

# The Westfield Leader

— Established 1890 —  
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# The Scotch Plains - Fanwood TIMES

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## We Must Practice Democracy; To Deserve It, to Preserve It

On the eve of Independence Day in 1999, citizens of our great state were celebrating the final voyage of the decorated Battleship New Jersey. After 50 years of serving the United States military efforts in World War II, Korea and Vietnam, it was returning home - being towed through the Panama Canal and up the eastern seaboard and finally arriving at the Philadelphia Navy Yard that September.

North Jersey had hoped for a decision to make its new home at the Bayonne Military Ocean Terminal on the Hudson waterfront near the Statue of Liberty. It didn't work out that way. The Battleship New Jersey has its quarters on the Camden waterfront near the state aquarium.

The return of this grand vessel was a proud moment for the Garden State. Now, seven years later, New Jerseyans are looking for a symbol to renew their dignity. We've battered our global reputation and undermined our hearts since then, largely by our own doing. Being known as the most corrupt state in the country is a serious matter. The injury resulting from this nefarious dance is evident now to all of us. To change this, citizens are no longer delusional that matters will improve on their own - individuals must act. We have the capacity but do we have the will?

In a few days from now, our state government may shut down over the budget impasse finally brought to

a head after a decade of malfeasance, missteps and untruths (the most benevolent of words that have been used to describe the situation). In the underbelly of the argument is the dispute by those who have garnered power and seek more of it - how to tax more while enhancing their control. Unfortunately, the debate has not included any of the fundamental elements necessary for reform but is wrapped in perfidy. Answers exist and are known but citizenship must prevail over voracity.

It's our fault, the citizens of New Jersey. Voting declines; officials and insiders get away with outrageous acts; rights to public information are stonewalled; we sit by. We don't attend public meetings and few write letters to the editor. Worse, we celebrate the powerful and corrupt as movie stars and ignore those that would show promise as statesmen or attempt to act in goodwill. We fear reprisal. We embrace patronage. We expect others to do what's right - Yet, do we hold ourselves to these standards?

There are many seeds of hope scattered in front of us waiting for nourishment. There is no need for trepidation. Matters can be turned around. But, we must practice Democracy to deserve it, to preserve it - "We have met the enemy and they are us." Pogo.

As you celebrate this holiday and enjoy the blessings of freedom, consider these words from dire times faced by our forefathers, 56 men:

## The Declaration of Independence

July 4, 1776, Philadelphia

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. - That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, - That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to re-

duce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security...

(concluding) - And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

John Hancock: New Hampshire; Josiah Bartlett, William Whipple, Matthew Thornton: Massachusetts; John Hancock, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Robert Treat Paine, Elbridge Gerry: Rhode Island; Stephen Hopkins, William Ellery: Connecticut; Roger Sherman, Samuel Huntington, William Williams, Oliver Wolcott: New York; William Floyd, Philip Livingston, Francis Lewis, Lewis Morris: New Jersey; Richard Stockton, John Witherspoon, Francis Hopkinson, John Hart, Abraham Clark: Pennsylvania; Robert Morris, Benjamin Rush, Benjamin Franklin, John Morton, George Clymer, James Smith, George Taylor, James Wilson, George Ross: Delaware; Caesar Rodney, George Read, Thomas McKean: Maryland; Samuel Chase, William Paca, Thomas Stone, Charles Carroll of Carrollton: Virginia; George Wythe, Richard Henry Lee, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Harrison, Thomas Nelson, Jr., Francis Lightfoot Lee, Carter Braxton: North Carolina;

William Hooper, Joseph Hewes, John Penn: South Carolina; Edward Rutledge, Thomas Heyward, Jr., Thomas Lynch, Jr., Arthur Middleton: Georgia; Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, George Walton.



## Letters to the Editor

### Westfielder Responds and Recounts Other Memorial Pool Experiences

In reading the letter by Ms. Mancho last week, I do agree with some of your observations, although you were given plenty of time to rejoin the pool to avoid being put on a waiting list. I personally pay in person every year as soon as I get the renewal application in the mail.

