

The Westfield Leader - Established 1890 - The Official Newspaper of the Town of Westfield Legal Newspaper for Union County, New Jersey. Includes contact info for Paul Peyton, Suzette F. Stalker, Michael Pollack, Victoria McCabe, Horace R. Corbin, David B. Corbin, Karen M. Hinds, Fred K. Lecomte, Michael L. Bartiromo, Robert P. Connelly, Ben Corbin.

Parking Information: Wild Goose Chase for Westfield Visitors?

Westfield is flourishing as a suburban town and growing as a regional business center. In addition to the traditional shopping and dining, general business activities are expanding. One only needs to note the number of new banks to understand the welcomed trend.

The county's Ralph Froehlich Public Safety Building at 300 North Avenue East and the county business annex is also attracting many new visitors to town. One difficulty visitors have with the county center in Westfield is that few go to the correct place, searching the train station area for 300 North Avenue, which doesn't exist.

The Westfield train station on the north side along with the NJ Transit bus stop shelter area is one hub of this phenomenon. People may come to Westfield to transact business, take a morning train to Newark, return to town in the afternoon, complete some banking, legal, marketing or real estate work, and then dine at an outdoor cafe.

This robust business climate brings people of all ages to our downtown, many for the first time. Whether they are shopping, dining, or commuting into New York City, many find themselves in need of a parking spot. First-timers to Westfield are confused about where to park because there is no visitor information available at the business hubs - and the town website does not contain such information.

It's no secret that parking, for some time now, has been the most notorious of issues concerning our charming community. There isn't a day that goes by when a newcomer doesn't ask, "Where is the all-day parking? I see the two-hour and four-hour and permit only, but...?" or "Do I need to put money in the meter at nighttime while dining?"

In search of answers to Westfield's biggest mystery - the parking conundrum - The Westfield Leader and Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times summer interns set out to investigate.

First, the interns contacted the town clerk's office, hoping they would be able to assist with the quest. The clerk's office was cooperative. They offered the official record, Motor Vehicles and Traffic: Chapter 13 of the Town Code. They conceded that none of this information was available online or as an electronic computer file, which we knew from inspecting www.westfieldnj.gov - the town's website.

A copy of Chapter 13 of the Town Code was requested that contains the detailed parking and traffic information. As it was not available electronically, after paying \$30.50 for a paper copy, the interns had a 92-page compilation of legal jargon and endless street names. A sample sentence: "Elm Street, west side, from North Avenue for a distance of 60 feet measured northerly there from" under section 13-19.1. Parking Prohibited - Regulations not exclusive.

After sifting through the entire document, it was concluded that this was not a viable solution to the

The Scotch Plains - Fanwood TIMES - Established 1959 - Official Newspaper of the Borough of Fanwood and the Township of Scotch Plains. Includes contact info for Fred K. Lecomte, Michael L. Bartiromo, Robert P. Connelly, Ben Corbin.

goal of locating consolidated information for visitors and residents. It took three hours to scan 92 pages and convert the scans to text documents with the Leader/Times "optical character recognition (OCR)" software. Once electronic, in five minutes, all 92 pages along with the parking brochure were posted on line at www.goleader.com/features.

The Westfield parking services division was called to see if it had the remedy. Our interns returned to the municipal building, this time to the police station. After requesting a brochure, they were told they would have to speak to a sergeant.

Waiting for the sergeant to arrive, they happened to notice a brochure called "Parking in Downtown Westfield," a comprehensive description and map of Westfield's parking lots, meter regulations and fees. The brochure is good, but perhaps a little aging. It did not address on-street parking or parking outside of the business district, located just a few blocks away.

This brochure might help solve the visitor's quest, but another obstacle was encountered. The removal of one brochure from the police department parking division had depleted its supply. Also, the pamphlet directs the reader to the town website for more information, but to no avail. Nowhere on the "town's new website" could we find the facts we were seeking, or even a copy of this brochure. The brochure was located at the Downtown Westfield Corporation website, www.westfieldtoday.com and a map was at goleader.com (from the era of the parking deck debate).

The contents of the brochure are printed on page 5 of this edition of the newspaper.

