

Lectures to Spotlight Relationship Therapy

WESTFIELD—The Westfield Area "Y" will offer two free talks on relationship therapy, both of which will be held in the conservatory of the "Y"'s new East Broad Street Family Branch, located at 422 East Broad Street in Westfield.

Licensed Clinical Social Worker Michael Barnak, a certified Imago Relationship Therapist and certified Inner Bonding Facilitator, will lead the discussions.

On Thursday, October 20, from 7 to 8 p.m., Mr. Barnak will address "Six Steps to Joy." Participants will learn how inner bonding can help people explore and release the fears and false beliefs that hold them back.

On Saturday, November 12, from 1 to 2 p.m., he will speak on "Improving Family Communication." It will focus on intentional dialogue, a three-step process used in Harville Hendrix's Imago Relationship Therapy. For more information, please call Mr. Barnak at (908) 276-8191.

Scotch Plains Resident Calls For Limits on BOE Spending

Recently the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education chose a replacement board member, Skip Whitehouse, for the resigned Lance Porter. Mr. Whitehouse comes with a recent experience, since he

lost his seat this past April on the school board. Has significant background with education issues and, from my viewpoint, is pleasant to have a conversation with.

However, Mr. Whitehouse's spouse is a teacher in another school district. We can only hope this does not cloud his voting on certain issues. In particular, these are spending issues, which result in the continual demand for the additional funding from the taxpayers.

The board had an option with the likes of Frank Festa. Mr. Festa is a past board member, resident of Scotch Plains for almost half a century and neither he nor his wife receives any salary or medical benefits from a school system (i.e. funded by taxpayers).

It is true that this position would only be available until the next election. But at least the two thirds (approximately 6,000) of households without school age children would have their voice heard for this time period.

This past year, I recommended that the school board not include monies in the budget for raises higher than average and for fully funded medical coverage for our employees. I recommended that they limit the employee contribution to that which most of us are forced to contribute for our

coverage. This was ignored by the board. We reached an impasse with the union and had to go to an arbitrator. Since the money for these increases are in the budget and I know it, the union knows it, the arbitrator knows it, — and rest assured that we, the tax paying public, will get the short end of the stick again — and all this money will be spent. Should this money not have been on the table then it could not be spent!

Taking these facts into consideration, it is obvious that the board does not want to hear from us, does not want to have a voice and rejoices when we don't vote in April. Allowing Mr. Festa to sit on the board would have gone a long way in giving the "silent majority" a chance for input.

It is up to us, should these predictions come true — we must reject the budget in April and force a full review of the budget. Hopefully this will include control of salary increases, medical coverage, deletion of unneeded programs, capital improvements that are not needed, etc.

Mr. Whitehouse, we hope that you are instrumental in accomplishing this endeavor. We wish you the best on your return, but we doubt that your conflict of interest will allow this to happen.

Albert Muller
Scotch Plains

More Letters to the Editor

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WF High School Student Presents His Views on Election Process

Adults often ask themselves the question, "Why don't today's teens take an active interest in politics?" One major answer to that question became rather apparent to me last week, while reading *The Westfield Leader*.

As president of the WHS (Westfield High School) Young Democrats Club, I oversee a club of around 100 students who have identified themselves as Democrats or as sharing principles of the Democratic Party. This figure, while seemingly impressive at first, is a lot less significant when taken out of the approximately 1,600 students at Westfield High. Including a Young Republicans club of approximately the same size, this means there are only 200 of 1600 students, or one eighth of the student body, who have been able to identify with any political party or political conviction.

Though I don't speak for all young adults, I strongly suspect many of them are repulsed by the mudslinging and dishonesty practiced by politicians on all levels. The letters-to-the-editor page last week seemed to be more of an advertisement, designed to smear a local candidate, than an open and balanced discussion of politics. There was no shortage of venomous and negative articles in last week's *Leader*, many of which accusing a candidate of trying to "re-write history" and practicing "diversionary tactics."

I do not believe that naming names or pointing fingers at particular parties is necessary in this case. A simple count of the blatantly partisan articles by any fair-minded reader would illustrate where the vast amount of negativity is coming from.

Many dismiss the lack of interest in politics by young adults, writing them off as "apathetic" or "too distracted." This, however, is not the case. It would be incorrect, insulting, and unwise to write young adults off as a factor in politics. The high-school student who you alienate today may very well be the voter you depend on tomorrow.

The bottom line is, most teens are tired of hearing baseless, politically motivated lies that do nothing to advance the public debate. We are an extremely bright generation, one that finds

the true issues more important than what someone may or may not have said at a council meeting or an offhand remark made within earshot of a reporter. We'd certainly prefer a positive campaign to one based on attacks and smearing a local resident's name.

This letter is an open call for decency and civility to all political parties or anyone affiliated with those political parties who want to have their voices heard. Let's end the continued negativity, and focus on a positive campaign that focuses on informing all residents of the town about the issues that impact their lives. This would go a long way in bringing many young adults, disillusioned by the continuous stream of negativity in politics, back into the fold of local politics where they belong, and can make a positive contribution.

Ben Zakarin
President, WHS Young Democrats

Aid Baskets Set For Delivery to Gulf Coast

On behalf of First United Methodist Church (FUMC), we would like to thank all who supported our Sunday school's Flood Bucket fundraiser. Thanks to the willing support of many members of FUMC-Westfield and of the families of the Wesley Hall Nursery School, we were able to provide 37 Flood Buckets filled with cleaning supplies. Our students in Sunday school assembled these buckets, valued at \$45 each, on September 25. These buckets are now awaiting transport to the Gulf Coast to aid those affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

This wonderful effort would not have been possible without the generosity of many. Thanks once again to all contributors.

Debra Leonard
Nancy Anderson
FUMC-Westfield

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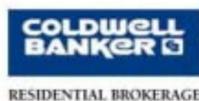
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