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Union County News
Those of Us Flooded Were Grateful for the Help
 Bette Jane Kowalski
 Freeholder Board Chairwoman



When Union County was being hit hard by the nor'easter last week, county officials were hard at work responding to all calls for help throughout the county. I would like to thank all members of Union County's Office of Emergency Management, our county police, our public works department, our parks department and Runnells Specialized Hospital for the incredible effort they put into responding to more than 100 calls and emergencies.

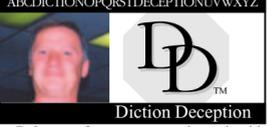
Many of our residents — especially those in Cranford, Rahway and Roselle Park, but also in other places — suffered severe damage to their homes. I noticed that wherever I traveled last week, Union County Public Works and emergency vehicles were on the scene to help.

As we all try to pick up the pieces after the storm, Union County's Public Works Department continues to offer assistance in picking up garbage and debris. Governmental officials from any municipality that has had serious storm damage can request assistance for their towns by calling public works at (908) 789-3660.

In addition, the county's Multi-Jurisdictional Program will make funding available to low-income and income-eligible residents, including seniors, who may have sustained damage to their homes and need renovation. Residents can call development directions at (732) 382-8100 for more information.

Thanks must also go to the police and emergency personnel of all of Union County's towns and cities. Municipal and county staff worked together to handle the crisis, and I know that those of us who were flooded are very grateful.

ABC D I C T I O N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z



Diction Deception

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. Sponson - A formal promise or pledge
2. Sanguigenous - Producing blood
3. Periole - The outside, smooth, horny part of the hoof of a horse
4. Leister - A three-pronged, barbed spear for taking fish

LOCUSTA

1. A private place where conversation is permitted
2. A small spike or elongated cluster of flowers in grasses
3. The order of large winged insects related to grasshoppers and crickets
4. A poisonous liquid alkaloid resembling nicotine

THYLACITIS

1. Degenerative disorder caused by calcium deficiency
2. Inflammation of the oil glands of the skin
3. Inflammation of the Adam's Apple; goiter
4. An alkaline imbalance

PERRON

1. A court entirely round a temple, surrounded by a wall
2. An outside staircase
3. One who receives anything, as rent or profits of an estate
4. The European falcon

LIBANT

1. Capable of being poured; in a liquid state
2. Lighthearted; cheerful
3. Balanced; stable
4. Tasting or touching delicately

Investigators Sweep Downtown Westfield Seeking Tax Cheats

Do you remember on May 16 and 17, 2002, when state tax investigators from the New Jersey Division of Taxation conducted an investigation, canvassing businesses in downtown Westfield, searching for tax cheats? We do. It was former Governor Jim McGreevey's idea of a tax amnesty program, where cheats could turn themselves in, without penalty. How arrogant and threatening they were, we thought then.

Investigator Charles Dingerdissen from the New Jersey Division of Taxation entered our newspaper office and asked to see our business tax I.D. number and other information. When asked by what authority, the investigator retorted, "Why, do you have something to hide?" He roamed around the office without permission, searching the walls and shelves. He was told to produce official paperwork or get out.

He left and was observed sweeping through other businesses in the downtown.

Each year, when filing income tax is complete, most of us are relieved. It is a dreadful experience and there is little hope of understanding any part of it for most. Many people hire an accountant.

For the last few years, mysterious notices from the state have been flourishing, advising that another 30 or so dollars is due. Accountants say this is becoming more commonplace by the state and that it's easier just to pay it. The time, cost and hassle just aren't worth it.

The state now must be really desperate for money as several of us received a notice for small amounts due. As usual, the accountants advise paying, as it will be almost

impossible to get through to the state and figure it out. "They have the ability to generate these notices by computer now," he said.

Knowing what was in store, we called the number listed on the notice, "should you have any questions."

After eight minutes with the recorded message, we were transferred to another message center and asked to make a selection via the phone pad. Twenty-one minutes later, a person answered and said she would have to transfer us. After 51 minutes, another person answered and asked how she could help.

