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Letters to the Editor
Grandstanding on SP Budget Is Reckless and Irresponsible

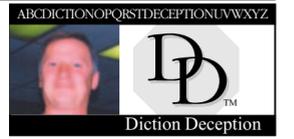
At the council meeting introducing the Scotch Plains Municipal Budget in March, I recall our new councilman, Kevin Glover, calling on the people of Scotch Plains to be heard on his proposed tax plan. One month later, at the public hearing on the municipal budget, only two people showed up in support of Mr. Glover's proposal.

Those two people were his Democratic campaign manager, Dick Samuel, and previous Democratic council candidate Phil Weiner. There is probably good reason for the lack of support for Mr. Glover. Those citizens with any interest in the municipal budget process saw through the facade of Councilman Glover's grandstanding and realized what he was promoting was reckless and irresponsible and was purely done to be political and not in the best interest of our town or its taxpayers.

Additionally, the people of Scotch Plains saw the four other members of the township council working in a bipartisan manner to put forth a budget that is sound and fair. It is also hard to ignore the comments from the town's professionals who at the public hearing all endorsed the adopted budget and condemned the Glover plan as a "big mistake."

Hopefully, Councilman Glover will understand the silent message sent by the general public with their lack of support of his budget plan. If not, I am quite confident the four other members of the council and the township's professional staff will continue their fine work, and will treat any future antagonistic, agenda-driven, misguided antics by Mr. Glover or those of his biggest cheerleader, Mr. Samuel, as no more than what they are, amusing distractions.

Marc Ginsberg
Scotch Plains



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. Plerotic - Restoring or producing anew; such as in tissue
 2. Springal - An active young man
 3. Fustigate - To beat with a stick or club
 4. Lentigo - A freckle or freckly condition of the skin

Warinanco Park Project is Good Private-Public Partnership

At least week's Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders' meeting, it was announced that Merck and Co. of Rahway would soon begin construction on \$3 million in improvements to Warinanco Park in Roselle - one of the county's largest parks. The improvements come as part of a major flood project in Linden, which involves Merck's property in Rahway and negotiations with the NJDEP.

The improvements include footbridges over some of the park's streams, new streambeds with plant material and aquatic life. A sanitary sewer line will be relocated and parking spaces at the skating center will be reconfigured.

The agreement between the county and Merck is a good example of government-private sector partnership. Zero taxpayer dollars will be utilized. Completion is scheduled for year's end. The City of Linden will see an end to flooding along Elizabeth Avenue, while county residents will be able to enjoy a stroll along the new footbridges with enhanced views of the streams in the park.

The improvements will be in line with the Olmsted style of the park. The sons of Frederick Olmsted, a noted American landscape architect who designed Central Park in New York City, created Union County's parks system. Union County has 33 parks encompassing 6,600 acres.

Merck has not asked for anything in return. This is a win-win project for residents and Merck. We encourage others to consider similar arrangements.

WF Councilman Caruana Helps Fund Union County Watchdog Group

Editor's Note: This letter was sent to Tina Renna, president of the Union County Watchdog Association and copied to this newspaper.

I applaud your efforts to expose wasteful spending and abuse on the part of Union County government.

A few years back, I attended a Southside Johnny concert in Echo Lake Park, and frankly, I was shocked at the self-indulgence on and off stage of some connected to county government. Are these events really for taxpayers, or are they opportunities for some over-aged groupies on the public dime to rub wine glasses on stage with rock acts?

Like many others, I love Southside Johnny, but should the public foot the bill for elements of a private VIP event for elected officials and their friends? Were campaign contributors VIP's too? Perhaps the VIP guest list should be released as part of the public record.

As for the newly instituted \$8-per-hour service fee to obtain what should be freely accessible public documents, please send me an address to mail a \$1,000 contribution to your organization to cover these and future "service" fees, and do not hesitate to contact me when and if you need additional funds for this purpose.

There is one condition: please pass on all evidence of obstruction and/or abuse to the U.S. Attorney's office. Enough is enough.

Councilman Sal Caruana
Westfield

What's the Difference Between 1942 Nazis, 2007 Islamic Radicals?

