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Letters to the Editor
**Superintendent Clarifies Points Raised
 In Editorial on Teachers' Contract**

Recognizing that public information is vital to an informed democracy, I respectfully would like to clarify some points raised in your March 15 editorial. Our school district recognizes and supports requests for information under the Open Public Records Act (OPRA), and we follow our board policy that addresses written requests for documents.

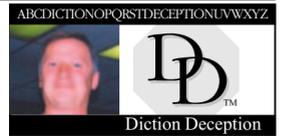
Last August, when *The Times* originally requested a copy of the finalized contract, we advised that this document was not available because it had not yet been completed. The collaborative process of putting together the final contract after a memorandum of agreement is reached is often a long and tedious process. On March 8, because the final document was still not published, Mr. Kanter sent you the 2002-2005 teachers' contract, the 2005-2008 memorandum of agreement, and the 2005-2008 salary schedules. Your office confirmed receipt of these materials. These materials are more informative as they reflect the agreed

upon changes from the pre-existing contract to the new contract. The contract language has not been finalized and as soon as it is printed, the contract will be distributed to the SPFEA membership, maintained as a public document, and be available to interested parties per OPRA.

Lastly, it is important for your readers to note that the current budget limitations are the direct result of changing state requirements, not the teachers' contract as the *Times'* editorial suggests. In fact, the teachers' agreement contains give-backs in the area of medical benefits and reflects a percentage increase consistent with Union County settlements.

I regret the impression that may have been left with your readers that we have not been responsive to your requests. We are committed to full disclosure and working cooperatively with your newspaper and our mutual constituents.

Margaret Hayes
 Superintendent
 Scotch Plains-Fanwood Schools



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. Poltroon - Cowardly; contemptible
 2. Telesitic - Pertaining to the final end or purpose
 3. Glutition - The act of swallowing
 4. Mactation - The killing of anything offered as a sacrifice

- PANEGYRIS**
1. In biology, the cessation of natural selection in generation
 2. A public meeting or festival
 3. Unmanageable; uncontrollable
 4. Capable of doing any kind of work; universally skilled

- ZYTHUM**
1. A malt beverage brewed by the ancient Egyptians
 2. Any poison derived from a decaying tissue
 3. A nerve cell connected with other nerve cells
 4. A kind of biscuit which is baked and then sliced and toasted

- GNOFF**
1. A miser
 2. To banish or ostracize
 3. To disregard or consider unimportant
 4. A sneeze or grunt
- CRAPULENCE**
1. Uselessness; of little or no value
 2. State of exhaustion; worn out
 3. Sickness caused by overindulgence in food or drink
 4. Untidiness; filth

Letters to the Editor

**Friends of SP Library
 Thanks Community for
 Book Sale Success**

We want to thank the public and business community and let everyone know what a huge success the Scotch Plains Library Book Sale was. Sales were at all-time high of just over \$11,000.

We had great volunteers. Junior Girl Scouts were led by Anemarie De Marco. The girls did a great job and made some purchases. Jeff Stein of the Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association (SPBPA) reached out to the business community to bring in raffle items and involved more members. He let them know what services the library has for them. Jeff "e-cast" our information to the SPBPA members.

We received a nice donation from Rossi's Funeral Home and other merchants, and raffled off two baskets - one with a DVD/CD player. Other gifts and donations came from Unity Bank, Trainor Family Chiropractic, Sea Bound Cruises, Inc., dinner for two from 503 Park Avenue Restaurant, Jane of All Trades and Tiny Flowers.

Despite our small amount of members, we have raised over \$35,000 in the past three years, and this year we faced the winter storm.

Ann Twu and I co-chaired the sale. We are both on the board of Friends of the Scotch Plains Public Library. Ann single-handedly sets up the children's area. Leslie Bass coordinates the volunteers. Judy Megaro created all of our signage, and Feather Foster takes care of our publicity. Bob Czaja, our president, works tirelessly throughout the sorting and sale days.

This was our second year having a member's preview night, and we held the raffle for Friends members to increase interest in the sale - and of course in Friends. We are a registered 501 (3)c organization and all of the profits go to support things like the children's summer programs, furnishings for the community room, and whatever else our members and the library director can agree on.

