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Smiles, Hope and Confidence of Our Community's New Friends

Back to school is a welcome relief to many as all the plans that have been worked on the last several months are now in place and operational. It's easy to see how things are working in the public schools as everything is nearby. The strong community support structure provides momentum and oversight to help the system work well - or to help correct items that may come up with a glitch.

It's not so easy for parents to tell how things are working regarding their youngsters who are off to college for the first time. For them, it's faith in the character of the student who left the nest. Time will tell, and will most likely provide proud relief.

There are many who are forgotten in this changing of the guard. Parents with seniors last year, and with no more children in school this year, become the new empty nesters. Many of these parents worked very hard in PTOS,

at athletic events and with social functions. Now, they will have more time on their hands and go other ways, but we'll miss them in their prior roles.

A whole new group of parents will rise and assume these essential roles in supporting the education of our youth in the community. We look forward to making new friends.

Our college students will excel and grow while away from home. We have every confidence in their success and hope they stop by from time to time.

Still, while on the high-school football field reporting on a game this fall, we'll glance over our shoulder, looking up in the stands for familiar faces of last year, and they won't be there.

But that moment of nostalgia will vanish as we see the smiles, hope and confidence of our new friends.

Letters to the Editor

Mayor Marks Replies to Cell Tower Issue on The Zoning Board of Adjustment Considerations

Editor's Note: Mayor Martin Marks replies to Mr. Flanagan's letter below.

Mr. Flanagan: Thank you for contacting me (see letter to editor on this page). This issue has certainly received a lot of attention, and I have been following it carefully.

As with many land use board applications, there can be misconceptions promulgated among our residents. As you know, the application is being heard before our Zoning Board of Adjustment. The Township Council does not have to ratify nor can they necessarily "veto" decisions of the Zoning Board. However, in certain situations, the Township Council can be the appellate body should objectors choose to appeal an approved application. This is why any member of the Township Council (including myself) must not involve itself in any appreciable extent while there is an active application pending. This could jeopardize the rights of the applicant and/or residents like yourself.

One of the more frustrating aspects of land use applications is educating our residents on what criteria can and cannot

be used to decide an application. Sometimes, what might seem reasonable, rational, logical and fair isn't necessarily legal. While we have our own land use/zoning ordinances on the books here in Scotch Plains, much of what we do is governed by higher levels of government (state and federal) of which we have no control.

For instance, the issue of wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas is a valid point of inquiry in most any application. There must be interaction with the State DEP by the applicant and the municipality to define sensitive areas, establish adequate buffers, and in some cases deny applications because of the inherent value of the environmentally sensitive area (defined by the state, not us).

This issue will likely be thoroughly threshed out at the Zoning Board hearing(s). By the way, our "sisters" in Fanwood, Westfield and Cranford all must comply with these standards set by higher levels of government and they all have cell towers, some of which might be in objectionable locations.

In fact, within the last couple of years

the Zoning Board in Fanwood turned down an application for a cellular tower because it was objectionably too close to a residential area. The denial was appealed to the courts and the Fanwood Zoning Board was overturned. This cell tower was erected soon after.

As to the issue of siting a cell tower near school property, I will refer you to the previous paragraph referencing what might seem reasonable, rational, logical and fair. You will likely hear at the Zoning Board hearing that this cannot legally be used as a criteria for denying this type of application. In fact, if the Zoning Board used this as a criteria to deny, it potentially could be used in an applicant appeal to the courts. Our Board of Education is fully aware of this and that is why they have taken no public position on the application.

You will also likely hear at the Zoning Board hearings that municipalities have an obligation to relax their zoning standards (which, by the way, does not allow for cell towers anywhere in Scotch Plains) in order to allow for applications that have an "inherently beneficial use" (state of NJ legal term, not mine) to the public to be accommodated. This could be viewed as a problem for communities like Scotch Plains that is mostly residential neighborhoods with few industrial or commercial areas.

Please keep in mind that this application is made by a private entity. It is not a township initiative. I, nor any member of township government had anything to do with bringing it about.

Even though this is not a township initiative, our zoning board is obligated to hear the application as they would be obligated to hear other applications that do not conform with our zoning ordinances. In any event, I encourage you to be present for the zoning board hearings and listen very carefully to the many other relevant factors to be discussed and the interaction of our board members, and their legal and technical board advisors. They are there to protect not only individual neighborhoods, but also the character of Scotch Plains as a whole.

Please keep in mind that there are certain prevailing laws that can "tie their hands," so to speak, when trying to satisfy this noble goal. I will continue to monitor the process as it unfolds and also work with the township council's legal and technical advisors to make certain all potential angles are fully explored.

