

Letters to the Editor

F.O.P. Comedy Show Proved That Laughter is Indeed the Best Medicine

On Saturday, March 4 I hosted the Fifth Annual Comedy Show to Benefit the Weldon F.O.P. Research Fund. F.O.P. is a rare and incurable disease known as Fibrodysplasia Ossificans Progressiva and it afflicts 13-year-old Whitney Weldon and 13 other children in New Jersey.

Thanks to the kindness of many people, the event was again a huge success. It was another sold out performance for the three comedians who attended but before they could make the audience laugh, it was necessary to get down to the basics about the disease and let everyone know what's been going on, past, present and future.

Besides Hillary and Bill Weldon being in the group of 200 plus people, we were also joined by seven IFOPA Board Members who happened to be meeting that weekend and planning the IFOPA Fourth International Symposium being slated for the autumn of 2007.

In attendance were Amanda Cali from Mountain Lakes, who is the chairman of the International Fibrodysplasia Ossificans Progressiva Association, accompanied by past IFOPA Board member Jennifer Snow from California, board member Lori Henrotay from Missouri, board member Don Bristler from Idaho, board member Holly Pullano from Connecticut, board member Jeri Licht from Scarsdale, NY, and dedicated volunteer Sue Salberg from Tennessee. A special thanks to Tony Barbera, IFOPA Board member and FOP Advocate.

I must once again thank my friends;

Sue Boyle, Nick Burdi, John Cataldo, Jim Debbie, Nancy Kinney, Bob Messler, Kerry Mooney, Heather Murphy, Janet and John Skinner and Phil Spinelli, who year after year help sell tickets and who are responsible for an annual sold out event. And in thanking the ticket sellers, it's equally important to thank the ticket buyers. It was a great mix of people attending this year.

This year's humanitarian award honorees were Scotch Plains Mayor Martin Marks and Mountainside Councilman Robert Messler. On a somber note, one other humanitarian award was posthumously presented to Mayor Marks in honor of Doug Hansen, township attorney of Scotch Plains who passed away last December.

We had decided that the money raised this year would help support one of the medical clinics at the fourth annual symposium next year. With Hillary Weldon and Amanda Cali on stage, we presented a check in the amount of \$22,000, but hinted that the amount could change as we were still receiving checks. Timothy Shinn, President and CEO of United Crane Rentals of Kenilworth, announced he would make up the difference and round the check off to a cool \$25,000! I thank the countless people who sent in donations. From my heart and from the children afflicted with F.O.P. and their families. Thank You Everyone!

Gary Whyte Mountainside

County Residents Should Attend FAA Air Traffic Meeting March 21

The FAA announced the outcome of their long-awaited New York/New Jersey/Philadelphia airspace redesign plan in December. When this plan was first proposed about 16 years ago, noise abatement for populated areas was to be included. The currently proposed plan not only does not include noise abatement procedures, it has incorporated procedures that will increase the noise level over Union County.

This has occurred because the focus of the redesign shifted to incorporate increased volume of departure and arrival traffic, as well as the need for airlines to cut fuel costs. The current Newark airport departure patterns send aircraft over less densely populated industrial areas to gain altitude prior to turning over more populated areas. The proposed plan turns aircraft over extremely densely populated areas, such as Elizabeth, Hillside, Union, and surrounding towns.

While these towns will experience the greatest noise increase, all of Union County will be extremely negatively affected, as the aircraft will be fanned over all towns, and they will depart at lower elevations.

This redesign, if implemented, will impact the county for many years to come, as these redesigns are infrequently performed. Union County residents must speak out now, because the deadline to comment on the redesign proposal is June.

There are a number of things county residents can and should do. The FAA is holding scoping meetings in various towns until the end of June. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 21 from 6:30 p.m. until 9 p.m. at the Springfield Holiday Inn on Rt. 22 West. This is the second and last scoping meeting to be held in Union County.

The first one, on February 23, was held in Elizabeth, a town most impacted by this redesign. Unfortunately, this meeting was poorly attended, which sends a message to the FAA that Union County residents do not care about this redesign.

