

# The Westfield Leader

— Established 1890 —  
The Official Newspaper of the Town of Westfield  
Legal Newspaper for Union County, New Jersey

Member of:  
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National Newspaper Association  
Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce  
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**Paul Peyton**  
ASSIGNMENT EDITOR  
**Suzette F. Stalker**  
COMMUNITY  
**Michael Pollack**  
EDUCATION & ARTS  
**Victoria McCabe**  
TECHNOLOGY

**Horace R. Corbin**  
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OPERATIONS & LEGALS  
**Ben Corbin**  
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# The Scotch Plains - Fanwood TIMES

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## Will Parents Accept Busing Their Children to Kindergarten?

The Westfield school bond referendum on Tuesday, January 23, 2007, has an interesting twist to it. The Board of Education proposes to use \$6 million of the \$9.4 million requested to convert Lincoln School at 728 Westfield Avenue to a town-wide kindergarten.

Lincoln School is not used by the Westfield Public Schools, but leased to the Union County Educational Services Commission (UCESC) since 1982 for a fee of \$200,000 per year. UCESC operates Hillcrest Academy at that site. The lease is being terminated this year as a result of complaints registered by neighbors over student behavior.

Schools Superintendent William Foley suggested last January that the administration could be moved to Lincoln School. Then, the under-utilized Elm Street Administration Building could be sold with

the funds applied to other capital needs. Money would be generated and operating costs would be reduced.

A citizens' committee was formed to review matters. Instead of consolidating and reducing costs as suggested by Mr. Foley, the committee recommends building the new facility at Lincoln School and busing in the kindergarten children.

The irony of this is that about 100 kindergarten children in Westfield last year were placed in local, private schools by their parents because they refused to have them redistricted to an adjacent neighborhood school for the purpose of optimizing use of classrooms.

Given this, and Westfield's tradition of neighborhood schools, will parents accept having their kids bused to a central, town-wide kindergarten school?

## Leader/Times Announces 2007 Summer Internship Program

The Westfield Leader and The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times invite area college and high school students with an interest in journalism and newspaper operations to apply to the 2007 Leader/Times Summer Internship Program. The longstanding program will be divided into two types of part-time, paid internships: staff intern and correspondent intern.

The staff intern program will accept a limited number of students to work alongside the Leader/Times office staff in a work/study environment with hands-on assignments involving newspaper operations, writing, photography, copyediting, graphic design, layout, communications and the Internet.

The correspondent intern program will accept a limited number of students to undertake reporting

assignments, such as covering local meetings and events for publication. The newspaper staff will guide the interns on journalistic standards, photography and accountability.

The staff intern program will require greater time and schedule commitment, while the correspondent intern program will be more flexible. Applicants may apply to either or both programs. The newspaper advisory committee will complete the selection process by early spring.

Those interested in the internship program must register online at [goleader.com/internship](http://goleader.com/internship). Complete application information (including résumé and writing samples) must be received by Thursday, March 1. Early registration is recommended due to the popularity of this program.

## The 2007 Bernard Heeney Creative Writing Contest

The Westfield Leader and The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times invite entries for the second annual Bernard Heeney Contest For Creative Writing. The contest celebrates reading and writing as exemplified by the late Mr. Heeney, who relished publications, particularly newspapers. The contest is open to anyone and there is no entry fee. There is one essential criteria - have fun.

All entries are to be original, unpublished work and uploaded to [goleader.com](http://goleader.com) no later than March 1, 2007. The winning authors will receive prizes and their entries will be published this spring in the 35th Annual This Is Westfield, which will have a printed circulation of approximately 20,000 copies; and it will be published on the Internet at [goleader.com](http://goleader.com) to thousands more.

Entries are to be 700 to 1200 words. A photograph or illustration is welcomed. In the spirit of creative writing, contestants are encouraged to consider past,

present or future; history, commentary, sports, art, humor, science fiction, essay, mystery and illustration - in some fashion, with a tie to Westfield or surrounding communities.



Bernard Heeney

For all details, see [www.goleader.com/tiw/contest](http://www.goleader.com/tiw/contest).

An author may submit up to three entries, which may be tendered early to receive editorial feedback with an opportunity for resubmission.