Library Director Meg Kolaya and her staff deserve our thanks for making this sale run so smoothly and keeping the public informed. We had all-time record donations this year, so we know this is an important service to the community as well as a great fundraiser.

Lori Klein
 Scotch Plains

**Edison Coach Thanks
 WF Baseball League**

The Edison Intermediate School 8th-grade baseball team would like to thank the Westfield Baseball League for picking up the cost for batting tryouts at the Ballpark Batting Cages in Springfield. The Westfield Baseball League has been a generous supporter of our team over the years and the players and I greatly appreciate all you do for us.

Dave Duels
 Edison Coach
 WF Baseball League

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**Sophisticated Questions are being
 Studied by Our Youth in School**

We recently received two letters requesting information to assist with classroom review of community issues. The issues being discussed are sophisticated, and we believe our readers will appreciate the depth of thinking being undertaken by our youth in the schools.

Letter One: *Hello, I am in the 8th grade at Roosevelt Intermediate School [Westfield], and my class is doing a project called Project Citizen. We have a problem in our community, and we write a report about it. Our subject is illegal immigration, and I was wondering if you could answer a couple of questions about it.*

Why do some people let it go and let them come into America illegally? How bad will it get in a couple of years? Can it affect others? Can it be stopped in any way? What percent of Americans [illegal] are there today? Can we ever be able to live with it? When did it start? Has anyone ever been really affected by it? Why do they break the law? Does it affect the government in any way?

Thank you for your time in reading this. If you can't answer one of these questions, then just leave it blank. From Kyle.

Kyle, your questions are most important. We could take the easy way out by responding that even the highest elected officials in the land have few answers to your questions.

But, we'll provide some comments and invite the public to comment as well. If your class comes up with some answers, we'd like to hear them.

Often, people are not aware of problems or would prefer to ignore them. That may be the case with illegal immigration. Some politicians and businesses may think it is to their advantage to allow illegal immigration - thinking that low-cost labor yields higher profits; illegal voting can occur and may increase a particular politician's chance of being elected.

Some people may believe that illegal immigration is the correct human thing to allow, even though it is illegal. We are sure there are many views. Economic forces encourage this problem, and the originating countries have little to offer these people. As long as this exists, it probably will continue. Things may slow down or may accelerate - but it will not stop for quite a while, in our view.

It has big effects besides unfairly treating those trying to immigrate legally - they are snubbed. Illegal immigrants can add significantly to our welfare system, cost of education and crime. Taxes go up to deal with it. Does this deprive American citizens of jobs?

On the other side, immigrants contribute great things to society. The issue is not immigration, but illegal immigration. So, if the matter were enforced and if everything occurred legally, would it be as our country was founded - "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...?"

We believe that a way to correct matters must be found - continuing to ignore wrongs is not a good thing. More than 100 years ago it was a problem, particularly in California. Do the works of John Steinbeck, Pulitzer Prize and Noble Prize winner, provide any insight?

Unfortunately, some people break the law because they can; because they are encouraged to do so; because businesses help them break the law for profit; because government is not living by the laws, perhaps with a corrupt element, and is not enforcing them.

Letter Two: *My name is Robert and I am doing a school project on a problem in the community. I was wondering if you could put me in touch with someone who has written articles about the problem I am researching, or someone who has past experience with this problem.*

Our Problem: There is too much traffic, and not enough

parking in downtown Westfield.

Why is there so much traffic in downtown Westfield? What are some solutions that can be used to try to solve the problem? What are some solutions that we have already tried to solve the problem with? Why is there not enough parking in downtown Westfield? Could we put in a parking deck or garage to solve the problem? Where have other articles been written about this problem and what do they say about it? What have other towns done to solve the problem?

If we were to solve this problem by putting in a parking garage, how much money would it cost? Would putting in more traffic lights help decrease the traffic? Has the increase in people in Westfield over the years increased the traffic? What do you think that we can do to make the town a better place, and get rid of this problem?

Robert, There is extensive discussion of this issue in the newspapers over the last eight years. You can search *The Westfield Leader* online at www.goleader.com/search.

