

The Westfield Leader

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Horace R. Corbin PUBLISHER David B. Corbin ASSISTANT PUBLISHER & SPORTS Karen M. Hinds OFFICE MANAGER

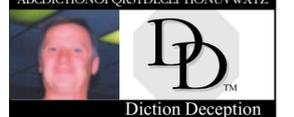
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Letters to the Editor

After Hype Wears Off, Children Tend to Lose Interest in Rabbits

With Easter just around the corner, kids are tempted now more than ever to ask their parents for two things: candy and bunnies. Bunnies make excellent pets, but Easter is a problem to a lot of bunnies in stores. There have been many cases across the U.S. that include a child wanting a rabbit for Easter, and get it, but as soon as the initial "hype" wears off, or as soon as the child gets bored of the rabbit, it's either neglected in its cage with improper attention and love, or abandoned on the side of the road with nothing to help it fend against the weather, or people. According to http://www.michiganrabbitrescue.org/soyourchild.htm, dwarf rabbits, which commonly weigh between three and five pounds, are the most common rabbit to get for a child, since they're so small. They are, however, the unfriendliest type of rabbit. They bite a lot, and are very skittish, and thus prone to scratching people. Smaller children do better with larger rabbits. But even the large rabbits are noisy. The clanging of the water bottle when bunnies get hungry may be music to a rabbit-lover's ears, but at 3 a.m., it gets frustrating to a parent trying to lull their two-year-old back to sleep. Most importantly, the common mistake for children is mishandling rabbits. Rabbits are prey animals, and should be treated as such by children. They're easily scared, and should always make the first move when being introduced to a child. Also, a child's crayons or paints could be fatal to a rabbit, as could the carpet in a household. A rabbit that ingests even a small bit of carpet could get a blockage in their throat that has been proven to cause the rabbit's death. I have a rabbit I love dearly, but I've heard too many stories about rabbits bought for a child for Easter that weren't properly cared for. Courtney Phillips Westfield



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. Illaquate - To entrap or ensnare 2. Hogmanay - New Year's Eve 3. Mazer - A large drinking goblet or bowl 4. Fraischeur - Coolness; freshness

- CAPYBARA 1. A large Asiatic flying squirrel 2. A street vendor; a seller of fruits and vegetables 3. A large, tailless, partially web-footed rodent of South America 4. A West Indian slow-moving coasting craft built for carrying goods

- TICPOLONGA 1. An extremely venomous Indian snake 2. A slingshot 3. A fool or imbecile 4. A skin disease caused by a fungus; ringworm

- RUNCATION 1. Characterized by being pierced with holes 2. Pertaining to plundering or looting 3. Furrowed or grooved 4. A wedding

- GINGILI 1. A Brazilian parakeet 2. A gypsy 3. Sesame seed or the oil from it 4. Sharpness; eagerness

Letters to the Editor See more letters on Page 5

Pat Quattrocchi Should Have Received An Award for Her Work

When I nominated Patricia Quattrocchi for the Union County Women of Excellence Award for her volunteerism with domestic violence victims, I didn't expect her to be chosen.

I mostly did it in protest to what the Union County Democratic Committee did to slander Pat during the election with a flyer distributed in her hometown of Garwood which stated among other things "Shame on you Patricia Quattrocchi....She has no family values and should be ashamed of herself."

However, not even I expected to see listed among the eight winners of this "prestigious" award to be none other than Angela Devanney (the wife of Union County Manager George Devanney and current Berkeley Heights Township Administrator).

How appropriate. As far as Pat's supposed lack of family values I'd like you to know that Pat has seven children, two are handicapped. She takes care of her elderly parents and still finds time to be involved in her community and is an active member of the Lions Club. She also has an amazing record as a domestic violence responder volunteer. Tina Renna Cranford

Busloads of Protestors Was Not Shameful But Democracy in Action

Heidi Hylan, in her letter to the editor in the March 17 edition of The Westfield Leader, says that "[bringing] busloads of people to protest the President's message in a small town community like Westfield is shameful." Actually, the word that comes to mind is not shameful, but democracy.

The right to peacefully assemble and protest is one of our most cherished rights. Certainly, we all agree that additional security measures in these uncertain times are prudent. However, to imply that the events of 9/11 have now completely taken that right away, as Ms. Hylan does, is what is shameful.

Instead of actively protesting, we are told to "write a letter." While letter writing can be a powerful means of communication, where would this country be if people like Rosa Parks and the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. had just wrote letters? Would communism have fallen if people in Poland and the former Soviet Union just wrote letters?

