

The Westfield Leader

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Union County News County Assists BHTS In Final Drive to Land NY Jets

By Alexander Mirabella, Chairman Board of Chosen Freeholders

As you may be aware, the County of Union has taken a very active role in the drive to bring the New York Jets corporate facility and practice field to Berkeley Heights. Berkeley Heights has become one of the final five sites the Jets are considering for their relocation. A couple of weeks ago, I had the pleasure of attending the Berkeley Heights rally to recruit the Jets. I was impressed with the enthusiasm and size of the crowd, as more than 700 attended. Mayor David Cohen introduced the Governor Livingston High School band, cheerleading squads from both the high school and Columbia Middle School and had a spectacular fireworks display sponsored by a hometown company, Garden State Fireworks. As promised, Mayor Cohen unveiled the first Jets-themed police cruiser, which featured Gang Green's logo and team colors. Jets merchandise was handed out and some children painted their hair green in support. There was even free hot chocolate with a touch of green garnish. While many showed up because of the excitement an organization such as the Jets would create in Berkeley Heights, the drive to bring the Jets home to Union County has many tangible benefits as well. Berkeley Heights, Union County and the State of New Jersey as a whole will generate millions of dollars annually in the economic impact created by such a move. Team players and personnel would likely live near Berkeley Heights and the Jets would become strong community partners in support of local education,

volunteer and fitness programs. In addition, the Jets move would create a boon to local business in Berkeley Heights and enhance Union County's reputation as a tourism destination and great place to live. Union County would also become a sports mecca of sorts in the region—already being a periodic host to one other major professional sports event—the PGA golf championship, which was most recently held last year at the famed Baltusrol golf course in Springfield. Berkeley Heights, with its land, location and convenient access to major highways including Route 78 and to Newark Liberty International Airport, is a perfect match for the Jets. The location the Jets are interested in (known as the Connell property) has been pre-approved and is environmentally clean to build on. The land also has an additional 32 acres, besides the 20 the Jets need, to build and expand upon if necessary. The township and county will be proud to be affiliated with a first-class organization such as the Jets, who would fit in perfectly with the climate of Fortune 500 companies located in the Berkeley Heights area. Mayor Cohen has joked he would help hold the yard markers for the Jets at practice camp and, as a lifelong Jets fan, I offered to help. I'll take it further: Union County stands prepared to go the extra yard to assist in any way possible to ensure the Jets a safe landing here, and the County of Union has made this a priority project moving forward into the year.



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. Pleurostean - The lateral element of a bird's sternum which joins onto the ribs 2. Limu - Hawaiian seaweed 3. Phiofilm - A waterproof, transparent rubber sheeting used for raincoats 4. Urson - The Canada porcupine

- KIBE 1. A crack or chip in the flesh caused by cold 2. Soft sleet or hail 3. An aside remark or suggestion 4. A horsefly DESPUMATION 1. A sudden flood due to heavy rains 2. An eruption, as with a volcano or geyser 3. The act of skimming or scumming 4. A removing of the feathers; plucking GARRAN 1. A small bell similar to a sleighbell 2. A hermit; loner 3. A monstrosity or hideous creature 4. A small work-horse EYRA 1. Pertaining to the dawn of time 2. A reddish or chestnut-colored wildcat of Central and South America 3. An aura; halo 4. Revenge; reprisal

Updating Information on Clubs, Organizations is Good for Region

One of the most complex things to do seems simple - that is to develop and maintain a comprehensive and current list with contact information for clubs and organizations in the region. It's difficult for the public to know where this list exists when they seek it. Also, organizations often change leadership and contact information each year; thus there is a need for them to have an easy way to update their information.

In 1999, Westfield developed such a list, W.O.R.D., Westfield Organizational Resource Directory. The United Fund of Westfield, through funding from the Westfield Foundation and the Town of Westfield, produced this resource guide. It was printed then and is published still on the Internet at www.goleader.com/99word/ and at www.westfieldnj.com.

Unfortunately, this excellent work is now out of date. It also was limited to just organizations connected to Westfield. In our view, a list such as this should be expanded to include organizations of towns throughout the region.

We believe there must be a more modern and effective way to develop, expand, maintain and publish this list. Perhaps a workable method is through mimicking the concept developed by Wikipedia. See http://en.wikipedia.org/.

