not discourage today's young adults from being a part of it. Nothing is accomplished by being frightened to experience all the wonders that life has to offer.

Graduation from high school is a major milestone in one's life, sort of like learning to walk, only now, as an adult. What this new stage in life means is different for everyone. Some of you will head for college in the fall while others will choose to start working immediately. Some may marry and start a family relatively soon while others will defer those major commitments for years. Some may be headed

for boot camp as they begin their military careers. Some of you may know exactly where you want to go in life while others are still trying to figure it all out.

Whatever choices you're making for the immediate future, only you, the members of the Class of 2002, know what is best for you. Resist the temptation to compare yourself with your friends and peers in the years ahead. Don't measure yourself against others. Success has many definitions and fits every person in a different way. Don't undermine your self worth by comparing yourself with others. Success is taking chances even though you fear failing. Remember the old saying that it's better to have tried something and failed than to not have tried at all. Success is setting your own goals and not by what others deem important. It is doing what makes you feel fulfilled, not striving to keep up with the crowd.

The world needs people who are passionate about their life's work, whether it's healing the sick, teaching our children, creating a work of art, solving problems, fixing a car's engine, inventing a needed product, saving the whales, serving the public, opening a business, keeping our communities safe or donating their time to a worthy cause. And you can do your part by traveling, learning, exploring, taking risks, branching out, making new friends, growing, and discovering what your passions are.

As you grow older and life gets inevitably more complicated, you may also look back on the past few years as a relatively blissful time, despite all the worries about grades, boyfriends and girlfriends, peer pressures, appearances, clothes, cars, fitting in and all the other crises that, at the time, seemed like major worries. And we'd wager that most of you, in the decades to come, would also have recurrent nightmares in which you've either forgotten your locker combination or neglected to attend class all year long.

Of course, there will be time for today's high school graduates to figure all of that out. For now, though, savor the summer, relish the time with your friends and family, and enjoy these final weeks before you embark on the grand adventure known as life. You will find it to be a fast-moving train, so hang on and enjoy the ride. Again, congratulations to the Class of 2002.

### Reader Praises Leader/Times For Editorial On the Memorial Day

One of your readers, Neil Scognamiglio also of Westfield came upon an Article on page four of the May 23rd edition, called "Remember The True Meaning of Memorial Day This Year In Town".

It made a most favorable impression upon him and he made a copy and he mailed it to his father who lives in Brooklyn, New York. His father also read it with much approval and in turn, mailed it to me.

His father, Joseph A. Scognamiglio is my co-chairman of our annual Memorial Day and Veterans Day Observances Committee of our Post, these past 30 years.

Each and every year Memorial Day and Veteran Day in Brooklyn, our Post observes these two paramount solemn days with a program including a Piper in uniform playing Amazing Grace, etc,

some speeches, The pledge to our Great Flag, the reading of 204 names of deceased veterans killed during a period of war and also those that survived and passed away since with the gavel bell sounding for each name, Taps and the firing of three rounds. All in all it is quite impressive and a bit sad, to a gathering of some one hundred people.

Our Post Commander Robert O'Hare, our Co-Chairman Joseph A. Scognamiglio and myself as Chairman thought you might like to know that Patriotism is not a thing of the past but is on the rise as it should be.

From all of us to you (Mr. Horace Corbin), may God bless you and *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood*.

Jerome Mack  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

### Westfield "Y" Thanks Volunteers For Participation In TeenXtreme Event

On Saturday, May 18, The Westfield "Y" held its fourth annual TeenXtreme event at the Westfield Armory. This was our biggest turnout to date, with over 200 participant's displaying their skateboarding, BMX and Aggressive-In-Lining skills, as well as the musical talents of a number of local bands. Kids of all ages and skill levels came together to have a great time.

The Westfield "Y" would like to thank all of the volunteers that came out that day to help with setup and take down of the obstacles that were trucked in. We would also like to thank Out of Bounds Skateboard shop from Scotch Plains, Pro Skateboard Shop of Belmar and Division East Sports form Verona for helping to make this event a success through their donations, representations

and assistance in advertising. Thank-you, also, to the bands that played: Senses Fail, Network, Socratic, The Insults, Crystal Noose and Blue Skies Burn.