Sharon Stockwell of Westfield WeCare has been very active on this matter. See their website www.wecarewestfield.com.

Sherry Cronin of the Downtown Westfield Corp also has information, see www.westfieldtoday.com.

Read the town website on traffic and parking at www.westfieldnj.gov. We suggest contacting Town Council Traffic Safety Committee Chairman, Councilman Mark Ciarrocca. His e-mail address is mciarrocca@westfieldnj.gov.

There are several documents about development, the parking deck and traffic at www.goleader.com/services/ features.

Robert, just as we asked of Kyle, if your group comes up with any answers, we'd like to hear them.

We're very encouraged that our young people are learning about sophisticated community issues in school.

It's April Fools Day

"The first of April is the day we remember what we are the other 364 days of the year." - Mark Twain. The April Fool's Day tradition is thought to have started in France around 1582. Prior to that, the New Year was celebrated for eight days, beginning on March 25 and ending on April 1.

Charles IX changed the calendar then. The Gregorian calendar was introduced and New Year's Day was moved to January 1. However, news back then traveled by foot and many did not learn of the calendar change for several years. Others refused to accept the new calendar and continued to celebrate the New Year on April 1.

The populace labeled these people as "fools" and subjected them to ridicule. They were made the butt of practical jokes. This tradition of pranks on the first day of April spread to England and Scotland in the 18th century and was then introduced to the American colonies.

For the most part, April Fool's Day is supposed to be a funfest where some carry out their brand of humor at the expense others. Pranks on April Fool's Day range from simply saying, "Your shoe's untied!" or perhaps setting a roommate's alarm clock back an hour. Whatever the gag, the trickster ends it by yelling to his victim, "April Fool!"

Senator Nick Scutari told us that New Jerseyans are somewhere between \$50 to \$100 billion in debt due to pension obligations. See his remarks at www.goleader.com/video. Now, this is not an April Fool's joke.



**Voting for the First Time,
 Student Will Vote 'Yes' for Schools**

This April 17th will be the first time I am able to vote. I am proud that my first vote will be for the Westfield school budget. It is my turn to do something for a school system that has done so much for me.

I am happy that I can be a part of something that has and will be a benefit for all those who have come before and will come after me. I am a senior at WHS. In a few months, I will graduate and head off to college. The Westfield school system has produced quality students year after year, and, as I go away to college, I'd

love to see the positive and caring nature of the Westfield school system continue.

What makes Westfield so great are the vast course choices for students. This is possible because we support our budget and our schools.

I am prepared to leave Westfield and put to use all that the school system has provided for its dedicated students. Please join with me in voting Yes for our great school system.

Rick Passananti
 Westfield

**Popular Brooklyn Expression,
 'Enough Already' Mr. Samuel**

The famous line from Shakespeare's Hamlet, "The lady doth protest too much, me thinks," came to mind when I read Dick Samuel's response to my letter.

No one denies that he has a right as a resident of Scotch Plains to speak out against what he believes to be inequities in our local government. However, it is obvious to anyone reading his letters that he writes, not as a concerned citizen, but as a disgruntled politician with an axe to grind.

Whether or not the miniature golf course is yet profitable is not very significant in the face of more pressing issues. I would venture a guess that most residents of our town don't even know of its existence. More exposure will eventually make it an asset to our recreational facilities.

I am not generally prone to writing letters to our local newspapers, but I was appalled by the tone of hostility in the

attempt to minimize our council's efforts. To turn town hall into a circus reduces all guilty participants to clowns, regardless what party they belong to, and impairs the ability of our government to properly function.

My observations are not personal. I know and have always liked Dick Samuel, sharing with him a common bond in our Brooklyn roots. However, his actions of late are disturbing. I will not use this newspaper as a venue to air political differences. There will be time for that in the next election. I just ask Mr. Samuel to be an activist for positive change and not an antagonist, which negatively affects our council's ability to function.

I'm sure that Mr. Samuel remembers that very popular Brooklyn expression, "enough already."