We're fascinated and impressed with the achievements of Wikipedia. Begun in 2001, Wikipedia has grown into the largest reference website on the Internet. In the English version, currently 995,448 articles exist. The content is free, written collaboratively by people from all around the world. Anyone with computer access to the Internet can edit, correct, or improve information throughout the encyclopedia by clicking the 'edit this page' link.

Editors monitor the entry and editing process of the public, but they don't control the information. From studies we have seen, the Wikipedia content is as accurate and comprehensive as that of the Encyclopedia Britannica. Computers are set up to do most of the presentation and updating work entered by the public.

The concept employs "collaborative writing and peer collaboration, which refers to projects where written

works are created by multiple people together (collaboratively) rather than individually. Some projects are overseen by an editor or editorial team, but many work without any top-down oversight."

Wikipedia notes that "[i]n a true collaborative environment, each contributor has an equal ability to add, edit and remove text. The writing process becomes a recursive task, where each change prompts others to make more changes. It is easier to do if the group has a specific end goal in mind, and harder if a goal is absent or vague - a very good method of discussion and communication is essential, especially if disagreements arise."

Wikipedia says that it "is an ongoing work to which in principle anybody can contribute, it differs from a paper-based reference source in some very important ways. In particular, older articles tend to be more comprehensive and balanced, while newer articles may still contain significant misinformation, unencyclopedic content, or vandalism. Users need to be aware of this in order to obtain valid information and avoid misinformation which has been recently added and not yet removed."

We've started what is hoped to be the first step of public collaboration and self-maintaining of an up-to-date organization contact list for the region. Organizational data is being collected from public input at www.goleader.com/organizations. In just a few days, several dozens of organizations have entered their current information to our database. We envision it growing to several hundred shortly.

As the database is established, we're testing various ways for automatic access of this database to the public on the Internet with search capabilities, along with methods for public editing and expanding of the entries.

We invite you to enter the data of your club and organization. It is open to all in the region and intends to be inclusive of the many things going on in our society - arts, sports, charity, service - without bounds.

Please provide us with your comments and recommendations as progress is made.

Those that have computer skills and interests in this area, please let us know. We appreciate your help.

There's Little to Report About Those Seeking and Holding Office

Two of our reporters received a first-hand view of power politics this week, and it wasn't pretty. They were more than annoyed at not being able to do their job. But, it's the public that should be alarmed. Given the manner in which things are currently being manipulated, there's little real that can be reported about those running for office and what they stand for - DEMS and GOP alike.

We receive press releases from the candidates about events - and we receive procedures for obtaining press credentials. Our reporters go to cover what's happening, and that's where the trouble starts.

Our reporters went to two events locally this week - Linda Stender for Congress at the Hyatt Hills Golf Complex in Clark and the visit by Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) in support of State Senator Tom Kean, Jr. for U.S. Senator for New Jersey at the Short Hills Hilton.

The shortest report we had was from the Stender event: Our reporter writes, "I went over to the Hyatt Golf Club, and was told by Mike Premo, Stender for Congress campaign manager, that there was "no press allowed" at this event! Talk about ridiculous! Declining free publicity? These Democrats, pulling up in their 'beemers' and 'benz's', declaring that they are all for freedom! It is truly a joke. I was really steamed last night, my husband can attest to it. In fact, I still am really annoyed. We give these people full campaign coverage, space for spun press releases and 'statements.' What are they fearful of? America, in my mind, is quite a scary place to live as of late. And I am a Democrat!"

At the McCain for Kean event Sunday at the Hilton in Short Hills, at least our reporters were allowed in. But, here's what they say about the experience.

Upon even greeting politicians and friends (or both), reporters were ushered by Senator Kean's press secretary to return to the pressroom. How 'de-pressing.' In a manner not above scolding a child, upon greeting Assemblyman Jon Bramnick, our reporter and photographer were booted back to the room, local assemblyman and all.

Dealing with a cordoned-off banquet area, reporters were limited to one small pressroom, where they milled about aimlessly. Against their usual inquisitive instinct, no contact could be had with Kean, McCain or supporters of Kean and McCain. Kean's press secretary of two weeks, Jill Hazelbaker, told us that the big players and donors paid a lot of money to take part in the event and shouldn't be hassled during a private affair. Still unable even to guessimate how many people were in attendance or how much one paid to meet with the politicians when asked, her treatment of the press basically boiled the event down to a 10-minute prepared speech and question session in which McCain barely raised an eyebrow because he didn't have to.

