

# The Westfield Leader

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# The Scotch Plains - Fanwood TIMES

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## Congratulations to Winners: Now Let's See Non-Partisanship Action

Now that another election season is behind us, it's time to congratulate the winners and get down to business. Last Tuesday, voters elected Jon Corzine as our new governor and chose to keep Democrats in control of the General Assembly. Governor-elect Corzine has a lot of work to do; the biggest job of course is two-fold - to reduce the state deficit and address skyrocketing property taxes - all the while, restoring confidence in state government.

On Election Day voters returned Asm. Jon Bramnick and Asm. Eric Munoz to represent the 21st district and Asw. Linda Stender and Asm. Jerry Green to serve the 22nd district. Locally, Andy Skibitsky was elected to a four-year term as Westfield mayor along with Councilman Sal Caruana, first ward; Vicki Kimmins, second ward; David Haas, third ward, and Tom Bigosinski, fourth ward. In Fanwood, Joan Wheeler and Bruce Walsh were elected to the borough council while Mountainside saw the reelection of unchallenged Councilmen Keith Turner and Paul Mirabelli. At the county level, incumbent County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi and Freeholders Angel Estrada, Rick Proctor and Nancy Ward were returned for new terms.

It is now important for non-partisanship to begin at all levels of government if we are finally going to get a handle on runaway state spending and actually address soaring property taxes. Bi-partisanship hasn't worked and it doesn't address the will and interests of the people. Bi-partisan actions have only served to strengthen the political interests of the insiders, be it GOP or DEMs.

Senator Corzine has vowed to hold a special session of the legislature next year to address the issue. On state spending, the state needs to stop borrowing and instead move to slashing the state budget. Audits need to be done of all state departments to identify cuts, i.e. new hires added during the McGreevey years. During a conference call with Corzine Transition Chair Richard Leone last Thursday, it was noted that the new governor favors creation of an elected state auditor to address state spending. We believe this is the right direction to go, providing this individual will attack ill-advised spending regardless of where it is found.

At the local level, taxes are also a big concern. All towns need to spend more time addressing education costs and over-development in the New Year while keeping municipal budgets in check. If 'empty nesters' and seniors are driven out of town and replaced by families with children, education cost will cause property taxes to spiral even higher. In the area, only

about 30 to 40 percent of residents have children in school while 100 percent of the residents pay for the schools. Simple mathematics tells one that, if this ratio rises, the impact on property taxes will be dramatic.

Similarly, housing costs can only rise so much before teachers, police, fireman and basic individuals cannot afford to live here.

We need a balance of all these factors - but what is the proper balance and how do we get there?

Westfield Mayor Skibitsky and the new council will be taking a good hard look at the Downtown Westfield Corp., the management entity for the downtown special improvement district (SID). They must decide if the town still needs a SID and what its role is. We feel the town needs a vibrant Chamber of Commerce, fully supported by the local government and business community. Hopefully, the SID can be reigned in and made compatible with community goals - if not, has the SID's time passed?

In Fanwood, Mayor Colleen Mahr and the borough council have contracts about to be let and shovels in the ground with downtown development projects. We hope for the success of these projects for the advancement of Fanwood.

At the county level, the freeholder board needs to do a better job at slashing spending. A top-to-bottom review of every department needs to be undertaken. We encourage the county to be bold and adopt rules to end pay-to-play practices. Better communication is needed with the county residents and with local governments. Attendance of municipal meetings by freeholders to answer questions on the county budget, grants, shared services, etc., would create a valuable dialogue between the two levels of governments. Freeholder budget hearings should be held throughout the county similar to the state budget process.

Matters and questions about the county would improve if more citizens attended county meetings, like they do for town council meetings, to become informed. Due to seemingly many unknowns, county government is subject to harsh political rhetoric.

We're wiping our slate clean and dawning an optimistic face that New Jersey elected officials will get the job done. Everyone's tired of scandals, with confidence being eroded by another indictment of an elected official or political insider.

It's a great time to start over with a fresh sense of goodwill and lofty intentions. Will our leaders be able to rouse us to work for the good of the country? Will they and their friends in power do the same?

## Former Westfield Chamber Director Says Suit Over 'W' by DWC Was 'Petty And Narrow'

*Editor's Note:* The writer lived in Westfield 20 years (1963-1983) and Scotch Plains for 11 years before retiring to the Jersey shore.