Aren't there times that a Million Man March is more effective than a Million Letters Sent? Mentioning several famous mass murderers, none of which are germane to this situation, further weakens Ms. Hylan's position. Colin Ferguson killed people on a train; does that mean we should ban train travel, in addition to political protests? Perhaps most discouraging about the letter is her disagreement with the philosophy that "...we think that our message or our point of view must be heard, even if our venue for expressing our views is antagonistic." That is precisely what separates democracies from other forms of government. Our message or our point of view may not be enacted into law, but we have every right to express it peacefully, whether it is at the ballot box, in a letter to the editor, in a segregated bus, or at a protest rally. Without that right, what did our forefathers fight for? Marc Simmons Westfield

Deadlines: General News - Friday 4pm, Weekend Sports - Monday 12pm, Classifieds - Tuesday 12pm, Ad Reservation - Friday 4pm, Ad Submittal - Monday 12pm. To Reach Us: E-Mail - editor@goleader.com, Phone - (908) 232-4407, Mail-PO Box 250, Westfield 07091, PO Box 368, Scotch Plains 07076. For more information, see www.goleader.com

Readers Are Urged to Examine the School Budgets in This Edition

This edition contains the legal notices of the proposed school budgets for the coming year, which will be presented to the voters on April 19 for approval or disapproval.

The proposed Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public School System Budget is printed on page 16. The proposed Westfield Public School System Budget is printed on page 18.

We suggest that you examine and compare these budget proposals and write to us with comments to share with others.

Our staff will review the budgets over the next few weeks and write about them prior to the voting. In advance, we thank the school officials, board members and candidates who have agreed to interviews to discuss the matters. Their comments will be included.

Westfield School Superintendent Dr. William Foley and Westfield Board of Education President Anne Reigel have agreed to discuss the school system initiatives with this newspaper today (Thursday). A 10-minute video will be made of the discussion to be aired on the Internet at www.goleader.com starting this weekend. The interview will be printed next week.

Westfield is fortunate to have five candidates running to serve on the school board where three seats are becoming vacant. Scotch Plains has three candidates vying for the two open seats. Fanwood has one candidate seeking the open seat. Regrettably, Mountainside only has one candidate seeking to serve with two seats being open.

The Westfield candidates have been writing letters on their views for the office, which we gladly print. We have received little input from the candidates seeking office in Scotch Plains-Fanwood and Mountainside.

There's still time for them to write to the newspaper. We hope they do, and we will print their views.

We are concerned about a system where administrators and teachers are frustrated, few citizens are willing

to serve on boards, where voting is held during strange months and at odd hours, where few people vote and where expenditures are sky-rocketing.

Our state government is worried too, for good reason. They are making noises with several proposals to reinvent the system, but no clear picture has yet emerged.

Our area is more fortunate than others because of the good schools - not so for some of our not-too-distant neighbors such as Plainfield, Roselle and Hillside.

It appears to us that citizen involvement, debate and competition are key factors for communities to achieve good public schools. We urge your involvement.

On Another Subject: Ward Project & Newpointe

In Westfield, the Ward residential development proposal on Prospect Street seems to have the favor of the townspeople. But, the Newpointe Realty office proposal by Michael Zemsky at New Street has fallen into disfavor. Newpointe Realty is now suing the town and the Ward organization.

We think Ward & O'Donnell Property Development Company has earned the well-deserved reputation for building not only superior quality projects; but projects that prove to be beneficial to the community as well. Their mission seems to be, "fit into the community, don't expect the community to fit you in."

We look forward to the completion of the 50-dwelling, age restricted residential development on Prospect Street because we are confident that it will have the same high-class feel that is characteristic of Mr. Ward. It will serve a vital part of our community: older residents.

We have a different feeling about the record and tactics that transpired with the Newpointe Realty project. As such, we're more than disappointed about the lawsuit they initiated.

Fanwood Advisory Committee Members Refute Councilman Kline's Claims

We read with great interest Councilman Kline's article regarding the recently adopted Revised Fanwood Development Plan. He said that, "this administration, which prides itself on open communication, has effectively censored a fair and balanced discussion of the relevant issues."

Nothing could be further from the truth. Mayor Mahr established the Fanwood Downtown Advisory Committee in April 2004. This bipartisan committee had a cross-section of residents, property owners and merchants. The Committee had to overcome a great deal of mistrust among the owners and merchants toward local government caused by the previous administration and the proposal by Landmark Developers.

With the assistance of the Schoor DePalma consulting firm, the Committee proceeded with a rigorous nine-month public forum on the issues. We sought and received the opinions of the affected property owners and merchants, and then held three well-publicized, open public forums to maximize input from all Fanwood residents.

More than 200 residents attended those public forums. If Councilman Kline believes that the process established by this administration didn't result in a fair discussion of the issues, it is because the councilman did not attend any of the public forums.