From thehistorychannel.co.uk, "In June 1942, eight German saboteurs were delivered to the east coast of the United States via U-boats, with the intent to attack, destroy and terrorize. But they were apprehended almost immediately, and six of the eight were executed [August 8, 1942]. The eight men had been born in Germany and each had lived in the United States for substantial periods."

As reported on nj.com Tuesday, "Federal agents last night arrested six Islamic radicals who were planning a heavily armed attack against soldiers at Fort Dix as part of a jihad against America, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office...the men planned to 'kill as many soldiers as possible...Some of the would-be attackers have been living illegally in the United States, while others are legal immigrants, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office.'"

"U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie said the arrest demonstrates the tenacity of America's efforts to thwart terrorists. It should show all of us that the continued terrorism threat in America is real and that federal law enforcement is going to continue to work as far as we can to catch these folks before they kill innocent Americans." Our questions: Now what? What's the difference?

Perhaps it's time for Non-Partisan Elections So Work Can Get Done

I cannot recall ever writing a letter to the editor, but I felt I had to write now to clarify a couple of issues for the residents of Scotch Plains. The first issue is our recently passed budget. For those who are interested in the facts:

\$3.4 million is our surplus at the end of 2006. \$2.4 million is the amount we used in this year's budget. \$1 million is our current surplus. \$300,000 is the amount to be deducted if we reduced the budget by another 3 points. \$700,000 is what our surplus would be now if our budget increase had been two points instead of five points.

Frankly, the math is not too difficult, but I, nevertheless, verified my figures (both before and after the budget vote) with township officials. The bottom line is that the majority of the council and our professional staff agree that using any more of the remaining \$1 million surplus would be irresponsible.

The second issue I want to clarify is the misimpression claiming that I take direction from the mayor and/or others as to what to say and how to vote. This could not be further from the truth and would be evident to anyone who pays attention and is not merely interested in dreaming up some sort of non-existent conspiracy. I take pride in the amount of time and effort I dedicate to my position. I make informed decisions independently based on what I believe to be in the best interests of our residents. To suggest otherwise is insulting.

Although I felt compelled to set the record straight this time, I have no intention of engaging in an on-going dialogue with those who disagree with me in letters to the editor. I'm sure many would agree that the recent conduct displayed by some is embarrassing and that the bickering needs to stop. Perhaps it's time for non-partisan elections in Scotch Plains. Maybe that would elect the bitterness in check and allow elected officials to concentrate on what we are put in office to do.

Councilwoman Nancy Malool
Scotch Plains

ROUSANT

1. A large fruit bat native to the islands of the Pacific
2. In heraldry, designating a bird, rising as if preparing to fly
3. A coarse product from tin dressing
4. An ornamental piece of plaster work in the center of a ceiling or panel

TROLLOP

1. An untidy or dirty woman
2. Moving in a hopping or skipping manner
3. In mines, a troughlike drain made of wood
4. A scallop or large mollusk

ACRISY

1. Condition in which no right judgment can be formed
2. Relating to or affecting external surfaces
3. Sharpness; eagerness
4. Disbelief in god

QUEME

1. An oak tree
2. A pustule or pimple
3. Minced chicken or veal, mixed with eggs and bread crumbs in the shape of a ball
4. To please

Thank You to the Scotch Plains Police

My wife and I would like to thank the Scotch Plains Police Department for their assistance during the early morning hours of Friday, April 27. My wife was traveling on Hetfield Avenue during torrential rain, and ran into a flash flood, which had covered the road completely.

An officer arrived very quickly (I met him at the scene) and went into the knee-deep water with me to help push the car out. He then waded across the flood to help another stranded motorist. Even after both motorists were freed, he stayed on the scene with road flares and lights to prevent others from doing the same.

He was soaked to the bone. I'm sure the police consider actions like this routine, but this was truly above and beyond the call of duty.

David and Lee Robertson
Scotch Plains

MS Girls Seek Return To Windmill Pitching

Editor's note: This letter was sent to the Mountainside Recreation Department and copied to this newspaper.

We totally do not agree with taking windmill pitching out of our league, especially in the middle of the season.