This should be far from the case, as even if one does not find aircraft noise particularly bothersome, the increased

emissions from these low-flying and higher density jet aircraft have a serious impact on human health, and can increase the number of respiratory problems such as asthma, as well as cause an increase of exacerbations of existing respiratory conditions. We should all be concerned about this situation, and take the time to educate ourselves by attending the meeting, asking questions, and entering comments into the public record.

Citizens should then follow up with their elected officials to let them know their opinions regarding this proposed aircraft redesign. Please take action now, as the redesign, if implemented, will have an irreversible detrimental impact on property values and human health in our county.

Lynn May Brown, Fanwood Vice President, UC Air Traffic Noise Advisory Board

Where Has Congress Been For the Past Fifty Years on American Business?

The Sunday Star Ledger reports the House of Representatives is demanding a congressional role in reviewing the acquisition of U.S. business by foreign buyers. It seems the sale of the port operations enabled the members of Congress to get into the limelight.

This is the biggest wake up call in history! Where has congress been for the past 50 or more years? Just look around your house to see where your belongings come from. Your television, stereo, and most small appliances are made in China. How many automobiles on your street are from Japan, South Korea or Europe? Go to your local supermarket and see where many products come from or who owns the company making the product.

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County Should Improve Website and Webcast Meetings to Inform Residents

During his swearing in ceremony, Freeholder Chairman Al Mirabella announced in his address titled "Community Connections" that the county had received a state grant which would enable them to dramatically re-design the county website. Mr. Mirabella stated, "We will create a new website that will be more exciting and interactive, paving the way for a truly modern portal for residents wishing to be connected to their county government."

While attending the recent budget committee hearings, the department head in charge of the web-design described that the goal is to inform citizens of county services.

This would be a laudatory goal if the county had plans to inform its citizens of the real business of county government. Nowhere has it been mentioned that the county would begin to post public records on their website to give a citizen easy access to information which would shine a light on county government business dealings. A truly modern portal for residents would be for the county to have web-cast meetings connecting them to their county government and on-line Open Public Records Request service.

The county website currently hosts extensive press releases featuring freeholders at public events. They also have a page which lists the municipal cable broadcast schedule for their Freeholder Forum program which is a half-hour program featuring a freeholder, who more than likely is up for re-election, touting county services. Nowhere on their website do they list the schedule of freeholder meetings to be broadcast in municipalities.

The county currently lists meeting agendas on their website. However, these agendas are never listed before a meeting takes place.

The county puts a lot of taxpayer-money

local A&P is owned by the Germans. Imported foods from Europe command a premium price. Shrimp from Viet Nam and fish from Taiwan fill our supermarket shelves. Read the label in your clothes and see in any way "made in USA?"

American business was being bought by foreign investors for years. Every imported product is shipped here in a container. Try to find a container vessel or oil tanker made or owned by an American Company.

Now Congress wants a role in foreign investment in U.S. companies. This will be easy because there is not much left to sell.

Thomas Lienhard Westfield

WF BOE Candidate Beth Cassie Initiatives Started, Need to Complete

Beth Cassie has announced her candidacy for re-election to the Westfield Board of Education. "There are a number of initiatives that the board has started that I would personally like to see through to completion."

Mrs. Cassie is presently the chairperson of the board's Long Range Planning Committee. During her four years as a board member (one year appointed, three years elected) she has served on every board committee except Policies.

"I have developed an in-depth understanding of the workings and responsibilities of the district. I thoroughly understand the challenges that we face."

This year Mrs. Cassie is chairing the Citizens Advisory Committee on Enrollment that was formed to provide input from the public on current enrollment issues that face the district. Also, Mrs.

Cassie is the liaison from the board to the town council.

"We held a joint meeting with the town council last week that was very encouraging. I think both groups see the enormous benefits of working together."

Mrs. Cassie was a member of both the teacher and paraprofessional negotiation teams. She is assigned to work on the upcoming administrator negotiating team.

