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Summer Interns Do 'Real' Work In Journalism and Publishing

When students return from summer recess, they are asked, "What did you do this summer?" For nine interns at *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*, this summer is a major learning experience in the day-to-day operations of a community newspaper.

Our interns are doing many things including covering town meetings, laying out newspaper pages and completing team projects. We have the greatest confidence in them and are glad to have them with us. Have you noticed the verve of their contributions?

In addition to developing production skills, they help write late-breaking news stories such as the carbon monoxide poisoning on South Avenue in Westfield, the drowning of a 6-year-old at a private swim club, the collapse of a fire wall at the Station Mews project in Fanwood and updates on the "Mad Hatter," who was captured over the weekend after 18 bank heists.

They are developing photojournalism skills too, covering area high-school graduations and Memorial Day parades. They composed primary election stories and reported on the opening of the Fanwood Museum. With the additional manpower, we have been able to report on meetings in Cranford and Berkeley Heights.

One intern team project involves preparing the election coverage for this November, including designing web pages and preparing the newspaper's November 2 pre-election section. This project debuted last year. The team this year includes Westfield High School senior Kelsi Browning, Boston University sophomore Jenna Nierstedt of Garwood and Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School junior Martin

Sweeney of Scotch Plains. They will conduct interviews with candidates for state, county and municipal offices, secure biographical information and compile stances on issues.

Syracuse University junior Allison Gibbons of Mount Arlington and Hamilton College freshman Georgia Mierswa of Westfield are reviewing local town websites. They are developing their view of essential and useful features that a municipality's website could and should provide for the community. They will publish their findings in the newspaper next month.

Another team is completing searchable street maps for all towns in Union County to complement that published on goleader.com for Westfield several years ago. The team is managing the digitizing of back issues of *This Is Westfield*, from 1978 through 1996, to complete the series published on the Internet in pdf format. This team includes Carleton College freshman Beth Budnick of Westfield, Boston University sophomore Liza Katz of Fanwood and Ebony McQueen of Roselle, a 2007 graduate of North Carolina Central University.

In addition, our interns have begun back-to-school stories by contacting school districts about summer construction projects, curriculum updates and staff changes. They are also putting together the first half of our year-in-review, to be published in the last two issues of December.

If you are noticing, please provide your feedback of their work by e-mailing editor@goleader.com. The interns have provided us with feedback. One said proudly, "Wow, what we're doing now is real work."

Freeholder Candidate Questions Destination of Funds Raised at "Rock On! Walkathon" for Cancer Research

I have tried over the years to limit myself to contributing and working for two specific charities, Lions International and Autism Research. Like others, I support my charities for personal reasons. I have a teen that has been legally blind since age three. I joined the Lions and Autism Research because my child has a high functioning form of the syndrome.

The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders will be hosting their annual MusicFest in Nomahegan Park in September. With that event, there will be a walkathon raising money for cancer and stem cell research. Though I don't mention it often, like Freeholder Deborah Scanlon, I too am a survivor of the dreaded disease, stricken when I was in my very early thirties. I thought about expanding my charitable horizons to help others. But first, I wanted to check out the situation.

County Manager George Devaney has had articles in the local newspapers and an insert in the Union County *Directions* regarding his recent cancer scare and how it impacted his life. He teamed up with his college rock idol, a two-time cancer survivor, and put together the "Rock On! Walkathon" benefiting the performer's Love, Hope and Strength Fund. Mike Peters will be walking and performing.

The sign up sheet and the premiums list are featured on the county's website. One hundred dollars will garner a t-shirt and \$250 the same along with a surprise gift bag. Walkers raising \$1,000 will receive a shirt, gift bag and invitation to a VIP reception on Sept. 14 with surprise guests.

