

## The Westfield Leader

— Established 1890 —  
The Official Newspaper of the Town of Westfield and the County of Union

Member of:  
New Jersey Press Association  
National Newspaper Association  
Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce

Periodicals - Postage Paid at Westfield, New Jersey  
P.O. Box 250 • 50 Elm Street  
Westfield, N.J. 07091

Tele: (908) 232-4407 • E-mail: [press@goleader.com](mailto:press@goleader.com) • Web: [www.goleader.com](http://www.goleader.com) • Fax: (908) 232-0473

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the offices of the newspapers at  
P. O. Box 250, Westfield, New Jersey 07091

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY BY WATCHUNG COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

<p><b>Michelle H. LePoidevin</b> A&amp;E and EDUCATION <b>Suzette F. Stalker</b> COMMUNITY <b>Jennifer Pinto</b> PROFESSIONAL STAFF <b>Lauren S. Pass</b> PROFESSIONAL STAFF</p>	<p><b>Horace R. Corbin</b> PUBLISHER <b>David B. Corbin</b> ASSISTANT PUBLISHER &amp; SPORTS <b>Karen M. Hinds</b> OFFICE MANAGER</p>	<p><b>Fred K. Lecomte</b> SALES DIRECTOR <b>Michael L. Bartiromo</b> MARKETING &amp; PRODUCTION <b>Robert P. Connelly</b> CLASSIFIEDS &amp; LEGALS</p>
--	---	--

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE  
One-year - \$24 • Two-year - \$46 • Three-year - \$66 • One-year college (September to May) - \$16

## THE TIMES of Scotch Plains - Fanwood

— Established 1959 —  
Official Newspaper of the Borough of Fanwood and the Township of Scotch Plains

Member of:  
New Jersey Press Association • National Newspaper Association  
Scotch Plains Business & Professional Association  
Fanwood Business & Professional Association

Periodicals - Postage Paid at Scotch Plains, New Jersey  
P.O. Box 368 • 1906 Bartle Avenue  
Scotch Plains, N.J. 07076

Tele: (908) 232-4407 • E-mail: [press@goleader.com](mailto:press@goleader.com) • Web: [www.goleader.com](http://www.goleader.com) • Fax: (908) 232-0473

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the offices of the newspapers at  
P. O. Box 250, Westfield, New Jersey 07091

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY BY WATCHUNG COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

<p><b>Michelle H. LePoidevin</b> A&amp;E and EDUCATION <b>Suzette F. Stalker</b> COMMUNITY <b>Jennifer Pinto</b> PROFESSIONAL STAFF <b>Lauren S. Pass</b> PROFESSIONAL STAFF</p>	<p><b>Horace R. Corbin</b> PUBLISHER <b>David B. Corbin</b> ASSISTANT PUBLISHER &amp; SPORTS <b>Karen M. Hinds</b> OFFICE MANAGER</p>	<p><b>Fred K. Lecomte</b> SALES DIRECTOR <b>Michael L. Bartiromo</b> MARKETING &amp; PRODUCTION <b>Robert P. Connelly</b> CLASSIFIEDS &amp; LEGALS</p>
--	---	--

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE  
One-year - \$24 • Two-year - \$46 • Three-year - \$66 • One-year college (September to May) - \$16

## Letters to the Editor

### WHS Principal Petix Gives History Of Open Lunch, Forms Committee

At last week's Board of Education meeting, several parents voiced their opposition to the high school's open lunch policy both through written petition and orally. The policy has been in effect for seniors since 1988 and for juniors since 1991. I feel that it is important for the community to understand that history of open lunch, its effect on the high school and the degree of success of its implementation.

In 1988 the Westfield High School PTO asked me to form a committee to investigate the feasibility of an open lunch program for seniors. This advisory committee, consisting of parents with divergent opinions on the issue, investigated the experiences of other high schools with open lunch policies, discussed the concerns for student safety and the potential abuse of the privilege including sexual activity and drug and alcohol use, and establish guidelines for the successful implementation of the program.

After weighing all the evidence, the committee responded "Yes" to the question "Do the benefits of an open lunch policy for individuals and for the school community outweigh the disadvantages of an open lunch policy?" The committee stated further:

"Open lunch does offer the opportunity for an expansion of responsibilities for the student. According to Dr. Lee Salk, 'One of the major tasks of childhood is to find the structure and meaning of life, which one learns to a large extent by finding out about rules, regulations, and how things happen.' The positive aspects of open lunch are that freedom is being given to the students, along with trust and respect which are implicit in the granting of such freedom. Studies indicate the teachers' expectations of students in a classroom have a definite effect on their performance. Could not the same be said in this case? If students are accorded trust, respect and freedom, is it not possible that far more would benefit from the privilege than the few who will undoubtedly violate them?"