We asked why the state said this additional money was owed. She said she couldn't provide that information and that her job was just to explain what the notice said — as if we couldn't read.

Customer service people in Trenton are hard to understand. The only real thing to understand is that you will be asked to ante up a lot more tax money to fund their retirements.

We wasted 55 minutes calling as instructed in writing on the notice. It was the good ol' loop de loop, where one ends up where they started after a long runaround.

It's time to write that check now. True, it's really offensive when you can't find out why. Still, government must be right, for Mr. McGreevey certainly must know a cheat when he sees one. Wonder if his class on ethics at Kean University is tax deductible?

It's just a small amount of money. But as Yogi says, "A million here and a million there and pretty soon you're talking about real money."

Letters to the Editor

Assemblyman Richard Merkt Expresses 'Shock' on Hiring of McGreevey to Teach Ethics

Editor's Note: The following letter was sent to Kean University President Dawood Farahi and copied to the newspaper.

As a member of the legislature and the Assembly Higher Education Committee, I must express my absolute shock and disbelief that you would use public dollars to hire a disgraced former governor of this state to teach a course on ethics and to represent your college. Governor James E. McGreevey resigned primarily due to ethical transgressions that made his administration the most corrupt in New Jersey history. Consider Governor McGreevey's ethical record as it pertains just to his own public office:

Governor McGreevey hired a completely unqualified paragon as his top homeland security aide shortly after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, jeopardizing the people's safety out of a desire for his personal sexual gratification.

Governor McGreevey directed creation of an unlawful \$128 million slush fund (the "Property Tax Assistance and Community Development Fund") that he then allowed legislators to draw on for personal benefit and that is now the subject of both indictments and an ongoing federal criminal investigation.

Governor McGreevey himself became the subject of a federal criminal investigation after he was taped using a code word agreed to by criminals to signal assent to an extortion scheme.

Governor McGreevey corrupted state institutions through an appalling array of pay-to-play schemes used by his subordinates to extort campaign contributions from state vendors.

Governor McGreevey unlawfully skewed the award of homeland security funds based on partisan political considerations.

Governor McGreevey filled his administration with political cronies and powerbrokers, many of whom who have

resigned in disgrace or gone to jail for criminal acts.

Governor McGreevey himself was caught early in his administration misappropriating public funds for his personal international travel.

Governor McGreevey wasted tens of millions of taxpayer dollars on a state-funded public relations campaign aimed solely at polishing his own public image and assuring re-election.

This is the individual whom you have selected to instruct your students concerning ethical behavior in government? What is he going to teach them? How to improve on his own "record"? How could you possibly make such a terrible decision in light of his well-known and well-documented trail of personal ethical lapses?

To say that I am shocked and disgusted by your decision to use public dollars to give former Governor McGreevey an important position of influence over the minds of young men and women is an understatement. Your lack of judgment causes me to question seriously how you are spending the more than \$40 million that your university receives from the State of New Jersey.

So to restore some level of confidence that your extremely disappointing decision is an aberration and not a symptom of a more pervasive problem, please make available for inspection the following public documents:

- 1) A list of all employees of the university together with titles, divisions of employment, dates of hire and salaries;
- 2) A list of all travel, lodging and meal expenses for you and administrative staff since January 1, 2005;
- 3) A copy of the contract with Governor James E. McGreevey; and
- 4) A copy of your employment contract.

I look forward to your prompt reply.

Richard A. Merkt
 Assemblyman
 District 25 (Morris County)

Why Doesn't Media Put Blame On Governor Rather Than Trooper?

Re: Your editorial last week on the governor's accident, I would join you in wishing the Governor a full and complete recovery. Re: the "Captain of the Ship" part, it sounds great, but anyone who has worked in a large organization knows about organizational pressures. If that trooper had pressed the issue of wearing a seat belt, he'd be doing the midnight shift patrolling East Petuchia.