As former executive director of the Westfield area Chamber of Commerce (1989-1993), I was saddened and shocked to see the headline in the November 3 issue, "DWC Sues Chamber, Claims Trademark of Westfield 'W.'" Many people worked long and hard in the chamber to come to the point where there exists a Downtown Westfield Corporation. The idea was that these two organizations would always cooperate and work well together to further their similar goals promoting Westfield as a great place to live and shop.

It was a petty and narrow vision to initiate the suit, and I hope the issue is

never resolved and nothing like it ever happens again. Let me tell you how a great gentleman and friend of the chamber resolved a similar incident. When I initiated the first holiday ornament the chamber commissioned, I used the logo that the late Harry Devlin designed for us. We used it on all our stationary, publicity, etc. When it appeared on the ornament with the artist's name, Mr. Devlin called and said we should have asked his permission. We apologized and he was most gracious about the incident. That is how friends operate.

Here's a history lesson for the DWC to learn. While I was director of the chamber, these presidents, Frank Swain, John Morgan, and Robert Newell with the town council liaison member Richard Bagger (later mayor) worked diligently to pursue the idea of becoming the recipient of the

Main Street designation, and eventually pursuing a special improvement district. It took many years and lots of meetings with the town council and cooperation of Mayor Bud Boothe to make this a reality. Hence the eventual birth of the Downtown Westfield Corporation. Both organizations share many members and certainly, as mentioned, the same goals. I do hope that both organizations keep their goals in mind and never let such "silliness" happen again.

I have lived in Toms River the last 10 years and it was by chance I saw the article. Westfield has always been a great place to live. I look forward to seeing these organizations continue to work together for the good of the town.

Cynthia Kowalczyk  
Toms River

## Letters to the Editor

### What an Incredible Night - the Town Welcoming Home our Troops!

I do not know where to begin! I want to personally thank everyone that came out this week to welcome home our troops. You all made the soldiers feel very appreciated. They were truly amazed at the outpouring of support and gratitude.

I want to especially thank Al Bar from the Township of Clark, Bruce and Betty Maloney from Garwood and Ed Silver and the Westfield Fire Department for their hard work in helping to coordinate the welcome home celebrations. We would not have been able to pull it off without them.

There are so many other people to thank but the list is too long to name you all. It was absolutely breathtaking to have all of you there to share such a special evening with my family! Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

On a more personal note, I want to thank all of my family and close friends for an unbelievable amount of support that you all gave to me, my husband and our three children during a very long 18-month deployment. When my family first found out that my husband, Robert Mondon, was going to be deployed I remember thinking "How will we ever get through this?"

Well, let me tell you how we made it through. We made it through because of the incredible support we received from all of you. I want to thank my family for being by our side every single day for the last 18 months. There were many days that we felt scared and worried but you were always there to comfort us. I want to thank the many friends that just stepped up and helped along the way. From taking my kids to games when I had a conflict, to sending the numerous care packages to Iraq, to being there when I needed a shoulder to cry on, to coming out to help us hang yellow ribbons around the town, to the endless amount of prayers that were said for us.

Well, our prayers have been answered. Most of our soldiers are home safe and sound. There are still many soldiers fighting for our freedom so please do not forget them.

I thank God for the multitude of friends that we have. Thanks to all of you that I have known for many years and thanks also to the many new friends that we have made over the past year and a half. We will be forever grateful to all of you!

The Mondon Family  
Westfield

### Welcome Home Sign for 250th Was Vandalized, Then Repaired

I would like to commend all those in town who decorated trees and buildings with yellow ribbons to welcome home our brave men and women of Westfield's 250th Battalion. I am sure that at this joyous time the troops and their families welcome the warm feelings of our proud town.

I also however, have to condemn those vandals who have destroyed one of these same Welcome Home signs proudly displayed at Holy Trinity School. The students of the school created a warm welcome for Sgt. Bob Mondon, father of two Holy Trinity students and member of the 250th Battalion, by creating a welcoming thank-you sign on the fence of their school property facing Rahway Avenue. While driving home [Saturday, November 12], my children, also students at Holy Trinity School, and I witnessed the vandalizing of our sign by a group of young boys practicing basketball under the supervision of an adult. This adult, who apparently is not aware that yesterday was Veteran's Day - a day to honor all those who have served this country bravely, stood by and watched as these young

hooligans destroyed a sign so lovingly created by the children of Holy Trinity. It is a disgrace that adults in this community would stand around and allow such destruction to go on. We confronted the vandals and their "adult" supervisor but to no avail.