So many girls love softball in Mountainside. Taking out windmill won't help anyone at all. How will all these dedicated girls ever make the Deerfield School team or the Governor Livingston team if they don't know how to hit a fast pitch? No one will ever make a team later in their life if they don't learn to play the correct way at a young age.

It is not just a small percentage of girls who are really into this sport. In the summer, more than 60 girls participate in the Mountainside Softball Association traveling league with fast-pitch. All of which play Rec. ball, so that clearly shows you there are so many more girls interested in this sport than you think.

How do you expect them to improve if they're not given the opportunity to play correctly? So far, we have pitched so much less than what the rules state we can. It's only one inning in a game that the girls have had to face a windmill pitcher. What's the harm of around three batters having to hit against her?

In the rules, it clearly states that the girls can pitch three innings in the first three games, four innings in the next three games, and the whole game after that. It was approximately four games before girls even started pitching, and even then it was only one inning.

We hope you agree with our point of view. Thank you.

Deerfield School 5th-graders
Shannon Compton, Jenny Pires,
Payton Murphy - Mountainside

Samuel was Mistaken On SP Budget Vote

I am writing in response to the letter written by Dick Samuel published in your May 3, 2007 edition. I would like to address Mr. Samuel's confusion concerning my vote in support of the 2007 Scotch Plains budget passed on April 24.

I supported the budget for many of the reasons stated on the record during the public meeting as well as unstated reasons garnered during the budget process consisting of many hours of work. However, Mr. Samuel was of the mistaken belief that one of the reasons for my support was a belief that the substantial increase in the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority assessments to the 2008 budget was actually to take effect in 2007. That statement is incorrect.

After reading his letter to the newspaper, I rechecked my personal notes, the charts presented and used at the meeting to illustrate the increases for 2008, and the actual transcribed minutes of the public meeting. I was aware of the importance of the increases anticipated in 2008, and the impact on the 2007 budget and the protective surplus.

My review confirmed his error, and I hope this clarifies his confusion.

Councilman Jeffrey Strauss
Scotch Plains

SP Councilman Glover, a Brilliant Student of Municipal Budgeting?

Most everyone has seen that bumper sticker that reads, "Don't ask me, I didn't vote for him." This statement usually refers to an incumbent president who falls into disfavor with the populace. However, I predict that soon, we will be displaying these same bumper stickers to exhibit our dissatisfaction with the ever-grandstanding councilman from Scotch Plains, Kevin Glover.

Mr. Glover, a new member of the council, has the audacity to chastise the mayor, council and other township officials as though he were a brilliant student of municipal budgeting. This is from a man who erroneously claimed at a meeting that the board of education budget was only being increased by \$29 per average household. After this display of naiveté, he proposes that the township dangerously anticipate revenues far greater than it has ever realized - and reduce the set-aside for uncollected taxes, assuming with no facts, that more delinquent taxes will be paid this year than ever before.

Using more of the surplus could have reduced the tax by a few points. However, doing this would leave the township in a precarious financial position if it encounters unpredictable violent storms or other disasters. A healthy surplus also entitles the township to a better credit rating if it goes out for bonding and earns interest, which is additional revenue.

I can't believe that Mr. Glover can be all that reckless, so I assume that behind this charade is a hidden scenario. It was easy for him to go against his colleagues with such a ridiculous proposal knowing that they have the good sense to act responsibly and not play Russian roulette with the budget. Mr. Glover did not care if his proposal was rejected. All he wanted is the opportunity to say that he was the lone voice for tax reduction, if, heaven forbid, he runs in a future election.

His plan assumes, of course, that we all forget how inane the concept was to begin with. Thankfully, the residents of Scotch Plains are more sophisticated and most of the ones I talk with are already fed up with Mr. Glover's nonsense. The only fear I have is that Mr. Glover might seriously injure his arm by constantly patting himself on the back. Scotch Plains certainly deserves better.

Gabe Spera
Scotch Plains

Thank You to Our Wonderful Neighbors

On May 2, our daughter was hit by a car while trying to catch a dog that had run into the street. We want to thank everybody who stopped and provided assistance. I am especially grateful to the people who made phone calls, put away my dogs and collected blankets and towels. We also would like to thank the 911 dispatcher, police, EMT's and paramedics.

