

## Let Me Reintroduce Myself And Tell You Who I Am

by: Tom Jardim, DEM Candidate for Westfield Mayor  
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Since 1890, *The Westfield Leader* has been a Westfield institution, informing its readers on the issues and news that matter. This year, it has offered local candidates space in these pages to tell voters where each candidate stands on issues important to its residents.

So that you can understand your choices better, I plan to utilize the pages of this newspaper and any other means I know of to let you know where I stand. But first, I thought it would be appropriate if I introduce - or re-introduce - myself to you and tell you who I am.

I am a life-long resident of New Jersey, grew up in Millington and have lived in Westfield since 1994. My wife, Karen, and I have three children, Cecile, Charlotte and Nathaniel.

I graduated from Watchung Hills Regional High School in 1984 and went to college at the University of Richmond in Virginia, where I worked in the policy office of then Virginia Governor Gerald Baliles. In 1993, I received a law degree and a master's degree in foreign affairs from American University in Washington, D.C. Prior to law school, my wife and I spent half a year

living and working in Tanzania, in East Africa. I have worked as an assistant legislative liaison to the Connecticut municipal league, as an attorney in the Deputy Attorney General's Office of the United States Department of Justice, and am currently a partner in a 15-lawyer firm in Morristown.

As many know, I've had the honor of serving before as mayor of Westfield, first elected in 1996 and re-elected in 1998. I am proud of my service during those two terms, during which we revived a stagnant downtown; nearly tripled the town's investment in its parks and fields, roads and other public infrastructure; worked to improve the ride for Westfield's train commuters; and made town government more accessible and more responsive to the town's residents. I was also honored to have served as the president of the Union County League of Municipalities in 2000.

Since I have already served two terms as mayor, the most common question I'm asked is, "why again?" My answer to that simple question is also pretty simple. First, I'm running again because I enjoyed immensely both the job of mayor and campaigning for that job. Yes, the hours are long, the pay is lousy and the meetings can seem endless at times. But it was also the most fulfilling experience I have ever had — and one in which you really can make a difference.

Secondly, I'm running again because there are a lot of things that haven't gotten done in the last few years that could have and should have been accomplished with better leadership. Take a look at the rates of increases in the municipal tax bills since I left office, or the declining maintenance of our parks, ball fields and other public spaces, or the condition of some of Westfield roads, and you'll see what I mean.

I believe I did a fairly good job when I served previously. With the experience of being mayor previously and the perspective of being away from it for several years now, I believe I can do an even better job than before.

Finally, when I first ran for mayor, I ran because I believed that this town was ready for new energy and new leadership. I truly believe it is time for new energy and new leadership once again.

To say it another way, I love Westfield and want to make it an even better town than it is. I enjoy the job of mayor immensely, and I think I'm the right person for the job.

Over the next several weeks, I will be using this space to tell you where I stand on the issues facing our town. I hope you will read these articles so that you can make an informed decision. And if you would like to, please call me (908) 917-7665, e-mail me (tjardim@ramseyberman.com) or visit our website, www.westfielddem.org, to better understand who I am and what I believe.



CAMPAIGN FUN... Westfield Mayor and Council candidates pose with many of the kids that attended the mini-golf fundraiser at Hyatt Hills Golf Complex in Clark last Saturday evening organized by Nancy Greco. Pictured above, from left to right, are candidates: Eric Leuthold for Council Ward 4, Andy Skibitsky for mayor and Vicki Kimmins for Council Ward 2.

## Architectural Review Board Should Have Input On Town Teardowns

by: Eric Leuthold, GOP Candidate for Westfield Council, Ward 4  
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Much has been made in recent months of the ever-growing instances of home demolitions that are replaced by so called 'McMansions.' I support the Mayor and Council's recent efforts to limit shoe horning and build responsibly. However, there are other concepts and common sense approaches, which provide viable solutions to this issue. One of those concepts is architectural review.

The Town of Westfield needs to implement balanced regulations. We need to weigh the expectations of homeowners to protect and maximize their life-long investment, while allowing our town to slowly and smartly evolve as it has for the last century. I advocate changes to the zoning ordinances, which balance the character of our historic community with the interest of a citizen's ability to change and develop their property.

Our town each year appoints local professionals to the Architectural Review Committee. This board is only vested with advisory capacity and in most instances has no input on houses that are constructed. We need to better utilize the unique skills of this body and give its members greater access to the process and more effective influence in the outcome.

Instead of passing legislation, which would reduce the allowable size of all homes, we must include a range of acceptable size for various neighborhoods. Teardown applicants would be restricted to build at the lowest end of the allowable range unless they consented to the jurisdiction of the Architectural Review Board.