We regretted that the members of the 250th Battalion would no longer be able to view our welcome, but be reminded that some of our community just do not appreciate their sacrifice.

Driving past the school later in the evening, we realized that someone had repaired our school sign. We do not know if it was the children and adults at the scene who took our words of admonishment to heart or other fine citizens who know the value of defending our freedoms abroad. We thank whoever repaired our sign.

We hope the members of the 250th Battalion and their families will always think of Westfield as a welcoming and appreciative town.

Jacqueline Pantano  
Westfield

### The 'W' Lawsuit by DWC Needs Common Sense and Good Taste

I was pleased to learn that the Downtown Westfield Corporation owns the letter "W." It certainly is a strategic acquisition, as it will preclude critics of their litigation from using terms such as "wasteful" and "without merit." Perhaps their ownership of "W" explains why the president felt compelled to visit our fair city this year. Was the visit part of a confidential settlement over a lawsuit involving his bumper stickers?

The next logical letter for the DWC to conquer is "E" followed by "S," then "T," then "F" - well you get the point. Controlling "E" certainly will have advantages (just think of the commissions from Wheel of Fortune every time a contestant buys a vowel!).

Nevertheless, I would encourage the DWC to think outside the box and explore the possibility of acquiring things other

than letters. For example, they should consider acquiring the color blue. Maybe a number, such as \$400,000 - never mind, they already got that from us. Perhaps they could own a sensation ("warmth" would be nice), or even an entire sense. I would suggest they start by getting some "common" sense and maybe they could show some "taste."

I imagine that in response, I will be told that I should know a little bit more about trademarks and that my position is just plain silly and overstated. I may even be invited to review their 100 pages of legal filings. They will probably be right. I am sure that after reviewing the submission, I will gain a much better understanding as to what is silly and overstated.

Michael Connolly  
Westfield

### Children at Edison Are More Than a Bunch of Numbers from Math Tests

After living in this town for more than 40 years, I have seen my share of Westfield's good and it's bad. And I must say that Mr. Neseaman's editorial cartoon last week, jumped right to the top of the bad charts.

I believe, sir, you and your paper used incredibly bad judgment and poor taste when you went to press that day. That being said, you are only the messenger, a despicable one at that, but messenger just the same.

So I ask where is the message coming from? For those of you who have not read it, the following is the Westfield's School System's Mission Statement:

"The Mission of the Westfield School District, a system built on successful cooperation among family, school and community, is to prepare students to reach their highest potential, and to become productive, ethical, and responsible citizens through rigorous educational programs which respect individual differences and diversity."

How dare the Westfield Board of Education and superintendent, along with respected community leaders, claim to want to "prepare students to reach their highest potential and respect their individual differences and diversity," when all they continue to look at are the numbers on standardized tests!

With all due respect Board of Ed, Superintendent and others, my child is not a number and neither are the other children of Edison Intermediate Schools.

Stop the humiliation of our children now! Our teachers teach our children to

reach their highest potential. Our children are happy and productive, and it is only you who see them differently.

For these children, as well as our teachers, to be humiliated in this way is despicable! In your hands, the Mission Statement is a joke and as long as you continue this line of thought, your mission statement will remain one.

The best way to teach our children to be productive, ethical, and responsible is by example, just the way the Edison teachers do it. Maybe the rest of you should take your clues from them.

Dana Roleri  
Westfield

### EIS PTO Co-Pres. Dismayed by Cartoon

We are very disheartened to see that you chose to make the students at Edison Intermediate School (EIS) the brunt of your cartoon joke.

EIS strives to have each student reach their full potential, and though some students in the EIS district were unable to achieve the goal set by the state, it is by no means a laughing matter.

We hope that none of the students regardless of their academic prowess witnessed your poor attempt at humor.

In the future if you choose to use public humiliation to get a laugh, please leave our children out of it.

Judy Hoffman  
Edison Inter. School  
PTO Co-Pres., Westfield

### Fundraising in Parking Lots Is Not Constructive Experience for Kids

Last weekend, traveling between the Westfield Diner, Super Cuts and Drug Fair with my kids in tow, I encountered three different groups of kids dressed in football uniforms shaking cans for donations. I believe this type of begging has a name but I can't recall it.

I understand the kids were PAL football players raising money for team supplies and trips. It did not appear to me that they were raising money to be donated anywhere else.