We're certainly not advocating that Westfield build a parking deck. We do believe information needs to be posted at the train station lots and affixed to the backside of all of the pay stations. NJ Transit might also agree to have this information posted on the bus stop shelters. Also, the town website, touted at the beginning of the year as a new beginning for information, falls far short of the stated intent. It is our opinion that there's less information on the town website than there was two years ago. Worse yet, it's a waste of time clicking from menu to menu, only to find nothing at each stop.

As the town continues to enjoy the business growth and many new, first-time visitors, Westfield should think of how to help them, perhaps a visitors' center at the train station - or a kiosk or two.

Past documents, granted, may not exist as computer files. But all documents today in the town, as elsewhere, are generated on computers. So, there are computer files of the documents. They should be posted on the Internet and made available to the public upon request as electronic files. The era is gone where the excuse that the files only exist as paper and the charge is \$.33 per page if the public wants public information.

We're not saying this document problem is a Westfield problem. Comparatively speaking, Westfield is very responsive. But government in general seems to be more frequently using the statement, "The information you seek is not available as an electronic file and thus cannot be placed on the Internet - so the cost to you for copying the documents will be..."

We'd be glad to provide the Town of Westfield with a disk containing Chapter 13 of the Town Code. The cost will be \$30.50.

Commentary From The Leader/Times Time Not to Tear Down

The town of Westfield has been approached by a resident who is interested in selling his property. The house stands on the corner of Central Avenue and Sycamore Street between fire house number two and Sycamore Field.

Though the town is not certain at this time as to the precise purpose the property would serve, we believe that it is important for the town to purchase it, and at a fair price to the owner. This small piece of property is the only one in between the firehouse and the field. It would be a shame if a developer grabbed it for a "tear down" and then shoehorned a McMansion into the spot.

There are areas of town that are

appropriate for development into large homes, but this is not one of them. We would hate to see the area become disjointed and an opportunity lost for integrating the community purposes possible with the fire station and Sycamore Field.

There are builders and developers who sit on the planning board and board of adjustment. We appreciate the power and influence that comes as a result. In the case of this property, we hope they, and all other developers, support the interests of the town and not clamor over the property. Such actions would only drive up the price and make for intense meetings down the road in attempts to obtain variances required to make a profit.

By 7th District Congressional Candidate Linda Stender, DEM

Tax Breaks for Big Oil Must End

Working families are being taken advantage of at the pump when they should be spending their hard-earned money saving for retirement, helping pay for their children's college tuition and putting food on the table.

Gas prices are hovering over three dollars per gallon in New Jersey and prices do not look like they are going to decrease anytime soon. And while we struggle at the pump, our President and Congress do nothing to help us.

In fact, our Congressman, Rep. Mike Ferguson, takes large campaign contributions from the oil companies that are taking advantage of us, gives them billions of dollars in tax breaks, and votes against legislation to stop price gouging while we do our best to find the cheapest gas on our roadways.

Big oil is making record profits while we struggle to pay increasing prices at the pump. We can't depend on our President to help us, and we can't depend on Mike Ferguson to help us. Mike Ferguson's record in Congress speaks volumes. In the past year, he voted to give big oil companies more than \$10 billion in tax breaks.

On July 28 of last year, he voted to give \$8 billion in tax breaks and subsidies to the oil and gas industry. And on October 7, 2005, he voted to give \$2 billion in tax breaks and subsidies to oil, gas and energy companies.

Mike Ferguson also has voted against legislation to stop price gouging. On September 28, 2005, Ferguson voted against a move to recommit H.R. 3402 so that it could have provided the Justice Department with the authority to prosecute oil companies engaged in price

gouging, and impose fines up to \$100 million on corporations and up to \$1 million in fines or 10 years in prison for anyone caught gouging at the pump.

And on October 7, 2005, Ferguson voted against a substitute amendment to H.R. 3893 that would have allowed the President to declare an energy emergency and prohibit gasoline price gouging in times of emergency. The measure also would have empowered state attorney generals to enforce the law.

While he votes to give Big Oil billions in tax breaks, Mike Ferguson takes tens of thousands of dollars from them. Ferguson just received a \$2,000 check from the Exxon Mobil PAC, according to a report he filed with the Federal Election Commission in July. That brings the total amount of money he's taken from the oil industry to more than \$70,000.

