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Letters to the Editor
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Westfield and Scotch Plains PAL Glad To Help Irvington Youth Football

Recently, members of the Westfield PAL football program attended the first annual football banquet for the Irvington PAL football program. Set in one of the highest crime-ridden areas of New Jersey, the Irvington football program has had its share of setbacks as they try to develop their league.

In addition to the dangerous area, financial woes continue to hurt the team. Under a unique program known as PAL helping PAL, the Westfield PAL program was able to donate a substantial amount of equipment and other items to Irvington. Included in the donations were 100 pairs of brand new Nike football cleats. The Westfield PAL also donated trophies and football Tee shirts for each player in the Irvington program along with NFL bags of football related items that were donated by Jean Gilmartin. Mrs. Gilmartin is a Westfield resident who works for the NFL and has a son J.P. who plays in the Westfield football program.

The Westfield PAL, in conjunction with neighboring Scotch Plains PAL, paid for the cost of the shirts. "Once we heard they were in need of help, we got involved immediately," stated Fanwood Police Sergeant Russ Yeager who also serves as the President of the Suburban Football conference in which Westfield, Scotch Plains and Irvington all compete against each other. "While we may try to beat each other on the football field, one of the goals of this football league is to assist each other in times of need. This league is all about the players," continued Sgt. Yeager.

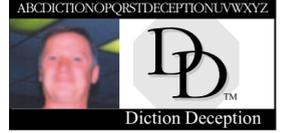
Westfield PAL Director Ron Allen who is also a Westfield Police detective echoed his comments. "The PAL helping PAL program is a nationwide effort and we were proud to assist Irvington with whatever they needed," he stated.

Police Chief Bernard Tracy offered the services of the police department and was instrumental in transporting the numerous boxes of donated items to Irvington. Attending from the Westfield PAL were football players John and Brendan Dugan, Ryan Scanlon and Michael D Antico (whose father Michael assisted with transporting the many donated items to Irvington).

Those interested in helping the youth of Irvington can call John Abrams at (862) 755-0628 or the Mayor of Irvington, Wayne Smith, at (973) 399-6639. The mayor was at the dinner and was real impressed with our donations.

We are proud to be part of this program, helping youth less fortunate.

John Dugan, Jr.
Westfield
Editor's Note: See photo on page 5.



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. Ossarium - A receptacle for the bones or ashes of the dead
2. Sorema - A mass of carapels in a single flower
3. Keratin - An albuminous substance forming the principal matter of hair and nails
4. Assot - To infatuate

- LACHRYMAL**
1. Putrid; foul-smelling
 2. Excessively sweet
 3. Producing tears
 4. Heavy, abnormal growth of hair
- VALETUDINARIANISM**
1. A state of feeble health
 2. Passing on unfavorable genetic traits
 3. A state of purification or having impurities removed
 4. A state of excessive grief; very sad
- DEBOUCH**
1. To make or look smart; to dress up
 2. A pulling or plucking off
 3. In military usage, to march out of a confined place into open country
 4. To belittle or humble
- IMBROGLIO**
1. A concealed dungeon with a trap door at the top
 2. A confusing situation
 3. An outside staircase
 4. A pleasant stroll

Should Westfield Not Have Gay Teachers?

Warren Victor's letter to the editor (April 28, 2005) begins by mentioning the recently-defeated school budget. In particular he blames the Westfield Board of Education for granting health coverage to domestic partners of members of the Westfield Education Association (WEA).

In this regard, the WEA is now on par with employees of the State of NJ, who also receive domestic partner health coverage. In addition, nearly half of Fortune 500 companies offer such benefits, and the number has been increasing rapidly.

Would these companies offer the benefit if they did not think it was in their financial interest as a tool to recruit and retain talented employees?

Mr. Victor states, "we are not San Francisco, SoHo or Michael Jackson." I do not dispute his geographic assertions. He discusses "normal and time-proven social and moral behavior" before ending with his second reference to "Neverland."

If Mr. Victor thinks Westfield should not have gay teachers, he should say so. But if he is trying to draw a linkage between health coverage for domestic partners and issues of child sexual abuse, that is shameful.

Among other things, he should be aware of the 1994 study in the journal Pediatrics that finds that between 97 percent and 100 percent of sexual abuse cases against children are committed by heterosexuals.

Tom Smith
Westfield

Watterson Lot is Still Taken by Contractor

I see that the town is finally tackling the parking problem in a sensible and cost-efficient manner. I wonder if anyone on the parking committee has noticed that a significant part of the Watterson Street lot is still occupied by equipment used to reconfigure the traffic circle, which has long since been completed.

This is both an eyesore and a complete waste of space. I would guess there are at least 30 unutilized spaces available here at virtually no cost to taxpayers.

Telly Zachariades
Westfield

BOE Employees Should Contribute to Benefits

With salaries and benefits accounting for 75 percent of the SP-F BOE budget, it is obvious where the members of the board should be concentrating their attention. It is time for the BOE employees to contribute to their health and pension benefits as are employees of the private sector are doing.

The Township of Scotch Plains and the County of Union must also look at their benefits packages and who pays for them. Pains should also be taken to eliminate nonproductive layers of administration in the school system.

If only 132 civic minded people joined us at the polls on school board election day to reject the budget, the property owners would be facing a smaller tax increase and possibly more fiscal responsibility at the BOE.

Walter Appel
Scotch Plains

Plainfield Welcomes Civic-minded People

I am responding to Chris Nelson's letter to the editor in the April 28 edition. Why, in an otherwise sensible letter, did Mr. Nelson have to make a completely gratuitous statement about Plainfield?