How can Councilman Kline critique the process when he never participated in the public forums? Even the title of his article ("Councilman Has Concerns on Fanwood Redevelopment") is very troublesome. If, as a resident, he had concerns, he had every opportunity to participate in the process. More importantly, as an elected public official with concerns, he had an obligation to the residents of the Borough to express them during the process of plan development. Instead, Councilman Kline chose not to participate, nor provide any concerns

Money Given to Governor's Brother Could Have Funded Local Programs

I read with interest the recent Star Ledger article concerning the salary "adjustment" for Deputy Attorney General Robert Codey, brother to Acting Governor Richard Codey. According to the Ledger of March 13, Robert Codey, received a salary almost \$25,000 higher than the maximum salary established by regulations after being assigned to help the Union County prosecutor's office.

I was distressed, but not surprised, to learn the Union County Freeholders were instrumental in raising the salary, in the process boosting Mr. Codey's pension by \$12,000 a year for the rest of his life. According to state officials, Union County could have had Mr. Codey's services for free because he was being paid by the state. Nevertheless, the all-Democratic Freeholder Board, offered to supplement his salary by another \$46,731.

As a third term councilman in the Borough of Fanwood, I am well aware of the escalating costs of providing municipal services. Thus, it is even more frustrating

Comments at Meeting on President's Visit Called An Embarrassment

The way certain citizens of the Town of Westfield reacted against President Bush, mayor, town council and employees during the town council meeting that took place on March 4, is a shame and an embarrassment for the rest of the citizens of the town.

All the citizens of Westfield should feel honored by the visit of such an icon of

District News

Ferguson Named Vice Chair of Subcommittee

WASHINGTON - The House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee has named Rep. Mike Ferguson, (R-7) vice chairman of its Health Subcommittee.

"I'm honored to be named vice chairman of the Health Subcommittee," Rep. Ferguson said. "New Jersey serves as the home of the most prestigious hospitals, healthcare institutes and pharmaceutical companies in the world, and the important work of the subcommittee will affect my constituents in New Jersey and every American."

"I look forward to being an active voice on the subcommittee and in support of Chairman Deal," Rep. Ferguson said.

In addition to the Health Subcommittee, Rep. Ferguson also serves as a member of the Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet, Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection, and Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Reader's View: If We Are to Respect the Office of President, His Office Must Respect Us

I just had to address two of the letters that were published in The Westfield Leader last week (March 17).

The first one was written by Frank Arena of Westfield. In his letter, he made varied references to the so-called "Liberal Elite." I know that this term has gained a lot of popularity in the past few years. Now I understand where it comes from.

Many of the liberals we see and hear on TV like Barbara Streisand, Tim Robbins, Susan Sarandon and Danny Goldberg are individuals who reside in Hollywood and exist in a much higher tax bracket than the rest of us. The funny thing is that the individuals who perpetuate the use of this term - people like Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity and Laura Ingraham - are far from "regular Joe's" themselves.

You will not catch any of these people eating at Ferrara's, playing golf at Oak Ridge, or driving a Chevy. In fact, these people are part of the same social network and tax bracket as their arch nemesis: the Liberal Elite.

Truth be told, they are the "Conservative Elite." They preach to us mere Philistines from their ivory towers, and thank heavens they do. Because without them, we wouldn't know any better.

The second letter was written by Heidi Hylan of Westfield. At the end of her letter, which addressed the protests the day President Bush was in town, she says; "But Freedom is the reward when everyone follows the rules. Everyone. Sometimes we take for granted that our freedom comes with some restrictions."

Ms. Hylan, if everyone is to follow the rules, that means the Government as well. The "Town Meeting" that took place in Westfield with President Bush was far from that. How were tickets handed out? Who got them? How many individuals with opposing views were given a seat inside the army and/or allowed a forum to ask questions?

Why were the protesters positioned so far from where the President was to be? Maybe the way to avoid arrests and violence is to give the opposition a legitimate voice.

Instead of "allowing" the protesters to march completely out of sight, maybe they could have marched at the high school athletic field across the street? There could have been a rigorous security check for anyone wishing to be on the field: including metal detectors, police with wands, bomb sniffing dogs, etc.

Yes, we do live in times of heightened security, but all that means is the govern-

ment needs to adjust to that. It does not mean that our voice should become less significant or important.

If people want Americans to respect the office of the President, then his office has to respect us - even when we don't agree with him.

America was founded on protests. The Boston Tea Party, for example, was far from an elegant affair involving crisp linen, finger sandwiches, and crumpets - quite the contrary. It was pretty violent but essential to us becoming our own, individual, free nation. Without protests (again many of which were violent) Civil Rights and Women's Rights would not exist.

In a Democracy, it is our duty to not only protest, but to question the government constantly. Instead of "restricting" some of our freedoms, in these times we should exaggerate them. It is our job and duty.

I think U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy summed it up when he said; "The First Amendment is often inconvenient. But that is besides the point. Inconvenience does not absolve the government of its obligation to tolerate speech."

Patrick Cerria Westfield