The committee report was prophetic. By extending trust to upper classman, all the other classes look forward to earning the privilege accorded by this policy. This small manifestation of trust has transformed the school for students from a "prison" to an institution in which young people are respected, and in turn, demonstrate respect.

PRESS's concerns are, nevertheless, real and will not be dismissed. Some ninth and tenth graders do indeed leave the campus without permission. This is not, however, a new phenomenon at any high school with or without an open lunch policy. As assistant principal of Westfield High School in 1975, my administrative colleagues and I spent a good portion of each day chasing after students who left the campus without permission.

The use of classrooms at the Armory, coupled with the extraordinary number of entrances to the high school, makes it impossible to monitor all the doorways without hiring at least a dozen additional paraprofessionals. Moreover, such a "foolproof solution" would completely change the atmosphere of the high school and would create unnecessary tension that would adversely affect relationships and, ultimately, the learning environment. Overly restrictive rules create an environment of distrust; fair rules and policies and the extension of trust foster mutual respect.

We can, however, improve our vigilance with some additional help and a renewed commitment by parents, as well as students and staff. With a total commitment from all constituencies, the high school will continue to implement the regulations and procedures to deter students from taking advantage of this privilege. Underclassmen will continue to be given additional penalties, including suspension of the privilege, and parents will be contacted immediately.

In 1988, the PTO Committee carefully considered the temptations of alcohol and drugs and the potential for sexual activity in unsupervised homes but still believed that the advantages of the program for students outweighed its potential disadvantages. They were right.



Diction Deception

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. Impetration - To obtain by request or entreaty
2. Spadassin - A swordsman
3. Hebdomadally - In weekly periods
4. Sturious - Resembling icicles

**TAUROMACHIAN**

1. A toreador; bullfighter
2. Marked by steadiness or consistency
3. A person born in late March or early April
4. A stubborn, hardheaded person

**HOMUNCULUS**

1. Very similar; in concord
2. An ogre; monster
3. A dwarf or pigmy
4. Creamy; smooth

**IMPOSTATION**

1. Making or forming fences
2. The act of making into pasture
3. A lie; prevarication
4. An undue burden or unfair demand

**HOLOSIDERITE**

1. A meteorite containing nothing but iron
2. Pure apple juice; cider
3. Consisting of an entire constellation
4. Giving one's complete attention

## Scotch Plains Proposed Ordinance Violates Fourth Amendment Of U.S. Constitution

The Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states that "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated." If this safeguard is to continue, then we'd hope that a proposed ordinance being considered in Scotch Plains and similar laws enacted elsewhere in New Jersey are ultimately turned aside by higher courts as failing to pass constitutional muster.

The Township Council is planning to introduce an ordinance next month that would greatly expand local police powers in an attempt to curb underage drinking. Rather than relying on laws already on the books and rather than working with parents, families, schools and peers to keep alcohol consumption by those under 21 years of age to a minimum, the township government instead wants to give the local police the right to enter a private residence where underage persons are in possession of or consuming alcoholic beverages.

It may sound like the perfect solution to a problem "Let the police handle it because we can't," but thinking beyond the feel-good aspects of sending a message to the community brings forth a number of potential problems. Under what circumstances do police have a right to enter a private residence. "A man's home is his castle," is not some catchy 20th century slogan, but, rather, one of the bases underlying the Fourth Amendment.

The ordinance that will be introduced in Scotch Plains would allow police to take action if they have reason to believe underage persons in a private home are in possession of or consuming alcoholic beverages. But how would they come to have a reason to believe? A neighbor's call to the police department? A patrol car driving past a house where numerous cars are parked? A policeman knocking on the front door of a suspected house? And then what is supposed to happen? Under what pretext can an officer then enter a

private residence? How will he conclude that alcoholic beverages are being consumed? How will he determine the age of anyone suspected of drinking alcoholic beverages? And what rights do those in the house have in this regard, especially if they are old enough to drink? And what about the overzealous officer who sets foot in a private home and either finds no underage drinking or mistakenly handles a situation involving minors unaware of their rights?