My problem with the pool is the lack of parking during peak times. As a member for over 16 years, why do I have to come to the pool at the time of opening to insure I can obtain a legal parking space? I have observed members coming to the pool with many guests at a time, and the mem-

bers don't even stay. I know some neighboring town pools put limits on the amount of guests per family. I guess this is how the pool makes money. Members should be given "tags" to put on their rearview mirrors or more parking should be made to accommodate the number of members who join each year. It is not fair that paying members are forced to park along Cumberland Street while guests are parked in the lot.

Jill Anderson  
Westfield

### Stender Supported on Book Boycott Comments; Criticism Labeled Politics

In one of most disingenuous examples of political gamesmanship I've seen, three gentlemen expressed their outrage over comments Democratic Congressional candidate Linda Stender made concerning Ann Coulter's book *Godless* in the June 22 issue. All three writers (proud defenders of freedom, I'm sure) claimed Ms. Stender called for Ms. Coulter's book to be banned.

If that were the case, Ms. Stender would have some explaining to do. But as John Adams actually said, "facts are stubborn things." Here's a transcript of the exchange on "Larry King Live."

King: Linda, you're not saying ban the book are you?  
Stender: No, I'm saying boycott the book (emphasis added). Ann has every right to say and write whatever she chooses, but we also have the right to say it's cruel, it's heartless, and don't buy the book.

Clearly Ms. Stender not only has an excellent understanding of the First Amendment, but also a firm grasp of right and wrong. Apparently the three gentlemen who impugned Ms. Stender's character and intellect are ones in need of a

remedial civics lesson. And while these three Perry Mason's are studying their constitutional law, they may also want to read *New York Times v. Sullivan*. That case, of course is about libel and defamation.

These letters should be dismissed as political partisanship of the worst kind. Cheap shots like these are reasons why the majority of the public is disgusted with politics. Ms. Stender spoke her mind on television, and came to the defense of 9/11 widows who were shamelessly attacked in Ms. Coulter's book.

Instead of doing the same (after all, these widows successfully lobbied a recent President Bush to establish the 9/11 Commission), these three gentlemen engaged in a callow, cynical political attack to help their preferred candidate Mike Ferguson or worse, themselves.

The people of the 7th District, and to Mr. MacDonald, the people of Fanwood, deserve better. They deserve the truth. Let's hope the voters remember this episode in November.

Kevin Cutro  
Westfield

### Fanwood Resident Questions Union County Freeholders' Spending

In 2000, I voted for the Open Space Recreation and Historical Preservation Trust Fund referendum. I thought at the time that it was a good thing - to slow urban sprawl, preserve open space and in some way, improve the quality of life for residents of Union County. Unfortunately, I did not realize that the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders would choose to spend some of these dedicated funds in questionable ways.

The next time I vote on a referendum issue, I will not only read the fine print, but also take into account our Freeholders' past record of unbridled spending and insatiable appetite for photo ops and "good news" publicity.

One way to slow - and hopefully reverse - the growth in spending and continuing increases in property taxes in Union County is for citizens to voice opposition to questionable spending initiatives, no bid contracts, pay to play, nepotism in hiring, unanimous rubber stamp voting in favor of spending propo-

sitions brought before the board, etc.

The Union County Watchdog Association and many of our local newspapers have done a good job in identifying and publicizing areas of concern and issues that should be addressed by our elected Union County officials - but more needs to be done because our Freeholders still haven't addressed these concerns.

I urge my fellow Union County residents and taxpayers to take a more active role in the months ahead by providing feedback and direction to our county government representatives. Call, write and e-mail them, and better yet, attend and speak up at the Freeholder meetings. If our elected representatives continue to conduct business as usual and fail to focus on meaningful and serious reductions in spending, then the voters should consider them unworthy and not return them to office.

John Marquardt  
Fanwood

### Asw. Stender Book Boycott Call Not Violation of Constitution

I write in response to recent letters critical of Linda Stender, the Democratic candidate for US Representative from our district. Several accused Ms. Stender of not understanding the U.S. Constitution when she urged consumers and retailers to boycott a book because it described some of New Jersey's 9/11 widows as reveling in their status after their husbands were killed in the World Trade Center attack.