By consenting to the jurisdiction of the Architectural Review Committee, an applicant would be allowed to build within the higher end of the range provided the property meets architectural muster. The board

would be able to make revisions to applications to conform to existing neighborhoods and outright reject applications that are wholly contrary to the goal of preserving the classic character of Westfield. Since the applicant would be required to consent to the jurisdiction of the board to breach the threshold, they would need to waive their right to appeal. If they disagree with the Architectural Review Committee, they would still be able to construct a new home but would be required to build at the lowest thresholds of the range.

This change to the process would effectively preserve the high property values we all expect from the investment in our homes but still limit the instances of drastic overdevelopment out of character with our surrounding neighborhoods.

I encourage the residents of the 4th Ward to review my other thoughts and ideas as well as learn more about my family and me by viewing my website at leuthold2005.com.

## Food for Hay ride at Williams Nursery

WESTFIELD — Everyone that brings in a can of food on September 24 to 25 will receive a free hayride at Williams Nursery at 524 Springfield Avenue in Westfield. As part of Williams' Annual Harvest Food Drive, hayrides run from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Besides the great need for food and water from Katrina, according to the Foodbank of NJ, almost one million people in New Jersey are hungry. One can of food makes a difference.

Foods most urgently needed include canned meats, fish, chili, peanut butter, and macaroni and cheese.

For more information, please call (908) 232-4076.

## Westfield Can Be A Safer, More Efficient Place To Live

by: Audrey Fisch, DEM Candidate for Westfield Council, Ward 1  
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My name is Audrey Fisch and I'm running for town council in the first ward. I'm running because I think I have the intelligence, the energy and the disposition to serve our community. Westfield is a great town, but like any town, we face challenges. I am ready and able to meet those challenges.

I was educated in public schools in upstate New York and New Jersey. In 1987, I graduated from Amherst College with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Math and English. After Amherst, I earned a Master of Arts and a Doctorate Degree in English at Rutgers University. I am a Professor of English and Education at New Jersey City University, in Jersey City, where I've taught since 1993. I coordinate the Secondary English education program, training students to teach high school and middle school English.

My husband, Mark, and I moved to Westfield 12 years ago. We live on Highland Avenue. Our son, Max, is a third grader at Franklin School, where I've served as class parent and volunteered for various events. Our favorite family activity is running the Haunted House at the Franklin School Pumpkin Fair.

A three-sport college athlete, I care deeply about youth athletics, especially about opportunities for girls that weren't available to me as a child. Since graduate school, I've been refereeing field hockey and girls lacrosse in and around Westfield at the youth,

high school and college levels. Recently, I've coached Max's basketball teams (at the Y for first grade and for the WBA for second grade).

I don't know everything about Westfield or about local government. What I do know is that all of us have ideas about things we could do to make Westfield better. Many of these ideas, some of which could be implemented at little or no cost, would make Westfield a safer, more efficient and easier community in which to live. We need local government that makes use of the knowledge and expertise of our citizens and that makes listening to the people of the community our first priority. As I make my way around the community, knocking on every door in the ward, I am eager to hear your ideas and suggestions.

You won't see expensive campaign materials from my grassroots campaign. I have pledged to limit campaign contributions to \$100 per person. Anyone with the interest and commitment should be able to serve our community; it shouldn't require a lot of money. I offer my simple campaign as a model of the fiscal responsibility I will show on the town council. It isn't always necessary or better to spend more.

Please share your questions, concerns, or suggestions for my campaign or for making Westfield better: 421 Highland Ave., Westfield, (908) 233-5421, AudreyforCouncil@yahoo.com.

## WE CARE Invites Public to Festfall

WESTFIELD — The citizen's action group, WE CARE (Westfielders Concerned About Responsible Development) invites residents to stop by their booth at Festfall this Sunday, Sept. 25. The public is invited to find out more about the organization and sign up for their e-mail newsletter.

WE CARE provides their top campaign issues for the upcoming town election in November and solicits questions from the public to be asked of the candidates.

The organization encourages residents to stay informed and stay involved. For more information, please see [wecarewestfield.com](http://wecarewestfield.com).

## Have Questions for The Candidates?

E-mail your questions to:  
[editor@goleader.com](mailto:editor@goleader.com)

The League of Women Voters and the *LeaderTimes* newspapers will ask them when the candidates appear on local TV. The televised Candidates Forum in Westfield will be videotaped on October 17. Westfield will elect the mayor and four council members, each for 4-year terms.

The forum for Fanwood candidates will be scheduled shortly. Fanwood will elect two council members, each for 3-year terms.

The programs will air up until election day, November 8.

For more information, see  
[goleader.com/05vote](http://goleader.com/05vote)

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1827 East Second Street, Scotch Plains

908-322-7000

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16 Prospect Street  
Westfield

Northside Trattoria  
16 Prospect Street  
Westfield, NJ 07090  
(908) 232-7320  
[northsidetrattoria.com](http://northsidetrattoria.com)