Mr. Devaney has made it no secret that he would like to accompany the singer and others when they make a fundraising trek to the Base Camp of Mount Everest in Nepal, for an event called "Everest Rocks," which appears to be a mountain

climbathon. The foundation's website explains that Mike Peters will be leading 40 musicians, mountaineers, cancer survivors, those whose lives have been affected by cancer and friends on the adventure of a lifetime. It is a 14-day trek and concert at the base camp with a grand finale rock concert in Kathmandu.

The website says that an MTV and BBC documentary team, as well as a writer and photojournalist, will capture the journey for a feature in *Outside Magazine*, and funds raised from the "Everest Rocks" event will go to the Nepal Cancer Society. The site has links to the trekkers' bios with pictures. A meter shows the money they have raised so far.

At Mr. Devaney's link, the needle on his meter has barely moved. In the county funded *Directions* article, he thanks "So many who have offered to help raise the money needed for the trek" and "others who have lent their kind words and spiritual support." At the end of the article, which landed in every mailbox in the county, he states, "I hope others join with me to help educate and bring about a cure," urging readers to obtain more information at the website lovehopeandstrength.com. He asks, "To make a contribution in my name, click on Everest Rocks, then trekkers to view participants." A link on the site states that a requirement to join the trek is a \$25,000 donation, which seems to be raised through contributions.

I find it rather distasteful that our county manager appears to be enriching himself personally with the assistance of the freeholder board and other legislators by using the county's resources so he can rub shoulders with the idols of his youth. The question that can be raised is, "Will the credit for the efforts of the Union County walkers go toward Devaney's \$25,000 donation

to enable him to make the trek?" The walkathon could have been an admirable endeavor if the monies to be raised were to be turned over to charitable causes here in Union County, such as the Center for Hope Hospice rather than to what some believe to be controversial, embryonic stem cell research or overseas to Nepal.

Patricia Quattrocchi
 GOP Candidate for Freeholder

Be Grateful for Task Force Volunteers

A number of letters regarding the Westfield Land Use Task Force have appeared in *The Westfield Leader* recently. Some have questioned the time it is taking the committee to issue its report.

As a former member of the Westfield Board of Adjustment, I would like to stress that the task force members are volunteers, who take their responsibilities seriously, adding this project to their family and job obligations. In Mr. Heinbockel's letter of July 12th, he stated that his committee has been working for several months and has met with numerous interested parties in preparation for their report, which he expects will be finalized in the coming weeks.

The Land Use Task Force wants to propose ordinances that will not only preserve Westfield neighborhoods, but also stand up under possible litigation from developers. Let's be grateful for citizens willing to take on the job and allow the committee whatever time it needs to frame and present comprehensive, well-thought out recommendations to the town council.

Mike Kelly
 Mountainside

Tired of Negative and Demeaning Posts, Cranford Pulls Online Forum

Nearly ten years ago, Cranford resident Mark Dingelstedt founded a message board with the intention to provide good-natured Cranford discussion. In a recent article, Dingelstedt is quoted as having stated, "The increasing prevalence of negative posts that insult and demean residents and other posters are the driving force behind the end of CranfordTalk." Dingelstedt went on to say that a group of individuals who continually post offensive and unsubstantiated comments about local politicians and township residents has made the board all but impossible to police. "I've kind of had enough," he said. "That's the sad part about it. If I asked people to sign their names, they wouldn't be talking the way they do." The decision is one he came to, Dingelstedt said, after it became clear that the forum had changed from a place to exchange ideas and information to a hotbed of innuendo and political potshots.

I stopped reading CranfordTalk and other message boards like it a few years ago. I found that the boards went from being informative to just being a way for posters who use sign-in names to create identities for themselves without ever having to claim them. And they would harass citizens, who have the courage to publicly stand up for what they believe in, with complete anonymity from the comfort of their homes. About 120 people post on

CranfordTalk, yet there are only a handful of people that regularly speak out at public meetings and write letters to the editor.