What's paradoxical is that the handlers want the press. They advertise in media advisories for press to attend; however, once the press arrives, they are governed by the most arbitrary of rules, all under the guise of deeming the event a 'private function.' In essence, the handlers want to use the press to suit their purposes and then discard them immediately for fear that something of news value will arise.

Perhaps if such actions continue, we will no longer cover such functions because we aren't allowed to cover the event as we deem necessary. Inviting the press and then limiting the obvious manner in which the press reports is not too dissimilar to jailing a sedated Bengal tiger and calling it "wild." By limiting access to Westfield Leader and Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times staff, the press agents and spin-doctors cut off a vital nexus of information. After all, just as the politicians have their constituents, so does this newspaper. Our readers demand the best coverage. When we can't deliver and do our job, perhaps it is time for the press to limit their access to their constituents by nixing their free press.

The New York Times on February 27 wrote about a breakdown in relationship between the White House press secretary and the press corps.

"It's constantly getting worse," said Ari Fleischer, who preceded Scott McClellan as Mr. Bush's spokesman. Perhaps surprisingly for a Bush defender, he attributed the soured relationship in part to what he said was a secretiveness within the White House. "Reporters can be perfectly civil and launch good, hard-hitting questions" in private, he said, then in the briefing room two minutes later, "they turn into barbarians."

"...the nation has watched the sausage-making in the briefing room and then seen it analyzed in the blogosphere. Commentators on the left say that the press is manipulated, and that it failed to challenge the administration enough after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and the ramp-up to the Iraq war in March 2003. The right says the press is petty, irrelevant and politically biased against President Bush."

"We're damned if we do and damned if we don't," said Ken Herman, White House correspondent for Cox. Newspapers in the NY Times article. Public service? There's little real that can be reported to our readers about those running for office and what they stand for - DEMS and GOP alike - except it's all about getting, holding and augmenting their power. But, it's the public that should be alarmed.

Letters to the Editor

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Development Should Not Mean Sacrifice of Brookside Park

To quote Joni Mitchell in "Big Yellow Taxi," "They paved paradise and put up a parking lot." They, in this case, being Scotch Plains Mayor Marty Marks and Recreation Director Ray Poerio. If plans go as "they" propose, over 38 mature trees will be destroyed to "put up a parking lot" in the proposed Brookside Park redevelopment plan. Not to mention approximately 74 for the new baseball diamond. The artificial turf soccer field will destroy at least 100 more. And if the proposed commu-

nity center is included, the total number of trees destroyed will be way into the hundreds. While new sports fields may need to be developed, they should not necessitate the destruction of Brookside Park, one of Scotch Plains' last natural gems. To borrow another line from the song, "Don't it always seem to go, that you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone?" We can't let this happen.

Cathy Smith Scotch Plains

Ferguson's Vote Actually Increases Deficit, Hurts Poorer People

Francis Quinn claimed in his recent letter to the editor that Rep. Ferguson is a deficit cutter. As someone who would like to see the federal deficit shrink, I wish it were so. Unfortunately, the facts say otherwise.

The truth is, while Ferguson did vote to cut the budget, he voted to cut taxes even more. In other words, his record, taken as a whole, actually increases the budget deficit by \$60 billion. And it gets worse.

For while the tax cuts mostly benefit the very wealthy (nearly half of the tax cuts that Ferguson voted for will go to people making more than \$1 million dollars a year), the benefit cuts harm those most in

need: the poor, the elderly, and the infirm. In other words, thanks to Mike Ferguson, thousands of poor people will lose their health insurance and millions more will face steeply rising premiums, all so millionaires can bring home more money. And he's doing it while falsely claiming to reduce the deficit. So let's see: hurting the poor, helping the super-rich, burdening future generations with debt, all while falsely presenting himself as a budget cutter. Truly a record Mike Ferguson can be proud of.