Ferguson is playing for the wrong team in the battle to bring gas prices back down to a respectable level. Because he accepts so much in campaign contributions from the oil companies that are taking advantage of us and our families, he cannot be trusted to do the right thing in the fight to lower gas prices.

When in Congress, I will end billion-dollar tax breaks for oil companies and will work to lower gas prices and create an energy policy that ends American dependency on foreign oil.

It's time to stop letting oil companies take advantage of us at the pump while they earn record profits. And it's time for common-sense change. We deserve a representative in Congress who will fight for the community's best interest, not big oil.

By GOP Freeholder Candidate Patricia Quattrocchi

Crime Report Shows How We're Doing

Annually, the NJ State Police releases what is called the Uniform Crime Report. Viewable on the Internet, the report contains a wealth of information regarding who is doing what illegal activity in NJ and where the crimes are occurring. In case you were wondering how many American Indians and Alaskan natives were arrested for committing crimes in NJ this would be the place to look.

The report also contains a comparison of what happened the past two years and how each county fared; this could be considered a report card of sorts telling us how, as a society, we are doing from year to year.

In Union County, 20,583 arrests were made, which was a decrease of less than one half of one percent from 2004. There were 13,145 more males arrested than females, which could be considered an interesting statistic and very telling when one ponders the differences between the sexes. Adult arrests decreased by one percent, but alarmingly, juvenile arrests increased by 6 percent over last year. Also of concern is that murders increased by 64 percent.

By comparison, in neighboring Middlesex and Somerset Counties juvenile arrests were down 6 and 5 percent respectively and murders 24 and 79 percent. So just what is going on here and what are they doing that we are not? Perhaps the answer lies in what they have been doing in those counties after the fact.

The Middlesex County website shows a plethora of services available to youth before and after incarceration at the detention center that it shares with Somerset

County, Union County, on the other hand, has little information available about preventative services for youth or follow up services for that matter.

Looking at the stats for individual municipalities tells absolutely no story at all. The numbers are up and down in the suburban as well as the urban centers of the county, with Westfield and Mountainside showing some increases in arrests for violent crimes while Plainfield and Rahway showed decreases.

One conclusion that can be drawn is that it doesn't matter much where one lives in the county as the incidence and type of crime shuffles back and forth from year to year and from town to town. But overall, 30.5 persons per one thousand inhabitants were victimized in 2005, which is down from 34 persons in 2000 and 35.5 for 1999.

Though things have improved since 1999, it is sad to say that according to the State Police Report, Union County placed fourth out of New Jersey's twenty-one counties for the number of murders and third for car-jackings statewide. So it appears that we still have some considerable work to do. Ensuring the personal safety of the county's resident's takes teamwork on the part of all the municipalities working closely with county officials to educate the residents so that they can take measures to protect their families and property, improvements in solving serious crimes and prosecution to the full extent of the law.

Please give me your support and vote -- Patricia Quattrocchi, GOP candidate for Union County Freeholder.

Letters to the Editor

The Purpose of the Federal Government Is to Keep Its People Safe

There is widespread support for the decision by U.S. District Judge Anna Diggs Taylor ruling against the eavesdropping by the Bush Administration. The members of Al Qaeda, Hezbollah, Hamas and other radical Islamic forces express their gratitude to Judge Taylor for protecting their members from warrantless searches. Judge Taylor deserves credit for the help she has given terrorist organizations and for making the lives of Americans more dangerous. Detroit has just been taken off the list of terrorist targets for fear they would injure one of their supporters.

Let's hope the Justice Department is successful in appealing the ruling and agree with the Bush Administration's effort to keep us safer by preventing attacks before they occur. The recent events in Great Britain are just another example of the need we have to use every available means to locate and stop terrorists before they can carry out their plans of destruction.

Donald Rumsfeld was correct when he once said, "We have to be right 100 percent of the time, the terrorists have to be right only once." It is next to impossible for our government to fight terrorist plots when people like Judge Taylor tie one hand behind their back. Judge Taylor seems to forget that the purpose of the Federal Government is to keep its people safe.

Thomas Lienhard Westfield

Do Officials and Businesses Care About Illegal Immigration?

