

The Westfield Leader
— Established 1890 —
The Official Newspaper of the Town of Westfield
Legal Newspaper for Union County, New Jersey

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Letters to the Editor
See more Letters on pages 5 and 19

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In the interview, Mr. Jardim states that over the last few years he has been watching our municipal government from afar and has "a good perspective." Mr. Jardim goes on to make a number of comments about traffic safety and downtown parking.

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Tom Quinn
Westfield

Mark Ciarrocca
Westfield Councilman

Courts Should be Consistent and Elections Fair: 'Let Al Run'

In our opinion, New Jersey state courts continue to make a mockery of our election process. On Tuesday, the appellate court overturned Superior Court Judge Walter Barisonok's ruling that Mayor Al McWilliams of Plainfield could seek reelection as a Republican because the state law prohibiting it is unconstitutional in that it unfairly limits municipal candidates but not those running for county or state office.

On the surface, the ruling of the appellate court seems logical and fair. But, it's inconsistent to us when one considers the court logic in the Robert Torricelli and Frank Lautenberg (for U.S. Senate) or the Joe Sulliga and Nicholas Scutari (for State Senate, District 22) 'bait-and-switch' decisions. In those cases, it was admittedly unconstitutional to allow the 'too-late' replacements, yet the courts ruled that it was more important to give the voters a choice rather than to follow the words of the constitution.

The 'too-late' replacement switches came about because polls showed the original candidates were going to lose and possibly be indicted.

How then does the appellate court not provide for giving the Plainfield voters a choice in the McWilliams case, particularly when the law cited is

a manufactured legislative oddity - let alone not making the standing of the state constitution?

Judge Barisonok's ruling was a 40-page review provided to the public. In our opinion, it was well-considered. The appellate court ruling was a three-paragraph statement that is kept secret.

Union County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi, the plaintiff in the matter because of her office, remains barred from printing the county ballots as part of the decision. The county clerk is also seeking reelection. The matter now moves to the state Supreme Court today.

As we followed matters of the New Jersey court election rulings over the last few years, we first concluded that it was the influence of powerful state Democrats steering the outcomes. But, with the McWilliams decision and reflecting on gerrymandering, we've changed our view.

It's not the state Democrats or the Republicans - it's both of them working together with the courts to maintain their collective power system. Only when convenient is rhetoric given about the rights of the voters. It's the 'rule of law.'

While we have not always agreed with state court decisions in the past, we believe these rulings must at least be consistent and fair - "Let Al Run."

Now Is the Time to Pay Attention To Local Candidates for Office

Election Day is Tuesday, November 8. Everyone will have a choice for governor, for the state general assembly, county freeholders and county clerk. Town races locally include mayor and four council seats in Westfield and two council seats each in Fanwood, Garwood and Summit. Also, mayor and council seats are up in Plainfield. There are no municipal elections this year in Scotch Plains. Republican incumbents Keith Turner and Paul Mirabelli are unopposed for the two council seats in Mountainside.

In cooperation with The Westfield Leader, The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times and the League of Women Voters, candidate forums will be filmed and aired on local TV (35 and 36). Westfield candidates will discuss issues on Monday, October 17 in the Westfield Municipal Building at 8 p.m. Fanwood candidates will discuss issues on Tuesday, October 17 in Fanwood Borough Hall at 8 p.m. The public is invited to attend. Questions for the candidates must be submitted in advance no later than October 15 to this newspaper or the League of Women Voters.

Please use e-mail, send to editor@goleader.com.

All local candidates are volunteers and are campaigning to serve for the good of the communities. They have been working hard. Please encourage them and congratulate them all - win or lose.

Candidate information, voting places and voter registration information are summarized on the Internet at www.goleader.com/05vote.

On Thursday, November 3, this newspaper will be mailed to every home in Fanwood and Westfield in addition to our subscribers in other towns. That edition will also be posted on the Internet at goleader.com and it will contain a special election supplement on state, county and local candidates and races to assist voters with their choices. Please read it.

Between now and Election Day, it's time to pay attention. Besides being fun as we approach the zenith of 'silly season,' it's very important.

We urge you to read and listen to what your local candidates have to say. Ask questions and provide opinions. Then vote on November 8.

Officials and Citizens Must Prepare For a National Energy Crisis

It's likely that New Jersey and the rest of the nation are headed for an energy crisis this winter, the likes of which have not been seen since the administrations of Presidents Nixon and Carter in the 1970s.