Gabe Spera
 Scotch Plains

**\$2 Million SPF Turf is Unnecessary,
 Let's Put Town Priorities in Order**

There have been some erroneous comments made regarding the high school fields in that they are in bad shape. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In 2001 (six years ago) the school district applied for a building permit to install new fields behind the high school. Multi-millions of dollars have been spent in that now each of the fields (soccer, football, and baseball) have their own state-of-the-art aluminum bleachers, electronic score boards, and underground sprinkler system fed by wells that were drilled for this sole purpose. Sod was then laid over the sprinkler system.

Approximately three years ago, the baseball field was realigned with a new backstop and infield and outfield fences. Another soccer field was built by removing thousands of yards of earth and removing a large number of trees. Sometime during this period, the running track was resurfaced with an all-weather system.

There is a drainage system in place under the grounds. This system starts from the Scotch Hills Country Club, runs diagonally under the football field, along the school driveway, across Westfield Road and comes out in the stream next to the Scotch Plains Post Office.

Artificial Turf does have advantages and disadvantages. It does need maintenance and repair work by professionals. Its life is eight to 10 years. What is the life of this \$2 million bond?

There is currently no official confirmation of any significant difference in the level of sports injuries sustained with natural and synthetic grass, although fric-

tion between skin and some types of artificial turf causes abrasions and/or burns to a much greater extent than natural grass and turf toe is also a medical condition which is often associated with playing on artificial turf.

How can the school district spend so much money these past six years and now want to do it over again at a cost of \$2 million? Don't they have a long-range capital plan. I have also heard that this plan will include the electrical capabilities for eventual night lighting.

I invite the taxpayer to take the time to look for themselves and determine whether bonding \$2 million for unnecessary artificial turf is more important than bonding the money for needed school roof repairs and more necessary projects for our students. Lets put our priorities in order.

Joan Papen
 Scotch Plains

**Resident Notes Two
 Primaries Set for 2008**

I read your editorial [March 22, 2007] on the new Presidential Primary. In presidential election years, there will be two primaries, the Presidential Primary in February and the regular primary in June.

The Presidential Primary will be for presidential candidates only and will not replace the normal June primary.

Bill McClintock
 Scotch Plains

**SP-Fanwood Public Invited to Discuss
 \$2 MM Turf Bond Proposed by BOE**

The Fanwood Republican Club will have its initial meeting of 2007 under the leadership of Michael D'Antuono this Monday night, April 2 at 7:30 p.m., downstairs in the Provident Bank located at 206 South Avenue in Fanwood.

The program will be a discussion of the proposal to pass a \$2-million-bond issue on School Board Election Day, April 17, to provide certain board of education playing fields with artificial turf and lights. The speakers will be Linda Nelson, representing the BOE, and Anthony Giannaci, representing the citizens group supporting the bond issue. The meeting will be

open to the public to express their views on all aspects of this project.

All the residents of Fanwood and Scotch Plains are cordially invited to attend regardless of their political affiliations. Refreshments will be served.

We appreciate your cooperation in providing space in your newspaper for this article on an issue that has caused many columns in your paper in the past few weeks. Thank you very much.

Theodore Trumpp
 Fanwood

**Eminent Domain, Will Developers And
 Gov. Obliterate Neighborhoods?**

There's fear and confusion about eminent domain. Many of your readers must be wondering: Is it inevitable that greedy developers and overzealous town governments must obliterate neighborhoods and displace residents in the name of redevelopment?

Here's where to get some answers. Top experts in the field of redevelopment will speak at an ANJEC workshop on Saturday morning, March 31, at Rutgers Law School in Newark on how to avoid abuse of eminent domain while preserving neighborhoods and protecting the rights of landowners. Recent New Jersey eminent domain case studies will be featured, including Camden and Long Branch.

We hope you'll help us get the word out to the people about the workshop. We

invite the public to call us (Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions) at (973) 539-7547 for more information.

Julie Lange Groth
 ANJEC, Mendham

**WF Rec. Reschedules
 Parent/Child Program**

The parent/child organizing program with Jamie Novak sponsored by the Westfield Recreation Department has been rescheduled from Thursday, March 29 to Tuesday, April 24. Please call the recreation department at (908) 789-4080 with any questions.

Traci Kastner
 Westfield Recreation Department