As a former Rahway resident and current reader of The Westfield Leader on the Internet, I hope I can get my two cents in. I have been encouraging flea market vendors that still sell those NYPD caps that the latest craze in fashion headwear is INS caps. Just a few of these worn at the many construction sites along the Grand Strand in South Carolina would scare away a lot of [illegal immigrants] who would work for lower wages than [Americans] who rightfully need the work.

Now ask yourself this: Just how many of those Congressmen and Senators that talk about stopping [illegal immigrants] from entering the country belong to country clubs that practice in the hiring of those who work for less wages?

I already see it at the county and municipal government level and they don't care either.

Vincent Lehotsky Loris, S.C.



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. Fucivorous - Eating or subsisting on seaweed
2. Incogitativity - Without the power of thought
3. Tureen - A large deep dish with a lid
4. Tufa - A porous limestone formed by deposits from springs and streams

EREMACAUSIS

- 1. A slow combustion or oxidation of organic matter in the presence of air and water
2. Skilled in questioning or interrogation
3. An increase in red blood corpuscles in the fetus
4. Explosive discharge of vomit

TRUMEAU

- 1. A marsh at a river's mouth
2. An eyepatch
3. A pillar which supports the arch of a double door or opening
4. A wine glass used by sixteenth century French aristocracy

CYESIOLOGY

- 1. The branch of physiology that deals with pregnancy
2. The study of organisms existing in marshes and swamps
3. The branch of medicine dealing with diseases in birds, especially geese
4. The study of the mating habits of penguins

INFUNDIBULIFORM

- 1. Grooved or rutty
2. Elliptical in form
3. Having the shape of a funnel
4. Having no form or shape

Letters to the Editor

Intern Notes Helpful Hints for Journalism

My internship this summer at The Westfield Leader was wonderful. Learning about the logistics of running this newspaper was an amazing experience. I learned a variety of things from scanning pictures for the weekly newspaper to conducting interviews.

It has also been fun working alongside helpful senior interns and other employees. Being a rising sophomore at Westfield High School, I feel that this internship equipped me with many helpful hints for journalism.

I thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity, and I really appreciate the senior staff's guidance.

Katie Taylor Westfield

Internship Prepared Me For College Journalism

I came into my summer internship at The Westfield Leader/Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times unsure of what to expect. My time at The Fancsonian, the student newspaper of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, provided me with a solid journalistic foundation. I was looking forward to honing my skills and experiences at a real newspaper like The Leader/Times.

But little did I imagine that my time at The Leader would provide me with lessons both in the newsroom and in the less concrete location of the internet.

As technology develops in the blink of an eye and our world becomes increasingly dependent on computers and the Internet, the field of journalism is forced to change as well. No longer do people depend on a tangible newspaper to deliver the day's top stories. Instead, they search online for the headlines and skim articles while multi-tasking.

In some ways, this has hurt the print journalism industry. Blogs have popped up across the internet, broadcasting headlines in real time. Just a few weeks ago, The New York Times closed its Edison plant amid rumors of decreased subscription numbers. Newspapers have had to cope with these changes. Most of the major newspapers in the country now offer an online version of their latest issues.

But for someone like me, who is somewhat computer illiterate, the process behind online journalism always seemed a bit out of my reach. I knew how to access the online newspapers and search for the top stories, but how the stories got there was beyond me.

Enter the summer internship. As part of the intern program, all junior interns must complete a project assigned to them. My group was given an online journalism assignment that involved developing a website for this November's elections with candidate bios and pictures, as well as helping Vicki McCabe, the paper's technology genius, upload the latest edition of The Leader/Times onto the internet.

Vicki showed my group how to use a program called Microsoft Frontpage to format the goleader.com website and how to change the headlines using a text file. She also showed us some HTML codes, helped us create our own shortcuts and even gave an introduction to the Linux operating system, where a written command replaces every mouse click. Needless to say, it was a bit overwhelming.

But at the same time, thanks to the internship, I feel more prepared to enter the world of college journalism. At The Fancsonian I always felt like I was blindly navigating my way through the technological part of the paper's production. Now I look forward to further developing my online journalism skills, using the knowledge and experience that I acquired during my summer at The Leader.

Carolyn DiProspero Scotch Plains