However, we hear nothing about it from government, nor is there a national plan put forth. No advice is being given to the citizenry. Oil companies are reaping in record billions of dollars in profits and airlines are concerned about bankruptcy.

The already-high gasoline price will be combined this winter with elevated natural-gas and heating-oil prices. Is our government prepared to deal with this? Will seniors on fixed incomes be able to afford soaring energy prices? Will a decline in disposable income impact retail sales, restaurant payrolls, etc?

Leaders in Trenton have focused on gas-price-gouging fines. Asm. Kevin O'Toole (Warren County) and his Republican colleagues have proposed a number of changes, including establishing New Jersey's own fuel reserves, tax incentives to consumers and businesses who purchase alternative fuel vehicles and the use of a pre-paid gas card to lock into prices. We would be interested in hearing what the Democrats, the majority party in Trenton, propose.

Are citizens supposed to conserve, turn down thermostats, wear sweaters and drive less?

Hurricane Katrina taught us of the need to prepare. A real plan must be put forth soon to respond to an energy crisis.

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Westfield

Mark Ciarrocca
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High Taxes Driving WF Seniors Away

I applaud Tom Jardim's article on holding down increases in local taxes. I have lived in Westfield for 30 years and am near retirement. I love the town and want to be close to my family. Increasing taxes are driving most seniors out.

Let's have more debate on reducing costs and increasing revenues (not taxes, e.g. wireless networks). Mr. Jardim's idea for a quarterly non-partisan advisory committee is also a worthwhile idea. I am sure there are plenty of ways we can make budget cuts if we looked at consolidated public safety, leaner recreation and Public Works.

I would be happy if some other of the candidates would also talk about reducing taxes. It has got to start here and not depend on Trenton's plans and promises.

Tom Quinn
Westfield

Preliminary Framework Suggested For Westfield McMansion Problem

In John Englehart's recent letter in The Westfield Leader on the appropriate height for new homes in Westfield, he suggested that, for his situation, a limit of 30 feet, rather than 35 feet would be better.

He also noted, however, that a large, new home might be appropriate if it were built near other large, older homes. In other words, the decision should be made with regard to the context of the neighboring structures. Any changes in grade would also affect the building's height and could, in effect, run off to neighboring sites. These thoughts, together with the published reports of ongoing discussions about controlling "McMansions" in Westfield, remind me of an approach to this problem that I saw in Europe a few years ago as a tourist and would like to suggest for use here in Westfield.

Before a new building was permitted, the builder was required to erect, at the site, a framework of rods or tubes that depicted the entire height, shape, and size of the building. As a result, the roof ridges, gables, roof and corner lines, proximity to lot boundaries, etc., would be clear, and especially, the building would appear to be in context of nearby buildings. This framework would be seen by the neighbors and by the local government officials, who could decide on its acceptability.

Here in Westfield, such a framework and review procedure might only be required for a residential or commercial building that, by its plans filed for permit purposes, would exceed some defined limits as to increased height, grade change, lot coverage or set-back in relation to the existing (to be replaced or modified) or neighboring structures.

Consistency with architectural style might well be a consideration where the area has historic significance and character. Careful evaluations and subjective judgments are implied, but that is already true in the functioning of the board of adjustment and the planning board.

George Gross
Westfield

Resident Can't Fathom Bench Desecration

On a recent walk through Mindowaskin Park, I was pained to see one of the memorial benches desecrated with graffiti. Not only is this appalling but it is also bizarre, since none of the other benches around the park were similarly marred.

The graffiti covers almost every available surface of the bench, some of the "artistry" very detailed, making me wonder why no one passing by observing the artist(s) at work didn't report this to the police station adjacent to the park. I can't imagine that this desecration occurred in the dark, which would have necessitated someone holding a flashlight while the artist(s) carved away.

Because the carvings are different in style, it would seem several people have had their shot at this bench close to the bridge by the Presbyterian Church parking lot. I don't know what can be done to rectify this abomination or to prevent future abuses but this certainly could be a deterrent for future purchases of memorial benches.