Thank you again for contacting me.

James Flanagan
Scotch Plains

Mayor Martin Marks
Scotch Plains

Scotch Plains Needs Pride, Not Just Saying that it is Close to Westfield

Editor's Note: This letter was sent to Scotch Plains Mayor Martin Marks and copied to The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times.

I am a concerned resident of Scotch Plains writing to you regarding the cell tower to be built on the Willow Grove Swim Club property. It is imperative that this cell tower not be allowed to go up.

The proposed site is in an area known as Robinson's Branch Watershed and has been identified by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) as one of the highest pollutant areas due to "poor land use" and lack of natural filtration (through natural vegetation such as trees and wooded areas. This has been explained to me by contacts at the DEP). Once the cell tower is built, extreme damage can be done to our waterways and our reservoir drinking water.

The cell tower will be located within 400 feet of McGinn School, near a wetlands area and many residences. Our property values will go down. Scotch Plains will be known as the town that has six cell towers and one next to an elementary school.

I have lived in Scotch Plains for over twenty years, and I had been encouraged in the last ten years that my town was the

up and coming place to live. Because of this, we made a major expansion in our home in the past year (taking a double hit of reassessment tax and property tax increases in the process).

Many of my new neighbors have moved here to raise a family in a safe place. Instead, I have seen Westfield re-emerge as a glowing meeting area, Fanwood making vast redevelopments and Cranford making a major leap in becoming a vital downtown spot to spend time and money. And the best that Scotch Plains can do is permit yet another cell tower?

I am heartbroken by the fact that this town seems destined to be the low-class sister to Fanwood, Cranford and Westfield, with a minimal downtown area that cars just speed through to get to Route 22. The best that can be said for my area now is that it is close to Westfield. Mr. Mayor, please, sir, I beg of you to speak with the council members and investigate the proposal by Omnipoint to build this unwanted structure. And, please, if the variance is granted, I hope that you and the council members can find a way to veto it. It will be a step toward restoring pride in Scotch Plains.



HUNG UP!!



Courtship Is the Time to Explore Troubling Issues In Relationship

By Milt Faith, Executive Director
Youth and Family Counseling Service

A Frustrated Divorcée Writes: I have been married twice, to losers. They were abusive and controlled my life. I had no freedom to make choices. They seemed nice during our courtship, although I was aware of some of these patterns of behavior. My message to everyone is: Love is blind; marriage is an eye opener. My advice: don't get involved with anyone!

Answer: I disagree. Marriages, commitments, are wonderful institutions. Your difficulty was choosing "losers." You were aware, on some level, that there were problems. My message: During any ongoing relationship, be open and honest. If you are aware of personality traits that are worrisome, discuss them directly. People do not change automatically when they marry. If difficulties cannot be resolved (initially), move on. Resolve relationship issues, and you will find your eye openers early and not after you are married!

A Concerned Mother Writes: I am worried about my nine-year-old son. We have two cats and two dogs whom we love. My son, Justin (disguised name), plays with them a lot. He pulls their tails, teases them with a broom and then takes a swing at them. Once, I heard a cry, ran in and it looked like he was choking the cat.

My husband feels this is a phase, since he has been doing this for a few months. I think this is sadistic. I now worry about Justin playing with his

five-month-old sister; he may hurt her. Should we observe it, and if there are no changes, have him see someone?

Answer: Yes. His behavior is destructive and harmful, very sadistic. Abusing animals can be related to the beginnings of harmful and hostile behavior. Such individuals show little or no remorse, nor conscience, about their violent behavior. Later in life, this pattern of behavior is often transferred onto people.

Justin's behavior may be related to the birth of your daughter, which has resulted in angry, competitive feelings. Unable to release this towards his sister (angry, competitive emotions), he transfers this and "acts it out" towards animals, a situation he can control.

Please have him see a mental health therapist now, one who can evaluate Justin's mental and emotional state of mind and recommend and/or provide appropriate therapy.

A Faithful Reader Writes: You've written "Hung Up" for over 40 years. How did you get the name and did you ever think of changing it?

Answer: "Hung Up" expresses the everyday difficult situations and relationships in which we all find ourselves. People can identify with this. The original names included "Faithfully Yours," "Have Faith," "Dear Milt" (a definite no-no) and "Solving Problems." I stuck with "Hung Up." Thanks for asking.