We have always said that we live in a wonderful neighborhood. We have received so many calls, flowers, gifts and offers of prayers. We are so grateful for the outpouring of sympathy and care we have received.

Our daughter is expected to make a complete recovery. Thank you everyone.

The Rodger Family
Westfield

Former Westfield High School Principal Robert Petix Comments on Censorship of Free Speech by Bd. of Ed.

Editor's Note: This letter was written by Robert Petix, who retired last year after serving 26 years as principal of Westfield High School.

After reading Victoria McCabe's article in last week's Westfield Leader, I feel compelled to express my disgust with the Westfield Board of Education's abandonment of one of Westfield High School's most cherished traditions: freedom of speech. The current "censorship debate" in Westfield is a tragedy for both the high school and the Westfield community. The frivolous manner in which the 73-year tradition of freedom of the press at Westfield High School was so easily discarded and extinguished is exceeded only by the arrogance, insouciance and hypocrisy of the compliant elected town officials, school board members and superintendent of schools.

After receiving a telephone call from thin-skinned town council members who did not like some benign criticism of them aired on Blue Devil News (the broadcast version of *Hi's Eye*), the mayor did what any typical politician would do: he called his counterpart on the Board of Education, President Anne Riegel, to ask her to ensure that student journalists would make were no further criticisms of town officials on channel 36. Never mind that this is a public access channel. Never mind

saying to the councilmen, "You are public officials, you are supposed to take criticism." Never mind saying, "Hey, these are just responsible kids who are offering their opinions over their town's public access channel." Never mind calling the students involved to ask for an on-air rebuttal. Never mind having the courtesy to answer their numerous e-mails requesting an interview.

Never mind calling the program advisor or the principal to voice concerns about the program. The mayor - quietly, anonymously and surreptitiously - went right to the top of the school system food chain to get what he wanted.

Mrs. Riegel, the overseer of education of Westfield's children, was only too anxious to comply with the mayor's request. After all, the mayor and town councilmen are neighbors and friends. And of course, more pragmatically, as Dr. Foley constantly reminded school administrators, the district has to stay on the good side of the council so that if the school budget does not pass, the reductions made by the council to the revised budget will be minimal. Mrs. Riegel then called Superintendent of Schools Dr. Foley and gave him his marching orders: keep those kids quiet. By the way, as readers of *The Westfield Leader* already know, Mrs. Riegel is hardly a defender of free speech. Last spring, when I presented my opinion to the Board of Education on the effect of eliminating department chairmen at Westfield High School in favor of the creation of district supervisors, the then Board President censored me and would not allow me to finish my written speech. (Heaven forbid, that an employee offers an opinion that questions the wisdom of a decision made by the Board of Education!) The full text of my speech was subsequently printed in *The Westfield Leader* and was received by an intelligent community as what it was: a considered alternative to the board's plan.

Dr. Foley, knowing that the board president and the mayor objected to the criticism aired by the Westfield students, reviewed the program in question and predictably found it "unfair of a student to refer to TV-36 as a propaganda machine." The superintendent's finding it unfair to refer to channel 36 as a propaganda machine reminds me of Claude Rains' line in *Casablanca* when he discovers that Rick's Place is also a gambling establishment: "I am shocked, shocked! - to find that there is gambling going on in here. Everybody out at once!" Rains' shock is short-lived when upon uttering these words, he is given his usual percentage of the evening's profits.

Of course Channel 36 is a propaganda machine for both town politicians and the school board. Dr. Foley knows it and masterfully uses the broadcast channel to get what he believes is good for the school district. Every year he spends countless hours preparing to present the budget for viewers of channel 36. He seeks the advice of the district's public relations officer and practices his presentations, meticulously selecting specific facts and precise language to persuade the public to vote for the budgets and to support board initiatives. Although legally prohibited from directly advocating a particular position, the superintendent makes certain that only "pro" positions are aired - repeatedly. The chief school administrator does what he should do: present the Board's initiatives to the public. Stated simply, he uses channel 36 to propagandize

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