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Letters to the Editor
Valentine's Day Restores Scotch Plains Resident's Faith In Fellow Man

My fellow co-workers and I were pictured in last week's *Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* as Irma's Hallmark preparing for Valentine's Day. This is always a very busy day, and in this very busy lifestyle we all live in, it is sometimes a last-minute holiday. Therefore, the stress is there for all of us.

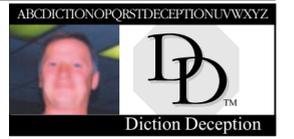
I recently had several situations that so restored my faith in humanity. Valentine's Day is a day when we all want to show our love and caring for one another. One of my experiences was an elderly gentleman purchasing a Valentine for his wife of 61 years, who had just recently passed away a few months ago. He was planning to still bring the card to her resting place and set it there so she would know he was still there thinking of her.

It just filled my eyes when speaking to him, the love he had and missed.

Others were the young fathers with their children buying cards for "Mommy" along with wives, husbands and loved ones buying for each other. I have worked in this retail area for over 25 years, and it can be so busy at times that you sometimes don't get a chance to see how much good there is in all of us. It sometimes takes a day like Valentine's Day, but whatever the day or case may be, at least it's there and that's what's important.

There are many good, caring and loving people out there in this hectic world we live in. That is so-ooo a good thing; So very happy to be part of it.

Millie Wagner
 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. Senescent - Growing old
 2. Sepicolous - Growing in hedges
 3. Amygdaline - Resembling almonds
 4. Sitology - The study of foods, nutrition, etc.

- GUTTATE**
1. Spotted, as with drops
 2. Rotund, obese
 3. Capable of being torn apart or disunited
 4. To puncture; pierce

- SEPELITION**
1. A formation of new flesh in a wound; a cicatrix
 2. Separation; division
 3. Burial; interment
 4. A heated debate or dispute

- THILL**
1. To saturate; soak
 2. A shaft to which a horse is hitched to a wagon
 3. To mix; mingle
 4. Untidy or dirty

- DIRDUM**
1. A wartlike lump or node
 2. A fight or contest for mastery
 3. A song of lamentation; a dirge
 4. A loud outcry of blame or rebuke

More Commentary
 See page 5

Prosecutor Shows Leadership In Putting Criminals Behind Bars

Since the escape of two inmates at the Union County jail in December, County Prosecutor Ted Romankow has been turning over every stone to find out what went wrong. Under his leadership, the jail director was reassigned, pending his retirement in March, the assistant jail director was fired, and now, two correction officers and three sergeants face dismissal as a result of the December 14 escape of Otis Blunt and Jose Espinosa. The inmates were captured in Mexico City and Elizabeth, respectively, following a nearly month-long international manhunt.

Mr. Romankow, who is not in charge of the jail, showed real leadership in taking on this investigation. A top-to-bottom review of the jail was conducted. Already, razor wiring has been placed on the roof of the jail to prevent inmates from jumping over the existing barbed-wire fencing, and cameras have been installed on the exterior perimeters of the jail. Headcounts are required to ensure all inmates are in their jail cells. No checks were conducted, however, on the day of the jail escape.

We believe the actions taken by Mr. Romankow and interim jail director Gary Hilton are well justified. The county has hired Brian Riordan, a 20-year veteran New York City Corrections Department warden, as the new jail director.

Besides his efforts to enhance the jail operation, Mr. Romankow's office has regularly kept the media informed of the numerous cases his office has prosecuted. These cases include that of an Elizabeth family that bilked an 89-year-old Westfield man out of \$235,000 and a prosecutor's office/Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) raid that broke up a major cocaine and heroin operation in Elizabeth. During his nearly six years as prosecutor, Mr. Romankow has taken down the operations of 15 wholesale drug dealers.

He also helped plug the importance of his assistant prosecutors during last year's county freeholder budget talks, which likely led to a new contract to help with retention rates. The prosecutors' office is a 24/7 operation that responds to the scene of mur-

ders, rapes and other violent crimes to assist in investigations and provide comfort to the victims.

As prosecutor, Mr. Romankow is the chief law-enforcement officer for the county, with more than 200 employees reporting to him. He operates the county police academy and works closely with the 21 county municipal police departments, as well as the county police and sheriff's office.

The county prosecutor reports to the state's attorney general. Over the past few years, Peter Harvey (under Governors Jim McGreevey and Richard Codey) and Zulima Farber (Governor Jon Corzine) have held the position.

Mr. Harvey was criticized for not aggressively pursuing political corruption cases. Ms. Farber resigned after a report by a retired judge, hired by Mr. Corzine, determined she violated the state ethics code by interfering in the motor-vehicle stop of her boyfriend for driving with a suspended license.

Stuart Rabner succeeded Ms. Farber and was considered a strong attorney. He resigned nine months later to become Chief Justice of the state's Supreme Court. Current Attorney General Anne Milgram has picked up where Mr. Rabner left off. She has been fighting crime in New Jersey by working with county prosecutors and U.S. Attorney Chris Christie.

A former Berkeley Heights mayor, Mr. Romankow was appointed to the New Jersey State Bar Association in 1966 and practiced law in Westfield for years. He recently served as president of the state County Prosecutors Association.

Mr. Romankow led the efforts to educate parents of the dangers of Shaken Baby Syndrome. He also has formed taskforces on gang violence, counter terrorism and insurance fraud.

We applaud his recent reappointment for another five years by Governor Jon Corzine and the State Senate.