Letters to the Editor

SP Township Should Stop Their Capital Spending Spree

After, at least, two debacles this year with capital projects, Scotch Plains Municipal Manager Tom Atkins and Mayor Marty Marks want to do it, at least, two more times. The total cost of their follies will cost the Scotch Plains taxpayers about \$8 million. They say the taxpayers can afford it because it is being bonded. The debt service will only cost us between a half-a-million to a million dollars a year for twenty years.

They are not worried because the one thing they do well is timing things to get the costs into the right budget year. If they shuffle the money around, they can keep the amount that hits next year's budget low and only have it hit after the next municipal election.

Even if the cost of these projects wouldn't raise our tax rate by 5 to 10 points a year during a financial crunch, their inability to get the first two right - the municipal building and the miniature golf course - should give them reason for pause to question their own ability to propose and manage such capital projects.

They would be wise to deal with the DPW building and firehouses state of disrepair rather than go off on additional fantasies. They should stop their spending spree and leave their successors with a fighting chance to repair the fiscal damage they have already done.

Dick Samuel, Chair
Scotch Plains Democratic Comm.

There Should be Limits on Candidate Spending, Media Must Help

American democracy is in danger because of the role money plays in the American political system.

Mayor Bloomberg of New York City, worth billions of dollars, spent tens of millions of his own dollars to make this little-known figure mayor of the city. Governor Jon Corzine, worth hundreds of millions of dollars, spent millions of his own dollars to become first a United States Senator, and then Governor of New Jersey. Even at the local level, who can raise the most money is often the person chosen to be the candidate. It is true that money does not guarantee electoral victory, as witnessed by the failed attempts of Stephen Forbes and Ross Perot to become President of the United States. And it is also true that wealthy individuals often are good elected officials. Still, money provides advantages, which make the playing field for elective office uneven.

Political campaigns are expensive and becoming even more so. When all the votes have been counted, the Republican and Democratic presidential candidates will have spent a billion dollars to win election. Each candidate will have raised more than a million dollars a day.

It takes tens of millions of dollars to campaign for statewide office in New Jersey, New York, California and Florida. There are travel, staff, consultant, insurance, campaign literature, telephone, poll-

ster, postage, food and lodging expenses.

Money distorts the political process. Money provides access. Migrant workers do not have the political clout of the pharmaceutical industry. The public agenda becomes skewed. To raise money takes much of a candidate's time and effort. This is time and effort, which could be better devoted to defining, presenting and solving the many problems of our great country.

To save American democracy, there should be limits on what a candidate may spend. Television and radio broadcasters must give free airtime and the print media must give free space to candidates running for office as much as *The Westfield Leader* does.

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution prevents mandating that the mass media provide free air time and free space but the American public, their audience and ultimate owner of the airways, can demand that the mass media acquiesce.

As citizens, we should be deeply concerned about who is not able to run for political office. Who knows what Churchhill, Eisenhower, Reagan, or FDR there might be if money did not play such a vital role in getting elected to office?

Dr. Stephen Schoeman
Westfield

Scotch Plains Resident Praises Plans For John Shippen Community Center

A very special activity is about to become a reality in Scotch Plains. We will join the thousands of other towns across the United States that can proudly say we have a community center, with a place for the seniors in our town to call their own. Seniors in this town have waited patiently for this and now we can say to them the possibility is becoming a reality. They will have a place to sit and walk down memory lane, to watch a movie, to listen to music or just pass the time of day with their peers.

Our community center will meet the needs of one of the fastest growing demographics across the country. By naming the center for John Shippen, Scotch Plains will honor one of its icons, the person who, along with the black residents of Scotch Plains, gave us the rights to the property now known as the Scotch Hills Country Club. For those not familiar with John Shippen, he was the first black professional golfer in the US and is honored today worldwide by golfers like Lee Elder, Tiger Woods and other legends of the game.

There wouldn't be a Scotch Plains without our senior population, which has steadily grown over the years. They are the builders and shapers of our community who created much of what we value in this town. Ask every realtor in town the day after the center opens and they will tell you that prospective buyers will be told we have a Community/Senior Center that serves all our residents.

The town's value will increase. The John Shippen Community Center will say this is a town that cares not just for the children but for the grandmothers, grandfathers, grand aunts and uncles and all who made it possible to have a great town. We have waited long for this to happen. My sincere thanks to our Mayor Martin

Marks and the township council for keeping the promise made and making this dream a reality. Scotch Plains has just leapt forward into the twenty-first century.

Elizabeth Mangan
Scotch Plains

Editor's Note: John Shippen was the Shady Rest Golf & Country Club long-time professional and greens supervisor (now Scotch Hills Country Club). According to various records, African-American John Shippen was the first American born professional golfer and played in the US Open in 1896.