Former Westfield Town Clerk Bernard Heeney, Jr., who died in 2005 at the age of 56, was a pivotal presence in the town's government for more than a quarter century. He had a friendly, chipper nature and an ability to get things done. Among many

things, he was innovative while making sure everything was done "according to Hoyle." Mr. Heeney read several newspapers each day and was proud that many of his letters were published, including one in *The New York Times*.

## Letters to the Editor

### Taking of Crèche Figures Upsetting To Area Church Communities

Over the Christmas Holidays three local Roman Catholic churches had their crèche sets disrupted by robbers. Holy Trinity, Westfield; St. Helen's, Westfield, had the infant child taken from their manger setting. The Holy Trinity infant was returned after being smashed on the property of Dooley's Funeral Home in Westfield. St. Helen's has heard nothing thus far. The third parish, St. Agnes in Clark, had the child Jesus, Mary, Joseph and one of the wise men removed from their property with no further word.

We live in a world that sings of joy, hope, love and peace and yet so often we experience actions that are contrary to the message of our Christmas season. One

wonders what motivates an individual or individuals to engage in activity that is so destructive and disruptive to so many people in our community. I pray for those who walked off with the crèche figures.

Perhaps they will be inspired to return what they borrowed. The parishioners of the above mentioned parishes are indeed upset over what has transpired. May those responsible for this activity be moved by the grace of God to rectify what has happened by returning as soon as possible the figures taken.

Rev. Msgr. William Harms  
Saint Helen's Church  
Westfield

### Thanks to Volunteers for Making First 'Family Night' A Huge Success

The Westfield Recreation Department and the Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce would like to take this opportunity to thank the community, the volunteers, and "Top Hat Sponsors" for making our First Annual Family Night a huge and safe success. Over 900 adults and children from the community enjoyed the event. It took the collaboration of the Westfield Recreation Department, the Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce and our dedicated volunteers to operate this wonderful event safely and smoothly.

The event was successful thanks to the following "Top Hat" Sponsors: Century 21 Taylor & Love, Inc., CitiBank, The Optimist Club of Westfield, PBA Local 90, Fred Defazio of Creative Sales, and Jeff Brandes of Protuff. Thanks to Abakadoodle Art and Just Babies Daycare for supplying activities throughout the evening for participants. Thanks to Mayor Skibitsky, the Town of

Westfield's Department of Public Works and Paul Rios of the Westfield Armory for their tremendous support in making the event possible.

Special thanks to the following volunteers for their hours of dedication the night of the event: Steve and Loraine Wereley, Kim Caster, Pat Gray, Fred Defazio, Kelly Gray, Bruce Gavumik, Diana Bruder, Matt and Kyle Monaghan, and Denise Morrell. You made this community project a success.

The above organizations, along with the many community members who volunteered, are to be commended for their efforts and dedication toward community-oriented programs. Thank you and wishing everyone a happy and prosperous 2007.

Naomi McElynn & Traci Kastner  
Westfield

### WF School Bond for Centralized Kindergarten is Not a Good Idea

The January 23 school bond referendum (in Westfield) is a lot more than just a vote on a \$9.4 million capital improvements program. It is a vote on changing the entire fundamental structure of the Westfield Public Schools.

With the bond's passage will come the start of a centralized kindergarten program at the former Lincoln School on Westfield Avenue. It will have many impacts on these young students (and their families), not all of them positive.

Children will now have to go through four separate schools from K to 12. Kindergartners will no longer be able to attend school with older siblings.

Their classmates will no longer be their neighbors. Friends they make in kindergarten may not see them again until high school. And many of these little kids will now have to take a bus back and forth to Lincoln each day.

Parents will no longer be able to walk their kids to the local neighborhood school each morning. Those with more than one child will have to get them to and from different schools each day. And many will have the added worry of putting their 5-year-old on a bus each day.

But in the case of my kids, my biggest complaint would be that my child would not be able to attend McKinley School,

which is just an incredible place. The principal, teachers, the rest of the staff, the PTO, and the entire school community have made it such a great experience that I wouldn't want my kids to miss out on that.

I think that most parents in the neighborhood would feel the same way, but may not think about it if their kids are all older. But it's important to consider how you would feel about this plan if you had younger kids. Considering what you would do if you were in that position is the right thing to do for the community and the school district. And if you consider that many homebuyers in town have young children, it's the right thing to do for your property values as well.