A friend sent me a recent post by Commissioner George McDonough in which he accuses the Union County Watchdog Association of taking illegal contributions. This is wildly untrue, and a good example of why these message boards are bad for a community.

Editors of newspapers have to be responsible when they print letters to the editor. No letters are published that are unsigned, and a good editor will make sure that the facts stated are backed-up with documentation. When CranfordTalk goes offline, it will leave a void. McDonough is quoted as saying "There's no other source like that for Cranford. I'll miss it."

I'd like to publicly thank Mark Dingelstedt for providing the community service and for hanging in as long as he did. But shutting down was the right thing to do. CranfordTalk went from being a great way to draw the community together to something that made our community look ugly and un-neighboring, which isn't a representative of the good people of Cranford. Neither is Commissioner George McDonough. I hope Cranford has had enough of him as well.

Tina Renna
 Cranford

Leader Should Apologize for Irvington And Newark Comments in Editorial

Generally, I respect the *Leader* as being a balanced and responsible newspaper. That is why I was surprised (and shocked) in reading from your July 19, 2007 editorial "Notorious, Route 22 from Mountainside to Scotch Plains" the statement: "The police from Scotch Plains to Mountainside do a terrific job on Route 22 in protecting our area from Irvington invaders and Newark narcotics. At times, blazing gun battles and high speed chases ensue."

Wow! What's going on here - are we comparing Newark and Irvington to Baghdad's insurgents threatening the sacred green zone, or what? I can only imagine how I would feel if I were a citizen of either town, after having read this statement. In truth, these words contribute absolutely nothing to the context of an otherwise well written editorial!

Without even addressing the implicit meanings that can be derived from such a statement, to essentially characterize Newark and Irvington as outlaw states is - in my opinion - untruthful and irresponsible and not a good thing to say about a neighbor. To characterize the Scotch Plains and Mountainside police as some kind of mythical, gun blazing cowboys that will save us (?) from those invading hordes is - in my opinion - troubling, in the least!

Newark and Irvington are our sister

communities. They both have suffered much over the past years and are struggling to reach "our standards" that we perceive as worthy.

Ask Cory Booker about Newark and its hopes and aspirations. Ask Newark's and Irvington's citizens about who they are and what they want for their communities. They will tell you that they want the same that Westfield and Scotch Plains and Mountainside want. They want to achieve the best that this nation proposes for its citizens.

What Newark and Irvington need is encouragement, not the constant disparaging invectives from their better off (and distant) neighbors.

I truly expect that the *Leader* will apologize to the citizens of Newark and Irvington (and Westfield) for such unfortunate slip of pen and will, in future, write something good about them.

Donnell Carr
 Westfield

Editor's Note: The editorial refers to criminal gangs that plague our good neighbors in the cities and make sorties down the highways to the suburbs.

We support law enforcement efforts in eradicating these gangs for the good of everyone - particularly, for those that suffer the most in the cities.

Letters to the Editor

Take Time to Understand Effects of Possible Cell Tower at School

I have lived many places in my life and in Scotch Plains for over 20 years. This is my home now. I have a business here and never thought I would move. That is, until now.

The last week has been unsettling for me. I am not happy with things I have witnessed or some things I have heard. I do not appreciate the way this application was handled. This tower was kept quiet for over nine months and went in front of the planning board in July, at a time when the least resistance would be met. I am glad a decision was not made so I have some time to learn as much as I can about this technology.

I have talked with many people over the past week with an open mind. I talked with someone who puts these towers up for a living. He is not sure if he would feel comfortable having his son go to school 600 feet from a tower. I talked to the mayor, to an ex-governor, to representatives from both Linda Stender's office and Senator Scutari's offices, as well as members of Kid Safety organizations. I have called members of the State Education department, as well as members of the state PTA. I have called reporters, as well as other parents across the country who have had to wrestle with a decision such as this. I am doing all this to try and get as many opinions and facts as possible so I can try to make a rational decision.