I have yet to see anyone in the media, including *The Westfield Leader*, address the real issue, and that is Mr. Corzine's irresponsibility in breaking the law and not wearing a seat belt, especially at 91 mph. What a lack-of-leadership example to the public. It is another instance of the hypocrisy and arrogance of too many of our political leaders of both parties. And now the Governor's staff, whom we didn't elect, is pushing for him to rule from the hospital. He ought to be resigning instead. And what about Mr. Corzine putting that trooper in such a position? It is truly unfortunate that the media doesn't address these issues, and instead wants to pass the buck to the driver.

It seems that since the "rights" emphasis of the 1970s, which continues to this day, the word "responsibility" has been banished from the public's lexicon, along with the word "immoral." I, for one, think we are worse off without those two words, and what they stand for.

Joe Boscia
 Westfield

Letters to the Editor

Field Development Foundation Thanks All for Supporting Bond

As you all may know, the SP-F school budget and the \$2-million bond referendum that was voted upon last week passed. The referendum passed by a very slim margin, meaning that people are very concerned about their tax rates. Although I am a supporter of this project and am very glad that it passed, I, too, am not crazy about my tax rates increasing and understand your frustrations, but know that some things in life are just worth the effort and the extra buck even though most of us (yes, me included) do not have school-age children to enjoy the benefits of this project.

I wanted to write a few words of heartfelt thanks to my colleagues on the Turf-It Committee, who worked very hard on this project: the BOE, the numerous leaders of both towns that have publicly voiced their support, the PAL, soccer association, Music Boosters, the youth baseball

league and countless others throughout the community that went the extra mile in getting this project passed. Every vote was needed and I'm thankful to all.

I hope that once this beautiful facility is constructed, those of you who were skeptical of the necessity of this project will take the time to enjoy state championship-caliber varsity football or soccer games or a track meet, or take in the majesty of the award-winning marching band at a home band competition, or even just a leisurely stroll around the new track.

Because, you see, the renovations are for everyone's benefit. I'm confident that anyone who was skeptical will at least enjoy the sense of Raider Pride that this "home-field advantage" will give.

Anthony Giannaci
 Co-Chairman
 Turf-It Committee
 Scotch Plains

V-Tragedy Hits Home For Local Mayor and Alumnus

It is with a heavy heart that I extend my heartfelt condolences to the families and friends that lost loved ones on the campus of Virginia Tech. My thoughts and prayers go out to readers who are students or alumni of Virginia Tech, who, like me, have taken this tragedy so personally.

I look back to my years in Blacksburg with great fondness. As many know, Virginia Tech continues to be a great source of pride and fun for me to this day. It was so hard for me to see news footage of such

familiar places captured in such a dark context. I fear that my memories of this fine institution and the perception of others will be forever scarred by the senseless violence that has occurred there.

May God grant the comfort and strength so desperately needed to those touched by this awful tragedy.

Martin Marks
 Scotch Plains Mayor
 Virginia Tech Class of 1984

Community Thanked for Supporting Luncheon/Fashion Show for CSH

The Auxiliary of Children's Specialized Hospital and its Twig groups from Westfield, Mountainside, Scotch Plains-Fanwood and Summit-Short Hills held a luncheon and fashion show on March 29 at the Shackamaxon Country Club to benefit the hospital. Using our own volunteer members as models, Lord & Taylor of Westfield presented, at no cost, dozens of its new spring fashion ensembles and, along with Chanel, generously donated the door prize and individual gift bags for all attendees.

A sold-out event, the auxiliary and twigs were able to raise \$35,000 for Children's Specialized Hospital. We are so grateful to L & T and to the many local businesses and individuals who supported our efforts with generous contributions to the program journal and silent auction. Thanks to you, we have made an unbelievable beginning towards our \$250,000 pledge to the hospital's new facility in

New Brunswick and the renovation of the original building in Mountainside.

We would also like to recognize and thank our dedicated committee — Susan Doherty, Nancy Jackson, Karen Temple, Susan Schwarz, Teddy Taranto, Lynn Kolterjahn, Sally Brown, Bruce Talcott, Maureen Verrier, Charlotte Cleavenger, Elizabeth Loland and Jean McDermott. These women donated hundreds of hours to ensure a successful event. They are a perfect example of the caring, bighearted community we live in.