The First Amendment restricts the government, not individuals, from interfering with free speech. It is not a violation of the Constitution for an individual, like Ms. Stender, to call for a boycott of a book because of its disgusting content. I think it is tasteless to author or sell a book that denigrates these innocent victims of terrorism. I could openly say so and not only would that not make me a bad person it wouldn't indicate that I don't understand our Constitutional right of free speech.

Other writers attacked Asw. Stender and her husband for allegedly having no-show jobs paid for by Union County. Not true. In fact, Asw. Stender is currently on an unpaid leave of absence from her fulltime day job to run for Congress. As

everyone knows, being in the Assembly is a part time position and most, if not all, have regular fulltime jobs. Regarding her husband, he serves as an unpaid member of the board of directors of a county cultural institution.

Our current Representative, Mike Ferguson, deserves to be unseated. While one of the authors of the attack letters attempts to accuse Ms. Stender of corruption, Rep. Ferguson holds the "honor" of having been the Congressional recipient of the largest fine in history for violating our campaign finance laws: \$210,000. Even more importantly, Rep. Ferguson votes consistently to support the Bush administration's restrictions of our civil liberties at home and to further its immoral war in Iraq. Thousands of Americans have already died in a senseless war launch on a lie. President Bush, who Mr. Ferguson supports, has banned the news media from taking pictures of their flag draped coffins as they are returned to our nation. Now that's real interference with our Constitution's protection of free speech.

Larry Cary  
Westfield

### SP Italian-American Club Historic Committee Seeks Old Documents

The Italian-American Club of Scotch Plains had a successful celebration of its Centennial in May. A tribute was paid to the widows (invited as guests to the dinner-dance) of those who worked in various capacities as the clubhouses were built. Present members and officers who continue to foster relationships with the community of Scotch Plains, as well as with friends and relatives in the town of Montazzoli, Italy were also thanked.

Twenty years ago, a sister-city relationship was established, with the town, the mayor and dignitaries being feted in Scotch Plains. Ten years later, our mayor visited Montazzoli with a contingent that renewed friendships that had been previously forged.

With the club's celebrations over, but with the feeling that many contributions have been made to the township of Scotch Plains, and with many achievements also made by the children of the immigrants who arrived here in 1896, a history is being prepared for publication by the Historic Committee of the Italian-American Club.

Hopefully, this historic record will be assisted by a grant from the Union County Freeholders and will outline outstanding contributions made by these hardy immigrants and their sons and daughters in the fields of law, government, medicine and education.

The committee is seeking old photographs, documents, original passports or passage tickets used in emigrating to the United States, old letters corresponding with relatives telling of lives in the new land. All documents will be copied and returned to the owners. John Appezato, a member of the committee, has graciously offered his office at 1926 Westfield Avenue in Scotch Plains as a

site for any documents, photos, etc. to be dropped off.

Once publication has been accomplished, the committee hopes that copies can be placed in local libraries and other educational institutions so that future generations will be aware of the events and achievements in the lives of those Italians.

Laura Swidersky  
Historic Committee  
Italian American Club

### Hello Westfield from Half-Century Ago

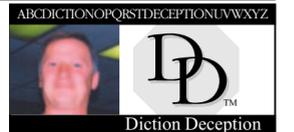
I was at my computer today and for some unknown reason I typed in the name of the elementary school that I went to - Lincoln - and there it was, right in your newspaper.

I completed the 6th grade there in 1950 and my recollection of the school was that it was a positive experience, but we certainly caused our share of mischief. My family left Westfield in 1953 after my mother having been there since a young child, but when I drove through about six years ago it looked much better than I remember it, but in many ways unchanged.

The park with the swans still looked the same, beautiful. I could comment on other changes and familiar sights I observed but nearly all of it looked to be positive.

I hope the Lincoln School continues to serve the community today as it did a half-century and more ago - just some positive comments from someone looking to the past on the Internet who spent his earliest years in Westfield.