We do know that cell towers have the potential to cause a risk to one's health. We do know that they are an eye sore and could possibly lower the value of one's home. There are studies out of Germany and Tel Aviv University that show there is potential for cells in the body to be mutated by these RF waves. But every one agrees on one fact. That fact is that this technology is new and therefore a conclusive decision cannot be made.

I have struggled with what is right and what is wrong and what our decision would be should this tower go up. My wife and I have discussed sending our kids to private school, though this is an expense we might not be able to take on.

Then I hear a tower might be considered close to Terrill Middle School. This is not a problem that is going away. From

the day our children are born, we go to extraordinary measures to ensure their safety. Is having them sit next to a cell tower while they are in their developmental stages safe for them? I don't know. That scares me as a parent, the unknown.

There has been discussion of the American Cancer Society (ACS) and its stance. If you read its section "Bottom Line," ACS is saying that this is new technology, so they are not sure what could happen. In a way, our children can be viewed as guinea pigs. This is nothing more than a disclaimer.

I am not against cell towers. I am not ignorant to technology. As a parent, I feel it is my duty to exhaust every resource possible to determine what is best for my children. We chose this area because of the schools. It is what makes this a great place to live. So I would like to ask that you take some time to try and learn as much as you can and get facts and not just spread unfounded information.

Where do I stand? Since I have not read any absolute proof either way, I am not sure. My gut reaction is to get the tower moved away from the school.

Jeff Kowalczyk
 Scotch Plains

Resident Calls for Change at WHS

Editor's Note: This letter was sent to the Westfield Board of Education, the Westfield Town Council and copied to the newspaper.

Open Lunch for juniors [at Westfield High School] should be stopped. It promotes more driving to school and litter on our streets.

How are the talks going with the town to help resolve some of the WHS parking problems? Some of the left over WHS addition bond money should be used to complete the addition by building parking spaces for the additional staff that was hired instead of simply kicking the students out of the parking lot and onto the streets.

Mike Nemeth
 Westfield

Restoring Rail Lines Would Ease Stagnation on Roads, Reduce Oil Use

Pat Quattrocchi and Alrene Murphy are peddling the GOP, which stands for Greedy Oil Promoters malarkey about how bad trains are. Are energy-wasteful, taxpayer-costly and death-dealing highways good? Who writes their stuff, big oil or Al Qaeda? There are 550,000 people in Union County. Many more pass through or stop to do business. If they all drove or shipped their goods by truck, we would be in terminal stagnation. Restored rail lines will ease that.

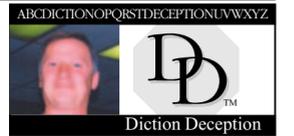
Restoring rail, not building more miles of highway, is good for the county, New Jersey and America. Of course, the Eisenhower/Bush GOP does not think so. They are deep in the pockets of big oil. Pat and Alrene should ask themselves why the rest of the world is building high-speed, electrified rail for freight and passengers rather than parrot the big oil lie that "if you don't drive, you don't count." We are down to our last one percent of the world's reserves with no new finds on the horizon. Why is everyone else smarter than us? Or why are we dumber than they are?

We must restore the lines we had after World War II to give us mobility when the oil runs dry. Of course, big oil will tell us to get rid of those energy efficient trains and keep on guzzling gas. It is their profit and our loss.

The ISDPT reported that all road-use taxes - the paltry "fare" they pay - only covered two-thirds of federal and state highway [costs]. The other third, plus the cost of county and town roads, police traffic control and fire and rescue costs are paid with other taxes. Plus, the societal costs of the one in four who do not drive for many reasons, plus the 43,000 annual highway road kill, plus millions injured, plus the excessive cost for buying that chrome-plated calf to keep our snobbish mobility intact.

The GOP has ruined America with their excessive auto orientation. We are heading for a major crisis that will make Pearl Harbor look like a picnic. It is almost too late. P and A are spouting treason.