Like Mr. Nelson, I grew up in Westfield and graduated from Westfield High in 1974. I have taught history and economics at Plainfield High School for the past 15 years. I bought my home in Plainfield in 1995 because I wanted to live in a community with enough civic spirit and sense of responsibility towards its children to regularly pass the school budget.

By all means, move to Plainfield. We have many lovely houses and neighborhoods in the city, a thriving and newly streetscaped South Avenue commercial corridor, a resurgent downtown, and graduates from our high school who attend Ivy League colleges.

We welcome civic-minded people from wherever they come.

Molly Banta
Plainfield

Those Consuming Taxes Divide Public and Escape Accountability

It's a "Dizzying Dilemma," this property tax situation that we in New Jersey have found ourselves in. There are so many aspects to it, so many special interests involved and so many skilled operators drawing from the coffers.

Scotch Plains Mayor Martin Marks has been championing a constitutional convention as a means to stem the tide. Yet, even Mayor Marks admits that his call is limited to only addressing the revenue side, for to address the spending side, too, would surely lead the initiative to failure - because of staunch opposition from the many interest groups involved. So, the mayor says at least this is better than nothing.

Many other leaders, including State Senator Tom Kean, Jr., are against a constitutional convention for property tax reform because they believe it would lead to an even bigger mess, let alone take several years to implement.

Sen. Kean's point seems to be valid. Others just want to maintain their empires. Legislators, along with the powerful union, the New Jersey Education Association, are promoting an alternative plan that would slash property taxes for schools but raise the state income tax instead. Just as onerous as the current system, still without accountability and control, in our view.

Most politicians seem to recognize that the tax level has become the number one issue in the state - even larger than corruption, scandal and waste.

The half-dozen or so Republican candidates for governor seeking office this fall are espousing several plans to fix the situation - all seem different, perhaps confusing or simplistic. At least they're trying to say something about it.

U.S. Senator Jon Corzine, the presumptive Democrat candidate for governor, has been wisely keeping his mouth shut because he doesn't need to say anything at the moment - he's leading in the polls and has suffocated opposition within the Democratic party with the menace of his wealth.

Westfield voters on April 19 made a statement in voting down the proposed school budget, not that they're against schools. The town council must now decide on the matter without encountering political harm in this election year for mayor and council. At least for them, it becomes a distraction to the public from their proposed municipal budget.

The county introduced a \$390 million budget last Thursday, yet so far it's been impossible to obtain a

copy of the proposed budget. The law says this is public record, mind you. We are having the same trouble with municipal and board of education budgets. How can these elected bodies discuss budgets of hundreds of millions of dollars without the budgets even being available to the public as required by law? All it takes is a click of the mouse to post it on the Internet or save it to disk. Budgets should be available when they are introduced, as well as at the public hearings prior to adoption.

These many factors are creating acrimony within the public and there's frustration without knowing where to direct concerns. The public is being assaulted with taxes, user fees, fines, bond obligations, unfunded mandates and judicial orders from so many different directions and sources. There aren't enough thumbs to put in the dike.

We believe the players consuming your tax dollars have successfully divided the public and isolated themselves from accountability. As such, the public is left bickering with themselves over priorities while having little say in how high taxes should rise. It's impossible to stay on top of the many agencies, state, schools, authorities, municipalities, county, unions, insurance companies, developers, courts and others that control the tax levels paid for by the public.

It would be very interesting to see what would happen if the public could say, "Here's how much money we're going to pay, no more - now, all you players who spend it, sit down amongst yourselves and fight out the priorities."

We think moving a little in this direction could lead to more accountability, a better review of priorities and lowered corruption and waste. In many ways, it might be self-policing, as they would be forced to keep a very close watch on each other.

At least, the battle would not pit neighbor against neighbor - the fight would be between those who are spending and consuming public money at ever-increasing rates - then passing the bill on to you.

New Jersey is a great state, and we have much for which to be thankful. Yet, we are not without problems - some of which are notorious, rising to national and international news levels.

Westfield Superintendent of Schools William Foley remarked that we are a community with problems just like everyone else. But, we address these problems and fix them - not letting them fester.

Isn't it time we do this?

Warren McFall Thanks Scotch Plains Voters

To all the electorate that supported me in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education elections, a heartfelt thank you.

It was a pleasure to have communicated through personal contact, e-mails and the telephone with so many and hear your concerns for the future. It is my goal to take those concerns and turn them into positive actions so the educational experience for our students, as well as financial issues, will continue to meet future challenges.

I welcome hearing from the public during my term so constructive dialogue can produce productivity and understanding.

We have a solid public school district and a community who strive towards excellence. I am proud that you have given me the opportunity to serve.

Warren McFall
Scotch Plains

Donald Cardiff
Save Cooper Road Island
Scotch Plains

Letters to the Editor

Save Cooper Road Island Group Calls on Scotch Plains Residents for Support

On May 5, the Scotch Plains Board of Adjustment meets at 7:30 p.m. to review the Cooper Road application scheduled on the agenda for 8:30 p.m. in the Municipal Court Room.

It is essential that all concerned Scotch Plains residents attend this meeting to reinforce their opposition to this variance; an application to build a home on the Cooper Road Island. Let the Board of Adjustment know of your steadfast determination regarding this critical issue.

Hub Realty Inc (Mark Lustbader) has made significant changes in his application to build a single-family home on the Cooper Road Island. It has been determined that the square footage require-

ment of 40,000 sq. feet is now 6,595 sq. feet short (16.5 percent) of the zoning requirement. Unsightly retaining walls have been added to the property. A driveway location has been moved to Cooper Road opposite Wellington Downs, the location of many accidents.

A legal team is prepared to oppose and present counter arguments against this application. Our community needs your support. Your voice will count.

Please tell your neighbors and friends. Thank you.