David Korfhage Scotch Plains

Reader Calls Ferguson's Budget Vote 'Shameful' with Tax Cuts for Wealthy

I couldn't disagree more with Francis Quinn's support of Congressman Mike Ferguson's vote on the 2006 federal budget. The \$39 billion in cuts that our Congressman voted for represent approximately one half of 1 percent of the total annual budget and they target some of the most vulnerable of members of our society. Among those affected are the elderly and the poor, as federal health-care programs will lose billions from these cuts. Single mothers and their children are also among the losers, as hundreds of millions are slashed from enforcement programs aimed at making dead-beat dads pay child support. Finally, and perhaps the most short-sighted of the cuts, \$12 billion alone will be stripped from student-loan programs, making college unattainable for many students coming from families of modest means. Considering that American students are lagging behind their peers in the industrialized nations of Europe and Asia, we should be making it easier for them to attend college, not harder.

What Mr. Quinn fails to say in his letter is that Congressman Ferguson also supported a \$70 billion tax cut as well. Of course this sounds good, but the net effect of these two bills will actually increase our deficit, not reduce it. If the Congress-

man is serious about reducing deficits and eliminating wasteful federal spending, he should be targeting "earmarked spending," commonly known as pork barrel projects. Since 1994, the number of annual pork barrel projects has tripled from 4,155 to over 14,000 in 2004. The spending on those projects has increased from \$29 billion to almost \$53 billion per year. For example, the 2005 Federal Transportation Equity Act contained \$223 million to build a bridge connecting a sparsely populated Alaskan island (population less than 50) to the mainland. Congress correctly zeroed out this funding for the notorious "bridge to nowhere." Mr. Quinn seems to believe that Congressman Ferguson showed some sort of courage for "ignoring the critics" when he cast his vote. In my opinion, what Congressman Ferguson showed was his willingness to vote for lopsided tax cuts that mainly benefit the wealthiest Americans, while attempting to show some sort of fiscal restraint by cutting funding for those among us who are the weakest. The congressman's vote wasn't courageous, it was shameful.

Chris Sdao Westfield



Garden Club Sends Sentiments to Sutter

The members of the Garden Club of Westfield join in sending David Sutter, owner of Lancaster, Ltd., all good wishes for happiness and fulfillment in his retirement. We have enjoyed his interest in and encouragement for our community service and gardening efforts.

It is good to know that he plans to continue being an active member of the Westfield community.

Jane Curtis, President, Westfield Garden Club

Transportation Plan Draws Comments

Governor Corzine's new transportation borrowing plan ensures a major day of reckoning - either severe cuts to transportation projects or a large menu of transportation taxes - at the end of the five-year construction program he will launch with the new bonds and restructured debt that he proposes.

The governor should be very clear with citizens about this as he extends New Jersey's long run of borrow-and-spend transportation finance.

Jon Orcutt Tri-State Transportation Campaign

Parking Tickets Are \$20, Not \$35, in WF

Regarding Mitch Slater's letter to the editor: Mitch, you did get what you deserve, as did I at 6:15 this past Thursday night. Yet to make the comment "shame on the officer," you are completely out of line. He was doing his job, what he/she is paid to do out of those taxes we pay.

Not only should you read the signs (as should I have) but you should also read the ticket. The fine is \$20, not \$35, for overtime on a meter. So, I am sure they appreciate the \$15 donation. One last thing, you think if they built a deck it would be free parking? Now that's funny.

Jonathan Walsweier Westfield

Bernard Heeneey Creative Writing Contest

The submission phase for the newspaper's creative writing contest has been closed, effective March 1. There have been several dozen outstanding entries. The judging phase is beginning, which will take more than a month. Winning entries will be published this spring in the 34th annual edition of This Is Westfield. Congratulations and thank you to everyone who has entered. To ensure that nothing has been overlooked, an e-mail confirmation will be sent to all those who have entered within two weeks. If you have not heard from us by then, please let us know. Assuredly, the readers will enjoy your work.

Deadlines: General News - Friday 4pm, Weekend Sports - Monday 12pm, Classifieds - Tuesday 12pm, Ad Reservation - Friday 4pm, Ad Submittal - Monday 12pm. To Reach Us: E-Mail - editor@goleader.com, Phone - (908) 232-4407, Mail-PO Box 250, Westfield 07091, PO Box 368, Scotch Plains 07076. Submittal Formats: Email Photos in color, Email Ads as pdf files in color, Please spell & grammar check. For more information, see www.goleader.com, www.goleader.com/presskit, www.goleader.com/classifieds