The proposed ordinance would be enforced, in effect, through warrantless searches of private residences, and it's far from clear that this would be permissible. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled, in a 1948 narcotics case, that under the Fourth Amendment, the determination of, "when the right of privacy must reasonably yield to the right of search is, as a rule, to be decided by a judicial officer, not by a policeman." Allowing the wrong police officer in a home without a warrant would set the stage for numerous problems, including the potential for mishandling the situation and, therefore, having any charges upheld in court. Furthermore, there is the potential that the township could find itself in a costly court challenge to the ordinance if a Scotch Plains resident were to fight it. There has yet to be any such challenge in the handful of other communities that have enacted a similar ordinance, but the law is still relatively new. In addition, it looks as if the ordinance has not been heavily utilized by law enforcement officials in those other towns.

The bottom line in this matter, however, is one of private property rights and excessive police powers and whether the two can coexist. We don't think they can, and we'd hate to even give it a try. Instead, we'd urge township officials and other local leaders to use the tools they already possess in their effort to curb teen drinking rather than relying on the government and a jaundiced view of the Constitution to do the job for them.

## The Westfield Volunteer Rescue Squad Is Tops In The State; But They Need Help

The week of May 20th is EMS week. At the state awards dinner in Mount Laurel on May 20, the Westfield Volunteer Rescue Squad will be awarded Volunteer Squad of The Year. There are over 400 all-volunteer squads in the state. No small wonder that the Westfield Squad won, in our opinion. The Westfield Squad, now in its 51st year, averages 2,200 calls a year. They make life-saving transports from Westfield to several area hospitals including Overlook, Muhlenberg, Rahway, Union, St. Barnabas, University, JFK, Morristown and Trinitas. They logged about 25,000 volunteer hours. They have a highly skilled staff, superbly dedicated - and not a single person gets paid.

But, we're a little concerned. Contributions to keep them in operation are way off target this year. Society may be a little tapped out after

Sept. 11. The rescue squad is an essential service to our society, and we urge all of you to correct this situation. Put the rescue squad on the top of your list. Send your contributions to The Westfield Volunteer Rescue Squad, P.O. Box 356, Westfield, NJ 07091. If you're making your will, consider including the squad.

Remember the volunteer squads in Fanwood and Scotch Plains too. When Mountainside had their rescue squad volunteer problems, they went to a commercial paid service. The paid ambulance service cost in Mountainside for an emergency transport is \$325 plus \$45 per mile, beyond 5 miles. As a comparison: Although Westfield doesn't charge, the per-trip average cost last year was \$113, but you didn't get billed - because your neighbors care and volunteer.



### Times Reader Says 'Stay Out Of My Wallet And My Home'

Once again I am compelled to voice my dissatisfaction with my local officials. Like the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education (BOE), the Scotch Plains Town Council is exhibiting all the characteristics of "life in a vacuum." Unlike the BOE, the Council has two issues, the budget and the right to enter my home.

Allow me to help the budgetary process. Over 50 per cent of my neighbors did not receive raises last year. The consumer price index rose 2.5 percent for our area. I don't have a good number (for how many) of your constituents that were laid off, but clearly there were layoffs. Do you really need to be raising our taxes? You are elected to make the tough decisions, not to

The Columbine tragedy of three years ago heightened the public's awareness of our children's vulnerability. The tragic events of 9/11/01 further galvanized parents' fears, prompting them to take action. The most significant role parents can play is to set standards of behavioral expectation for their children: parents of ninth and tenth graders should tell their children that they should not leave the high school campus anytime without permission. Period.

The review of current policies to ensure student safety is valuable and worthwhile. The safety issues related to open lunch, i.e. driving and parking, are different from the issue of general access to the building by the public and should be considered separately. Providing the best learning environment for adolescents means extending trust, encouraging students to make responsible choices and holding them accountable for their actions.

For more than a decade, seniors and juniors have demonstrated their ability to abide by the regulations of the open lunch policy. Both the senior and junior classes should continue to be afforded the privilege in the future.

I have formed a committee of parents, teachers and high school administrators to review our current open lunch policy and procedures. We will make recommendations for improvement to the Board of Education in June.

**Robert G. Petix**  
Principal  
Westfield High School

### Times Reader Says 'Embrace Our Responsibility To Each Other'

As reported last week, the National Day of Prayer on May 2 is seen as a chance to express unity following the atrocities of September 11. As an atheist/humanist, I seek a way to join with the efforts of all people of conscience.