William Wright
 Cranford



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. Ulotrichi - The woolly-haired peoples
 2. Expectation - Awakening from sleep
 3. Deliquate - To melt or be dissolved
 4. Pratti - Cymbals

PHYSETER

1. A sperm whale
2. The strawberry tomato
3. A group of siphonophores which swim by means of air bladders; jellyfish
4. Any animal or organ having a plant-like appearance

BRUNION

1. One of the smaller sticks forming the frame of a fan
2. A nectarine
3. The shattering effect of a sudden burst of energy, as in an explosion
4. A trap, snare

TERATISM

1. A monstrosity; a malformed fetus
2. A tumor
3. The state of being worldly; mundane
4. An irritation; annoyance

DECERTATION

1. A fight or contest for mastery
2. A pulling or plucking off
3. A decree or sentence of the court
4. An ending or closing statement

Letters to the Editor

Thanks for Clarifying Mt. Ave. Structure

Thank you for your front-page photo and caption "Super McMansion," which clarified that the structure being built on Mountain Avenue is a home. I mistakenly thought it was an office building.

Annamarie Puleio
 Westfield

Contradicting Info. on Municipal Repairs

In January, at the Township Council reorganization meeting, Mayor Marks gave his state of the township talk. During his talk, he spelled out his agenda for this year discussing what he intended to accomplish. He was proud to say that under his administration the repairs at the Municipal Building would be completed "on time and within budget."

Last week I read that the repairs at the Municipal Building were behind schedule and the budget was still in the air. What struck me about the article was that the Mayor's name wasn't mentioned. Perhaps the Mayor is only responsible for things that go well and does not associate himself with failures. Good way to have a good record of accomplishment for himself, but not for the tax payers.

Dick Samuel
 Scotch Plains

Leader Editorial 'Myopic, Smug'

I am puzzled at the intent of last week's (7-19-07) editorial about the deficits of Route 22 in our area. The piece discusses some serious safety issues but also veers distressingly into a narrow-minded view of our communities.

References to the "raceway to Newark" do not add to intelligent debate over highway safety. While the highway can provide a convenient conduit for criminal escape, it is myopic, smug and possibly racist to attribute crime in our area to "Irvington invaders and Newark narcotics."

It is also ironic that you think the poor condition of Route 22 has protected us from shopping malls since, in effect, Westfield is an outdoor mall with national chain stores replacing local businesses. We are fortunate to live in our communities of general well-being; let us be thankful for the privilege, rather than randomly critical of those who cannot.

Mary Mahony
 Scotch Plains

Sensor Could Save A Child's Life

I would like to express my sincere sympathy to the family of the 10-week-old baby that passed away on July 17. I am a mother of two and can't imagine the grief of losing a child.

I would like to share some information with the public.

My son was born three months premature. Because premature babies have frequent and dangerous episodes of sleep apnea, he came home from the hospital wearing a very sophisticated heart and lung monitor. This monitor was a part of him for the next five months and became his guardian angel, alerting my husband and me when our son would stop breathing.

In 2003, our daughter was born at eight and half pounds. Before she was eight weeks old, she outgrew her bassinet and was in a crib in her room. She also had very bad colic, which meant hours of crying every night for almost four months. When our daughter finally fell asleep, my husband and I were constantly at her side checking her breathing.

One day I went on the internet looking for a monitor that was similar to the one my son had. I immediately found one that was sold at Babies R Us called the Angelcare Movement Sensor with Sound Monitor for under \$100.00. This monitor is placed under the crib mattress and alarms if the baby stops breathing after 20 seconds. It wasn't a replacement for my husband and me checking on her, but it was definitely peace of mind.

We have used our Angelcare monitor for almost two years. We have taken it with us on our vacations and have happily passed it on to two nephews.

I hope that I have given parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles some useful and important information for the sake of all of our precious little babies.

Shareen Peterson
 Westfield