Resident Says Anti-Tower Group 'Lies'

I write to you about the above because of the unethical behaviors of some who are opposed to the tower.

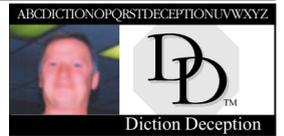
I, personally, have no objections to anyone's options - this is America. Unfortunately, there are people who are opposed to this tower and are illegally putting flyers in people's doors and sending spam with untrue information.

These very few people are creating bad feelings among a small community and trying to get people to believe their lies. I have no issue with people voicing their opinions, as long as it is within legal boundaries and factual.

This group is slandering not only a pool club but the PTA and BOE - as if any of those entities would have anything to do with such an issue.

I urge the Scotch Plains Planning Board to look at the "big picture" and at those who are voicing opinions legally instead of those who are not.

Barbara-An Cuccaro
Fanwood



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. Ninut - The magpie
2. Paynim - A pagan or heathen
3. Excretion - Cursing
4. Crepuscular - Pertaining to twilight; glimmering

SIFFLEMENT

1. A hissing or whistling sound
2. A separation or passing through
3. The use or repetition of the letter s
4. A formation of new flesh in a wound; a cicatrix

CATAPHRACT

1. A horseman in complete armor
2. A puma; a cougar
3. A powder formerly used for sprinkling the body
4. Inflammation or a mucous membrane; especially of the nose or throat

IMPUTRESCIBLE

1. Vile; evil
2. Not subject to corruption
3. Not capable of being measured or weighed
4. Wanting; needy

URTICARIA

1. Bacteria causing inflammation of the urinary tract
2. A parasitic infestation of the intestines of Bears
3. Hives
4. Wild strawberries

Letters to the Editor

FWFD Thanks For Help With Wetdown

The Fanwood Fire Department held their wetdown celebration on August 4, welcoming Ladder 1 into the fire service. We would like to thank those who made this celebration an amazing success.

First and foremost, thanks to the residents of Fanwood, especially those who live around LaGrande Park, for their continued support. We would also like to thank the mayor and council of Fanwood.

A special thank you to the following businesses from Fanwood for their generous donations: Laser Design Inc., Re: Transportation Inc., Fanwood Bagels, Family Investors Co., The Wonder Years Academy, Kristopher Piccola's Landscaping, Golden Hanger Cleaners, Metro American Sales Inc., Fanwood Clipper, Watchung Pediatrics, Schembre and Gannon LLC, The Mattress Factory, Shultz Insurance Agency, Memorial Funeral Home, Fanwood Transmissions, A&P Fanwood, Messercola Construction and Jim Drewes Snap-on Tools.

We would also like to thank the following businesses from outside the borough: A&P of Clark, Hi-Tech Data Floors of Lakewood, Computer Floors Inc. of Clifton, Federated Fire Equipment of South Plainfield, New Jersey Fire Equipment of Green Brook, Stop and Shop of Watchung, Shop-Rite of Watchung, Showroom Hand Car Wash of Scotch Plains, Structureone Inc. of Matawan and Those Guys Fire Co. of Union County.

Volunteers of the Fanwood Fire Department

Swim Program Helps Inner-City Children

Last summer, you published an article about the swimming program I ran for my Boy Scout Eagle project. I thought your readers might be interested to know that with tremendous support from so many people in Westfield, this program was successfully repeated this summer.

Twice a week for six weeks, my volunteers and I gave swimming lessons to the children in the summer camp run by the Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless. When they were not having their lessons, the children had a great time playing in the pool for a couple of hours. Forty-seven children participated in the program over the course of the six weeks.

This program would not have been possible without widespread support from our town. The Westfield Service League made a very generous grant to cover expenses. The Leader Store helped us out with goggles for all the children.

Over 160 bathing suits were donated by families with children in the Westfield elementary schools (Extra suits go to St. Joseph's Social Service Center in Elizabeth).

All the volunteer swim instructors were from Westfield, most from the Memorial Pool's swim team. This year's volunteers were John McGrory, Brian Hart, James Kazakis, Rich Polini, Sean Sullivan, Brian Gringrich, Max Blum, Connor Jennings, Matt Bluffield and Mike Cifelli.

It is now recognized that many minority children, especially from the inner city, don't know how to swim, and that their drowning rates are much higher than those of white children as a result.

This is why the swimming program is so important. I would like everyone to know about the program and feel proud about the difference our town made for this needy group of children.

Eric Hagstrom
Westfield

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- General News - Friday 4pm
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- Classifieds - Tuesday 12pm
- Ad Reservation - Friday 4pm
- Ad Submittal - Monday 12pm

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