I am concerned, however, especially in the light of 9/11, about those who use religious texts to claim infallible knowledge and then promote destruction and death. Any action from any source must first be checked against its human consequences. To protect ourselves, we must embrace our responsibility to each other.

With this in mind, I propose the following nonsectarian statement for May 2 in the form of a pledge we might all take.

Good people everywhere: Our destiny is in our own hands. We can each of us be a source of goodness in the world, but let us recognize the harm we can do to each other and have done to each other when we

exercise your ability to raise my taxes when you have a shortfall.

Regarding your ability to enter my home to "curb underage drinking", I cannot shake the images of the 1940's and a "police state" and I have tried. Is the problem in our community that bad? I don't believe you could possibly budget for the liability you would have with the implementation of this ordinance - let alone (that you) think you have such a right. I have kids. That's my job.

With all due respect, stay out of my wallet and out of my house.

**Michael S. Weber**  
Scotch Plains

### Leader's Headline On Westfield High's "Open Lunch" Is Not Accurate

Your article this week on the parents protest of the Westfield High School open lunch policy, which included the headline "R30: Drug Use, Sexual Activity, Drinking Take Place", greatly disturbed us.

As the parents of two Westfield teenagers, including a current senior at the high school, we take offense to this highly inflammatory headline. Specifically we take issue with both The Leader and the "PRESS" group for the use of hearsay to implicate our students as partaking of illegal activities during open lunch at the high school.

As we have become familiar with many of our town's teenagers as the friends of our children and through many activities at the high school, we can attest that the large majority are outstanding young men and women. We are not naive enough to think that no improper activities take place during open lunch, but it is our belief that a very small minority of the students is involved. If there is some police report or study that indicates a significant problem, we would be very interested in reviewing that information.

As for security, neither we nor our daughter have ever felt that was an issue at the high school. We respect the opinions of other parents who might have a concern, but we believe their concern is unwarranted.

We support any of the efforts of the high school's administration to build trust with the students by offering them privileges that they show they can handle.

The open lunch policy is a program that does just that. Soon enough these students will be at college where we hope they will have developed the maturity to make good choices given the many real life situations that they will encounter on their own.

We hope that in the future The Leader will show more journalistic restraint and not make a practice of printing inaccurate headlines. The opinions of ill informed groups using unsubstantiated innuendoes against young citizens of our great town have no place on the front page of The Leader.

**Tom and Mary McClellan**  
Westfield  
cc:  
**Dr. Robert Petix**  
**Dr. William Foley**  
**Arlene Gardner**

### Candidate Whitaker Disagrees With Freeholder Open Space Explanation

Most people who voted for the Open Space Tax did so because they thought it would be used to acquire additional parkland in Union County - not to expand buildings, or build parking lots. The Open Space Tax should be used for one thing, and one thing only - acquiring additional parkland.

If the Democrat Freeholders really think the people of Union County intended for their Open Space Tax money to be used for building expansion and to acquire land on which to build parking lots, they should put that on the ballot as a straightforward, plain English non-binding referendum.

The more interesting part of Ruotolo's letter is the statement the county intends to use capital funds (read "your tax dollars") to acquire 7 acres for public auction "with the property severely restricted to uses beneficial to the Union County community as a whole for recreational purposes. There will be no development for private or commercial use on any of the 63 acres."

Exactly what does this mean? Do they

have a deal to auction it off to some open space trust? What do the Democrats define as "uses beneficial to Union County as a whole for recreational purposes?" Aren't the Freeholders supposed to provide, through the park system, "uses beneficial to Union County as a whole for recreational purposes?" Why would they have to auction off land to someone else to do their job?

In my view, there are two types of entities: government and private. Private includes open space trusts, nonprofits/winning clubs, churches, nonprofit theater groups, nonprofit hospitals, nonprofit riding academies, colleges and universities. The mere fact they are nonprofits makes them no less private.

The Democrat Freeholders should start telling people the truth about what they intend to do. There's no better time to start than now.

**Joel Whitaker**  
Fanwood

**Deadlines**

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

**To Reach Us**

E-Mail - [press@goleader.com](mailto:press@goleader.com)  
Phone - (908) 232-4407  
Mail - PO Box 250, Westfield 07091  
PO Box 368, Scotch Plains 07076  
In Person - 50 Elm St., Westfield  
1906 Bartle Avenue, Scotch Plains

**Submittal Formats**

Email Photos & articles  
Email Ads as pdf files  
Please spell & grammar check  
For more information, see [www.goleader.com/help](http://www.goleader.com/help)