The centralized (but still half-day) kindergarten is an interesting and bold experiment. Dr. Foley and the BOE should be commended for proposing new ideas. But I'm not sure that I would want my 5-year-old being the subject of such an experiment, and I suspect others with young children and those couples planning families will feel the same.

But I guess we will see on Jan. 23 just what people think of the idea.

Cory Mermer  
Westfield

### Teachers Urge Westfielders to Pass \$10 Million School Bond on Jan. 23

Recently a group representing kindergarten teachers, administration and the Board of Education from the Westfield Public Schools visited the Berkeley Heights Early Childhood Center to observe their facilities and to discuss their educational program.

Based on the success of the Berkeley Heights program, we encourage Westfield residents to consider the development of an Early Childhood Learning Center by voting for the bond referendum on January 23, which would support renovating Lincoln School for this purpose.

An Early Childhood Learning Center in Westfield would create an environment that would encourage joint involvement between the teaching staff, child, and parent community. Currently, at some of our six elementary schools, there is only one kindergarten teacher. If all the kindergarten classes were centrally located in one building, kindergarten teachers could collaborate and share resources and ideas. The special needs children

could be successfully mainstreamed into regular education classes.

Proposing an Early Childhood Learning Center is a viable and practical solution to the space problem, which now exists in the elementary schools. Hopefully, this move will provide space for art and music classrooms. It will also help to maintain small class size at all elementary schools. The move will enable us to maintain the high quality of education we strive to provide at all grade levels.

An Early Childhood Learning Center will encourage shared experiences that will enhance learning for our kindergarten and pre-k disabled students. It will afford children the opportunity to develop skills necessary for success. Establishing an Early Childhood Learning Center at Lincoln School will have a long-term positive impact on Westfield's education system.

Mary Ann Sepe and Josie Ho,  
Westfield Kindergarten Teachers

### Perhaps the Residents Should Blame Themselves Over Taxes

For years, the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders has been taking a "pass the buck" approach to the property tax problem. Though county government is currently in the process of its annual reorganization, it is doubtful that the board will make any notable changes in their "modus operandi." Most likely, they will proceed with business as usual simply because the cast of characters is the same. They will not be changing anything other than their seating arrangement on the dais.

For those who expect anything new or daring, in the form of a cut in the county portion of their tax bill, I am sad to say that based on past performance you can expect to be disappointed.

Within the next couple of weeks, the county spending plan for 2007 will be released with a vague explanation of why county government needs to generate additional income over last year. It will be noted that costs such as health insurance for county employees are going up and that contractual obligations have made it impossible change.

It will not be noted that certain individuals received bloated raises just weeks ago, and that about 68 new people were hired during a self-imposed hiring freeze in '06. We will be told that the state is having the same problem. It is predictable that Gov. Jon Corzine will be drawn into the equation, complete with assurances that he will provide the silver bullet that will allow the freeholders to lower county property taxes. You will be asked to be patient.

There is a problem here. We have a governor who two weeks ago on the radio during the teacher's demonstrations in Trenton, referred to the voters of New Jersey who put him in office as "Joe Six-

Pack." This poor choice of words makes one wonder how much respect he actually has for those not as well heeled as himself.

Somewhere along the way, two words have mistakenly become interchangeable - relief and reform. Tax relief can be thought of as a decongestant for cold symptoms - controlling the running nose till the infection runs its course. Tax reform on the other hand is like the vaccine administered for Polio. It is a permanent, life saving measure to eradicate the problem.

So far, no Jonas Salk has burst on the scene in NJ to cure the property tax epidemic - certainly not Jon Corzine. Though, the freeholder board would like us to think otherwise. They put the responsibility of what is going on in Union County on anyone other than themselves.

If the past few years are any indication of what is to come, we will see the continuing blame game being played out. Blame the contractual employees, blame the legislators in Trenton, blame the health insurance companies, blame the municipalities, blame Wal-Mart, blame George Bush, blame the custodian or blame political opponents.

When one looks closely, blame the voters who keep electing them. Perhaps the residents should blame themselves because they are not holding the freeholders' feet to the fire.