Mrs. Cassie and her husband, Scott, have lived in Westfield for eight years. They have two children in the Westfield schools. Mrs.

Cassie received a Bachelor of Education from Wellesley College and a Masters in Business Administration from the Harvard Business School. Her professional experience includes working as a management consultant to the healthcare industry.



Beth Cassie

WF BOE Candidate Anne Riegel Making Good, Though Tough Decisions

The Westfield Board of Education is in the midst of making several critical decisions, which will have a significant impact on the future of the Westfield school district. For example, we're faced with developing a budget that the community can support, addressing solutions to the elementary and intermediate space issues, and replacing the high school principal for the first time in 26 years.

I've decided to run for another term on the board because I believe my experience and commitment will help us make good, though tough, decisions. I've served on the board for six-and-a-half years, as president now for almost two years and previously as vice-president for two years.

Volunteering in education has long been a priority of mine. I began my involvement with the district in 1994, when continued enrollment growth and classroom shortages were predicted. Since my daughter's kindergarten class had 25 students, I was concerned about the future and felt it was important to become active in the district.

I ultimately joined the executive board of Jefferson School PTO for five years, including two years as co-president. I served on the 1998 Citizens Advisory Committee that recommended the additions to McKinley and Franklin Schools. I was also a member of the JCC Board in Scotch Plains for six years, including 3 years as co-chair of the Early Childhood Committee.

As a Westfield BOE member, I've served as chair of the finance and long range planning committees and as a member of the curriculum, policy and negotiating committees which successfully settled contracts with our teachers, secretaries, custodians and paraprofessionals.

Our family has lived in Westfield for 13 years, and my daughters are now in 11th grade at Westfield High School and in eighth grade at Edison Intermediate School. I graduated from the Wharton School of Business and have an M.B.A. from Columbia University. I worked as an investment analyst for Equitable and Citicorp.

My experience on the board has been both rewarding and challenging. I've learned so much from my interactions with staff members, fellow board members, parents and community members. I hope I can continue to serve the district by working to attain excellence and providing our community's children with an outstanding education.



Anne Riegel



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**Your Favorite Whiskey**

Jack Daniels	\$35.99	1.75L
Jim Beam	\$23.99	1.75L
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**Your Favorite Rum**

Captain Morgan	\$23.99	1.75L
Bacardi Silver	\$19.99	1.75L
Bacardi Gold	\$19.99	1.75L
Malibu	\$23.99	1.75L

**Your Favorite Value Wines**

Mondavi Coastal Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay	\$16.99	1.5L
Beringer Founders Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay	\$15.99	1.5L
Woodbridge Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay	\$10.99	1.5L
Vendange Cab/Merlot/Chardonnay	\$6.99	1.5L
Fetzer Cabernet/Chardonnay	\$12.99	1.5L
Cavit Pinot Grigio	\$11.99	1.5L
Walnut Crest Cabernet	\$8.99	1.5L
Cesar Pinot Grigio	\$10.99	1.5L
Bolla Soave	\$10.99	1.5L
Beringer White Zinfandel	\$8.99	1.5L
Franzia Burgundy/Chablis/Chianti	\$10.99	5L
Carlos Rossi Burgundy/Chablis/Paisano/Sangria	\$8.99	4L
Opici Homemade Barbarone	\$11.99	4L

**Your Favorite Gen**

Bombay Sapphire	\$34.99	1.75L
Tanqueray	\$30.99	1.75L
Grey Goose	\$25.99	750ml
Smirnoff	\$18.99	1.75L
Stolichnaya	\$30.99	1.75L
Skyv	\$24.99	1.75L
Wolfschmidt	\$13.99	1.75L
Gordons	\$14.99	1.75L
Seagrams	\$15.99	1.75L

**Your Favorite Scotch**

Dewars White Label	\$29.99	1.75L
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Johnnie Walker Black	\$55.99	1.75L
Johnnie Walker Red	\$29.99	1.75L
Clan MacGregor	\$16.99	1.75L

**Your Favorite Cordials**

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180 River Road, PO Box 1008  
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