It is because of this wonderful community that Children's Specialized has been able to help children in crisis for more than 100 years.

Gail Sloan and Susan Lorentzen
 Co-Chairs
 Auxiliary/Twig of Children's Specialized Hospital

Communications Professor Says NBC 'Irresponsible' for Airing Manifesto

Editor's Note: The following letter was sent to the offices of NBC. The writer is a former reporter for *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*.

I am rather disappointed that you chose to air the ranting of the Virginia Tech killer. As journalist and a professor of communications, I understand and respect the first amendment, but the choices your network has made over the course of the past couple of weeks have been poor.

How irresponsible of you to air this material, glorifying murder in such a heinous manner, and at such a vulnerable time for the families, students and faculty

members whose lives have been forever changed because of this tragedy. The exploitation and "moral panic" that your network has facilitated is regrettable and will be reflected in the days, months and years to come. I am now officially boycotting all things NBC.

Your lack of discretion and judgement is terrible. NBC's priorities, obviously, are simply dedicated to the advertisers that you rely upon to pay hefty salaries. You fire a comedian and glorify a killer. Shame on you.

Meghan Gill
 Newton

It Was Refreshing to See Officials Of Different Parties Discussing Issues

On Saturday, February 14, I was pleased to attend the opening-day ceremonies for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Youth Baseball League at Booth Field. More than 150 players attended with their parents and siblings, and it was great to see the town embrace this event. It was also attended by several local dignitaries, including Mayor Marks from Scotch Plains, Mayor Mahr from Fanwood, and Union County Freeholder Al Mirabella, who resides in Fanwood.

An interesting thing happened. Democratic Mayor Mahr, Republican Mayor Marks and Democratic Freeholder Mirabella were engaged in a discussion regarding improvements in our community, namely the plans for a future senior-citizens center and the status of improvements to our community athletic fields. It was very refreshing to see all three discussing the plans in an open forum, but the thing I found to be most refreshing was all three remained very professional and respectful of one another; did not talk over one another and were genuinely interested in accomplishing their goals that best serve our community.

This should serve as a lesson to all that hold public office that much more can be accomplished by following this example of leadership. Despite the magnitude of the issues, compromises can be reached for the future of our community and I urge

all those who serve as elected officials to follow the lead of these three representatives. Despite the interests of your party or future political aspirations, it is your responsibility to focus on what our community at large requires of you as an elected official. This is far more important than which party holds office.

Grasping for popularity is not a noble aspiration and not admired by the community. Rather, it is nothing more than self-serving and quite embarrassing. Hard work and diligent efforts will gain the respect and admiration of our community and ultimately those who care to vote in future elections. I hope all will keep this in mind as they serve in their capacity as elected officials.

Rich Duthie
 Scotch Plains

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
 For more information, see www.goleader.com/help

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Mothers Group Celebrates 18th Year

The Union County Chapter of Mothers and More celebrated its 15th anniversary Wednesday, April 18, with a fabulous "Indulge Yourself" night held at the Fanwood Forest Road Park Building.

Our members enjoyed chair massages, reflexology, skin treatments and meetings with an astrologist and physiotherapist. Everyone also enjoyed delicious food and delightful conversation.

Mothers and More is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of mothers through support, education and advocacy. We address mothers' needs as individuals and members of society, and promote the value of all the work mothers do. We are a national organization, with more than 70 members in our local chapter.

Without the generous donations of time from many volunteers, the evening would not have been the success that it was. We would like to thank Jade Sancho-Duser, Debby Teal, Veronica Pinion, Susan Wilson, Carol Raine, Jak Eskinazi and Rejuvenations in Mountainside.

Thank you also to all of our members who have kept our organization thriving for so many years. We are hoping to make this an annual event to celebrate our membership.

Andrea Westervelt
 Victoria Devlin
 Mothers and More