We residents are the eternal optimists and want to believe that this year will be different. But it is doubtful that things will change as the Freeholder Board has done an excellent job at pulling the taxpayers into playing their blame game.

Patricia Quattrocchi  
Garwood  
UC Watchdog.org



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 sarcane words.  
1. Cumshaw - A tip or gratuity  
2. Sarcoid - Like or consisting of flesh  
3. Philter - A love potion  
4. Pircaroon - A rogue, pirate, or thief

#### SCHEELITE

1. A catfish native to the River Nile  
2. A diagrammatic representation of something; a summary; a scheme; an outline

3. A radical sect of Moslem  
4. Calcium tungstate

#### INQUINATION

1. Of an alien or foreign nature  
2. Bizarre; strange behavior  
3. The act of defiling; corruption  
4. A tendency or leaning

#### YAULD

1. To pull back or retreat suddenly  
2. Active, vigorous  
3. Elderly, worn out  
4. Breaking out in blisters

#### TOVARISCH

1. Unspoken; unthinkable  
2. Comrade in the Soviet Union  
3. A large cape, or short, full cloak worn in the first half of the nineteenth century  
4. A disorderly, unkempt, rough person

### Families Smiled

#### Because of Your Gifts

To our Westfield community, we thank each and everyone of you who participated in "Gifts of Gold" this year.

It was a huge success because of the special volunteers that got involved and bought a gift(s) for families living in the Newark YMCA shelter. We could never make this program work without your participation. We wish you could have seen the smiles on the faces of those families receiving your gifts. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you for your thoughtfulness and generosity.

Vivian, Jeffrey, Brandon,  
Gabrielle and Jessica Gold  
Westfield

### Free, Within Limits, To Speak our Mind

I attended the recent organizational meeting of the Scotch Plains Township Council. One has to be impressed with Mayor Martin Marks' ability to use words to support his position that bear no relationship to the truth.

George Orwell called this "double speak." A new definition has been given to the phrase "non partisan" - in supporting a man, Brian Levine for township attorney, who has been a friend of Marty's since they were barely out of diapers, and contributed at least two thousand dollars to local Republican activities - that this man was "non partisan".

There are those of us who would use different words to describe this situation. I would more readily think of cronyism and pay-to-play than "non partisan." That's what makes America a wonderful country. We are free, within certain limits, to speak our mind.

Phillip Wiener  
Scotch Plains

### Art Teacher Urges School Bond Passage

Did you know that out of 23 districts polled in our surrounding area, only three districts do not have designated rooms for elementary art and music and Westfield is one of them?

As the Supervisor of Fine Arts for the Westfield Public Schools, I receive many phone calls from prospective buyers inquiring about the arts programs in our school system. Unfortunately, for the first time this year, I have received phone calls from prospective candidates for elementary positions stating that they would rather travel an hour to work, work for less money, or even less hours just to have a room rather than teach on a cart.

I feel it is my duty as supervisor to inform the community of the obstacles our elementary art and music teachers face everyday while traveling on a cart. Can you answer these few questions?

Do you know how hard it is to keep children painting or creating objects out of paper mache' without a sink in the room?

Do you realize how hard it is to implement dance and movement between desks in the everyday classroom not designated for music?

Do you know how many supplies are left off the 24x36 cart because they just won't fit?

In addition to funding a rigorous arts curriculum through the school budget, we have been successful in receiving grants for additional programs, scholarships and equipment from the Westfield Coalition for the Arts, a community supported organization. Although I understand many community members are concerned with tax increases, I feel it is important to look at the bigger issue: a solid, well-rounded education for all.

It is important to understand that the arts develop skills in creativity, cognition, communication and making cultural connections. Students in the arts share qualities such as imagination, the capacity to work hard, commitment and personal vision. What messages are we sending our 20 elementary fine arts staff who touch the lives of 2,865 children through the arts every week?

Please consider this information when you make your decision regarding the bond referendum vote on January 23rd. By renovating Lincoln School to an Early Childhood Learning Center for all our kindergarten and pre-school disabled children, space will be freed up in our elementary schools with the opportunity for fine arts to eventually get off the cart.

Linda King  
Supervisor of Fine Arts, Westfield  
Board of Education