Joan Lowell Smith
Westfield



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Mark Ciarrocca
Westfield Councilman

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. Tussicular - Pertaining to a cough
 2. Kame - A low mound or hill composed of sand, gravel, etc.
 3. Pule - To whine, cry, whimper
 4. Keb - Scottish for a tic or sheep louse
- CHITRA**
1. A closely woven cotton cloth, used for sheets
 2. Hay fever
 3. A freckle or freckly condition of the skin
 4. The Indian spotted hog deer
- HIERODULE**
1. A Greek temple slave
 2. An expert, specifically, a skilled theologian used as a consultant
 3. A Mohammedan fanatic
 4. A guardian spirit
- INTERTRIGO**
1. An entrance in the rear of a building, home, etc.; a back door
 2. An eruption of the skin produced by friction of adjacent parts
 3. A connection or go between; liaison
 4. A communicating of knowledge; systematically investigating
- TOCSIN**
1. A malt beverage brewed by the ancient Egyptians
 2. Manageability of a ship at sea
 3. An alarm bell
 4. Barren; unprofitable

Jardim Issues Charges To Score Political Points

The parking deck bickering lives on thanks to Tom Jardim. While the rest of Westfield moves on with their lives, Mr. Jardim will try to use this emotionally-charged issue to score political points. I'm referring to a story in the September 29 issue of The Westfield Leader. Mr. Jardim essentially accuses the council of raising the parking-permit fares unnecessarily for a deck that wasn't built and believes that the town should now refund monies back to the commuters.

"They've increased fares to do nothing but conduct endless studies," Mr. Jardim stated. Obviously, that was not their intent. He makes this off-the-cuff statement to incite and divide the community. Was the money spent on economic, environmental and traffic studies? Of course it was. It had to be. As a lawyer, Tom understands that the town could never undertake a project without conducting these studies. We could not have voted on the project without the information provided in these studies.

Why did Mr. Jardim pass an ordinance to increase parking fees during his term as mayor? Was he raising money for the deck? A quote from another article in the September 29 Leader said, "Mr. Jardim acknowledged that while he was serving as mayor from 1996 to 2000, he shared the responsibility for the conception of the ill-fated deck."

Finally, he accuses Councilman Echausse of trying to rewrite history. The only one trying to rewrite history or looking in the rearview mirror is Mr. Jardim. When he looks in this rearview mirror, I wonder if he can see the vacancy signs in the downtown windows while he was mayor? I do! The downtown was stagnant and losing tenants during his term. Since he has left office, we have a vibrant and thriving downtown.

Enough of the mudslinging and Monday-morning quarterbacking. We are all neighbors. Lets look forward not backwards.

Tom Fazio
Westfield

Vote November 8, 2005

- goleader.com/05vote
- Candidates Public TV Forums Filmed:**
Westfield: Monday, 8 pm, Oct. 17
Fanwood: Tuesday, 8 pm, Oct. 18
- Governor (1, 4-yr.)**
- Jon Corzine (D)
Doug Forrester (R)
Jeffrey Pawlowski (L)
Hector Castillo (Ed)
- State Assembly D-21 (2, 2-yr.)**
- Jon Bramnick (R)(I)
Eric Munoz (R)(I)
Steve Merman (D)
Bruce Bergen (D)
- State Assembly D-22 (2, 2-yr.)**
- Linda Stender (D)(I)
Jerry Green (D)(I)
Nancy Malool (R)
Elyse Bochiechio (R)
- Union County Clerk (1, 5-yr.)**
- Joanne Rajoppi (D)(I)
Saundra Spector (R)
- Union County Freeholder (3, 3-yr.)**
- Angel Estrada (D)(I)
Rick Proctor (D)(I)
Nancy Ward (D)(I)
Patricia Quattrocchia (R)
Stuart Kline (R)
Albert Dill (R)
- Westfield Mayor (1, 4-yr.)**
- Andrew Skibitsky (R)(I)
Tom Jardim (D)
- Westfield Council Ward 1 (1, 4-yr.)**
- Sal Caruana (R)(I)
Audrey Fisch (D)
- Westfield Council Ward 2 (1, 4-yr.)**
- Vicki Kimmins (R)
Frank Fusaro (D)
- Westfield Council Ward 3 (1, 4-yr.)**
- Danielle Walsh (R)(I)
David Haas (D)
- Westfield Council Ward 4 (1, 4-yr.)**
- Eric Leuthold (R)
Thomas Bigosinski (D)
- Fanwood Council (2, 3-yr.)**
- Joan Wheeler (D)
Bruce Walsh (D)
Michael D'Antuono (R)
Maureen Mawby (R)
- Garwood Council (2, 3-yr.)**
- William Schadewald (D)(I)
Walter Tucker (D)(I)
Anthony Sytko (R)
Bruce Paterson (R)
- Mountainside Council (2, 3-yr.)**
- Keith Turner (R)(I)
Paul Mirabelli (R)(I)
(I)=Incumbent