Most of all we want to thank all of the participants for coming out. The Westfield "Y" is committed to providing the youth of our community with a safe and appropriate place to participate in these alternatives activities. Please call the "Y" to find out about our skateboarding camps this summer as well as our after school skateboarding programs during the school year. And check out our part two of TeenXtreme4 at Family Fest Sunday, June 9, across from the Westfield Post Office.

Marty Collett  
Westfield



See it all on the Web!  
[www.goleader.com](http://www.goleader.com)

### Bagger Clarifies Handgun Bill, Leader Headline

In your June 6th edition, you published a press release on a bill I have introduced in the State Senate which would disqualify a juvenile who has had previous explosive weapon offenses from obtaining a handgun permit in the State of New Jersey. Unfortunately, the headline that appeared with the story might have given your readers the idea that we were expanding the law to allow more people to purchase handguns. That is not the case.

My bill aims to close a loophole in state law which allows a juvenile who has built a bomb and brought it to school to later buy a handgun. Current law prevents a juvenile with a gun-related offense from obtaining a firearm. Yet, New Jersey law does stop a juvenile with a police record involving explosives from owning a firearm.

I hope this clarifies the nature of this important piece of legislation.  
Senator Richard H. Bagger  
Westfield

### Resident Is Impressed By The Improvement of WHS Art Program

*This letter was also sent to Dr. Robert Pettis and Dr. William Foley.*

I write this letter not to criticize programs of the past but to express support in the progress that you and your staff have made to develop the art program of Westfield High School. I would like to see this progress continue till the art program is on par with the high level of academic standards expected at WHS. I believe art is not a hobby, it is a vocation and it should not be evaluated as anything less.

I was impressed by the quality of work at the recent Westfield High art show. In the last few years, the work has come a long way in terms of sophistication and quality. This was not always the case at WHS.

I can tell you from personal experience that the process of portfolio interviews with art schools was an eye opener. Despite the excellent marks in the WHS art program the work in my children's portfolios done at WHS was derided with comments like, "Even a machine can copy.", "We are not interested in copies from photographs.", "Where are their sketch books filled with drawings?", "Where is evidence of conceptual thinking?". These comments came from highly regarded art school interviewers, such as Rhode Island School of Design, Syracuse University, Tyler School of Art.

Fortunately for my children, my husband and I not only have an academic background in art but also a professional

one. We were able to help them augment their portfolios with enough additional work that they were accepted to very good programs with scholarships and graduated with Bachelors of Fine Arts.

However, I couldn't help think about what happened to the other students that graduated who were interested in art. Did they miss opportunities for careers in the arts, despite their efforts and expectations?

Like science and math there are criteria that high school level work meet in order for our students to take the next step to a career in art. Pretty pictures may please people in town but not the interviewers in the competitive reality of art school portfolio reviews.

Thank your staff, especially Annora Conway. She is doing a service for your students. She pushes them to move out of the safety zones of copying into the realm of real art. I saw it in the studies of hands, I heard it when a high school student discussed a piece of work intelligently. I was impressed. I have two more children that will attend WHS and I hope that the teachers will continue helping our young art students achieve their full potential. Hopefully someday soon, parents in line at these portfolio reviews will be saying, "They will be accepted for sure, they went to Westfield High School."

Mary Sue Schwab  
Westfield

### Westfield Resident Encourages Others To Volunteer At The Rescue Squad

After reading about our Westfield Rescue Squad being number one in the state, should make Westfield proud. I live on a busy street here in Westfield, and those ambulances must go by ten times a day. What really makes me proud is that volunteers staff the organization.

I have lived in this town for 42 years. The only time I needed the Rescue Squad was last year for my husband. My husband was having a heart attack. For the first time in my life, I felt so hopeless. Shortly after I called, a police officer showed up at my front door. The officer did not have any medical training but was helpful in applying oxygen. Then

about five minutes later a mobile intensive care unit from Overlook hospital came in. It didn't strike me until a few days later that it took over ten minutes to get an ambulance to my house.

With all calls that the Westfield Rescue Volunteer Squad does, we should be proud. But we should help more. I read in the paper that they are desperately looking for volunteers. I would not want anyone else that needs help to wait a long time for an ambulance. Everyone reading this should think possibly helping a neighbor out by volunteering.

Mrs. Kish  
Westfield