Since I had to explain to my kids why I not only didn't put money in the cans but was also annoyed by the experience of saying no to little kids in uniforms, I spent some time thinking about what it was that struck me as wrong about this type of fundraising.

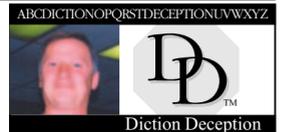
It comes down to one major point. Why do we teach able-bodied, athletic kids

that a good way to earn money is to shake a can at complete strangers in parking lots?

These teams are raising money for their own use. Wouldn't it be a better experience if they did something constructive to raise the funds? What ever happened to leaf raking, car washing and bake sales?

I have three children and understand it costs a lot of money for kids to take part in activities and that every family has different income and ability to afford these things. I am not at all against fundraising for teams to take the strain off parents. I'm against teaching kids that begging in parking lots is an acceptable way for healthy, fortunate kids to raise money.

Patty Spinner  
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. Capercaille - The Scotch wood grouse

2. Tana - In India, a police station  
3. Xeres - A sherry from Spain  
4. Walsome - Disgusting; offensive

AMPULLACEOUS

1. Shaped like a bottle or inflated ladder

2. Possessing great speed; quickness  
3. Obese; very overweight  
4. Very loud, deafening

SIBIL

1. A stork native to Africa  
2. In fortification, a defense built in a wide ditch  
3. The coalfish  
4. The harness of a weaver's drawloom

HOLOSERICEOUS

1. Faith healing  
2. Bad breath  
3. Completely covered with minute silky hairs

4. Aptitude for making fortunate discoveries accidentally

WURLEY

1. Disheveled; rumpled  
2. An Australian aboriginal hut  
3. A helicopter  
4. A basketmaker

## Letters to the Editor

### Retired Vet Thanks Leader for Coverage

Thanks for your coverage of the homecoming events to date of the 250th Signal Battalion of the 42nd Infantry Division on their return from Iraq. The continuous support of many organizations from the community during the deployment is greatly appreciated.

Joseph Dunphy  
Clifton

*Editor's Note:* Mr. Dunphy is a retired NCO, 250th Signal Battalion and life member VFW Post 7165, American Legion Post 8 (both of Clifton), and Signal Corps. Regimental Association (Ft. Monmouth chapter).

### S-Plains Resident Urges Action Re: Tax Break

We thank the Scotch Plains Mayor and town council for listening to our concerns and comments in a gracious and receptive manner and for taking additional time during the meeting of November 9 to detail the history of the situation. However, setting aside the state statutes and the unfortunate "There are no choices" statements, it remains clear that this august body of sincere and dedicated public servants still requires further evidence to consider revisiting and perhaps modifying the Heather Glen tax-break issue.

Maybe the tax exemption should be diffused over all town services to lessen the effect of focusing on just one thereby achieving an equitable solution.

Why would anyone think that a proposal benefiting a small segment of the community while antagonizing the majority of all taxpayers is a worthwhile and equitable endeavor?

Accordingly, we strongly urge all those concerned taxpayers to either attend the next town council meeting on November 22 to voice their protest or to contact the mayor and the town council by email (Mayormarks@scotchplainsnj.com) or regular mail to reflect your disagreement with this inequity.

If it is possible to convince anyone that a change is necessary, it cannot be done without major support and waiting for the other guy to step forward.

Sheldon Roskin  
Scotch Plains

### WF Candidate Walsh Congratulates Winners

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many friends and neighbors who urged me to seek a position on the Westfield Town Council and supported my campaign. It was an exciting and worthwhile experience to be part of such an important process.

I was fortunate to have had outstanding teammates and they have my utmost respect for their abilities. I would also like to recognize my family and thank them for their encouragement, support and understanding of the time involved in public service.

Congratulations and best wishes to all the candidates on their election to the town council and their dedication to Westfield.

Danielle Walsh  
Westfield

### Leader 'Totally Unfair' In Portrayal Of DWC

I have been associated for 40 years with the Westfield area Chamber of Commerce board. I am a former president of the Chamber and have been the chairperson of the Downtown Westfield Corporation (DWC) Promotions Committee for the last several years. I have seen what Westfield was and what Westfield is.

The Westfield Leader was totally unfair in its editorial in its portrayal of the DWC. Westfield is one of the best towns in the State of New Jersey and being in the commercial real estate business, I know the value that the DWC adds to the town.

Saul Dittel  
Westfield

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