Jim Coffey  
New Ipswich, NH



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. Lapidarist - An expert in cutting precious stones
2. Littoral - The region on the shore of the sea or large lake
3. Plumsity - The quality of being feathered
4. Guariba - A howling monkey

#### SELCOUTH

1. Rare; unusual
2. Awkward; clumsy
3. Abundant; plentiful
4. A miser

#### SYNOCIL

1. An enzyme that assists a bee in making honey
2. An astringent or repellent
3. A hermit; loner
4. In zoology, a sense organ in sponges

#### ZABRA

1. Small sailing vessel
2. A type of Greek alcoholic beverage flavored with the seeds of the anise plant
3. A three-pronged, barbed spear for taking fish
4. Resilient; flexible

#### ZIMB

1. A species of South African gazelle
2. Dipterous insect of Ethiopia
3. Characterized by an ashy, white complexion
4. Lacking adequate mental power

## Letters to the Editor

### World War II Veteran Thanks Hogaboom

It was such a pleasure to attend the World War II concert held at Temple Emanu-El last week.

All of the participants performed beautifully. Thanks to the Life Scout Thomas Hogaboom and the Arts Coalition. I had not heard "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree" in years!

Helen Livesey

First Lieutenant Army Nurse Corps  
1943-45  
Westfield

### Stender Said Boycott, Not Ban the Book

I saw Assemblywoman Linda Stender on CNN's "Larry King Live," suggesting that people should boycott Ann Coulter's book because of its offensive content. At no time during the interview did Ms. Stender mention book banning.

Certainly Ms. Coulter has ever right to publish her inflammatory statements and we, the public, have every right to decide what we want to read. By urging the public not to buy the book, Linda Stender did not violate either Ms. Coulter's or the public's right to free press.

Sandra Itzkoff  
Scotch Plains

Publisher's Note: For more information on this subject, please see other letters on this page plus articles and letter on page 5.

### WF Triathlon Thanks Town for Hi Tri Success

I want to take a few inches of column space to thank all of those who helped organize the Westfield Hi Tri held at Memorial Pool on Saturday, June 10. I especially want to thank the participants that braved the chilly wind and swam the first leg of the race! All proceeds from the day are being donated to Camp Fatima, a summer camp for disabled children, a charity dear to many Westfield hearts.

In particular, I would like to thank Town Administrator Jim Gilda (my first swim instructor) and Bruce Kaufman for giving us the pool, the surrounding roads and basically making it all happen. Huge thanks to Mr. Schaefer at the Public Works Department for trusting us with his brand new cones - returned with few scratches. And lastly, the town Police Department, who also offered cones, but actually did a larger service by being there and making sure we were all safe. Thanks to Mr. Cognetti for opening the pool so early and for Jen Metz, who froze in the life guard chair that morning.

The Westfield Triathlon Club staff and members need no thanks as we all ate enough donuts and bagels to make it worthwhile that day. The talented Westfield High School teacher, Ms. Muir, the club's advisor, was patient all year and supportive on the day - thank you to her.

The Westfield Leader also deserves recognition for publicizing the event as we had a very meager budget. Bruce Johnson, the awesome WHS champion swim coach and entertaining, insightful columnist for *The Leader* is to be thanked for not only his encouragement, but the great mentions in *The Devils Den*. Cassie Lo, home from Holy Cross, did a great job with *The Leader* news story and it is much appreciated.

Thanks to our sponsors Panther Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine, Perotta, Fraser & Forester, Attorneys-at-law, Dr. Antonio Pugliese, Chiropractic Physician and Primedia.

And lastly, Mr. Mark Zenobia of On Your Mark Productions is to be greatly thanked. Mark, a local professional race coordinator, generously donated his time, talents and unbelievable, super efficient staff to make the Westfield Hi Tri a reality. Mark, we thank you so much.

Kylie Fraser

President, Westfield Triathlon Club

#### To Reach Us

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www.goleader.com

### A WESTFIELD TRAFFIC COP ON VACATION

GIVE IT A REST, HAROLD! CAN'T YOU STOP THINKING ABOUT YOUR JOB FOR JUST ONE WEEK?



NETERMAN@G  
THE LEADER/TIMES