It is extremely encouraging to know we have such a hard-working public servant taking criminals off our streets and improving the quality of life for Union County residents.

Mr. Romankow, keep up the good work.

Westfield School Superintendent Dolan Disappointed over Cartoon

The *Westfield Leader* has a longstanding tradition of supporting and encouraging the young people in this town. High school and college students with an interest in journalism write for the newspaper each summer. Most editions of *The Leader* include a column, "The Student View," written by a current high school student. As the Superintendent of Schools for Westfield, I have always been proud of the writing of our students and graduates, and I appreciate the opportunities provided to them by *The Westfield Leader*.

My local paper is also a great supporter of our sports teams. The efforts and successes of our teams and individual student-athletes are covered enthusiastically each week. One of my favorite stories this year came from the "Devil's Den" column. The story did not focus on the football team's exploits on

the field; rather, it described how senior members of the team visited an ailing Gary Kehler to present him with the game ball from the Thanksgiving Day game. I applaud the staff of *The Westfield Leader* for acknowledging the efforts of the student-athletes.

Imagine how disappointed I was to see the cartoon in the February 14, 2008 edition of the paper. The cartoon depicted student football players and cheerleaders as being illiterate and ignorant. Our young people need encouragement for continuing to do their best as they prepare for their futures. I hope that last week's cartoon was an aberration and that the students in Westfield will be able to continue to count on *The Westfield Leader* for some of that encouragement.

Margaret Dolan, Ed.D.
 Superintendent of Westfield Schools

Dem Chair Questions if SP Council Wants to Help on Cell Tower Issues

Editor's note: This letter was sent to the Scotch Plains Township attorney, mayor and council, and copied to the newspaper.

I am writing in response to your [attorney] letter of February 12, 2008 continuing our discussion of finding language for an ordinance to help the residents of Scotch Plains in preventing cell towers from going into residential areas. It is clear that there cannot be a wholesale prohibition on such placement, but there are provisions, which can be put in an ordinance that would increase a resident's chances of being successful in opposing many towers that may be proposed.

Based on the present location of cellular antennas in and around Scotch Plains, I believe most, if not all, new ones can be prevented. A little help from the local government would make it easier for Scotch Plains residents to be successful.

Your letter raises two kinds of objections to my proposal, one kind is legal and the other relates to policy issues best left for the council. I will respond first to the legal positions and then comment on the policy ones.

You assert that "it would be a gap in coverage that determines whether a cell tower is necessary and not the distance from any existing structures." This statement, of course, does not address any legal issue, which relates to the ordinance I have proposed. The issue which the council needs to consider is whether or not this ordinance, or any other ordinance, can be passed by them, which can properly affect the outcome of a proceeding before the zoning board of adjustment with regard to the installation of a new cell tower, which will benefit the residents of Scotch Plains.

As I am sure you are aware the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (the "TCA") specifically was passed as a compromise between local zoning authority and federal interests in building a national wireless communications network. There is a specific provision in the act for the preservation of local zoning authority with regard to, among other things, the placement of cell towers. Thus, it is clear that the council can pass an ordinance regarding the placement of cell towers without violating the TCA.

The TCA did put limitations on the power of the local authority to regulate the placement of cell towers. Those limitations are also specifically spelled out in the TCA. The language I suggested would not, on its face, interfere with those limitations.

The following is a quote from the Ogden case we have been discussing and

begins on Page 8 of the copy I sent to you. [Reference omitted for brevity].

With regard to the issue of what a gap is and its significances in this discussion, I call your attention to the case of Onnipoint Communications Enterprises, L.P. v. Zoning Hearing Bd. of Easttown Twp., 331 F.3d 386, at 398 C.A.3 (Pa.), 2003, which I referred to in one of my earlier e-mails. At Page 386, the court said, "Not all gaps in a particular provider's service will involve a gap in the service available to remote users." Thus, a "gap in coverage" may determine the need of a cell tower for a cellular company, it does not determine the need of a cell tower for purposes of the TCA. For a more in-depth discussion of this issue, I refer you to the discussion in the above case that follows the above quoted sentence.

It appears to me that the remainder of your letter relates more to policy issues than it does to the law. These matters are best left to the council. This is particularly true under the present circumstances, where you have been represented by the mayor as being nonpartisan.

Since I have never asserted that I was nonpartisan, I will comment on these policy issues. First, the fact that the ordinance was "ineffective" in the Ogden case should be of no relevance to this council's consideration of enacting such an ordinance or another one. The ordinance in Ogden would prevent a tower from being constructed at the Willow Brook swim club. There is a tower six-tenths of a mile away from the Willow Grove swim club on the top of which the applicant has an antenna. That tower does not cover Willow Brook swim club because it appears the applicant intentionally left a sector antenna off of the existing tower in the direction facing the Willow Grove swim club.

You also commented that the zoning board of adjustment can consider other structures in the area in its deliberations. This is true, but it would consider it under different legal standards, and the burden of proof would be on the residents without the ordinance and on the applicant with the ordinance. This, of course, is a major difference.

The council has to decide if it wants to seriously consider helping the residents I speak of or continue to posture and reject any attempt to seriously address this issue. As I have said, I am available to work with the council and provide any input requested.

Dick Samuel
 Scotch Plains Democrat
 Committee Chairman

Letters to the Editor

'Westfield HS Athletics Is Money Well Spent; Cartoon Last Week Depicts Negative View

We were very disturbed to see the cartoon published in the February 14 edition of *The Leader* depicting school board members wondering if budget money is properly spent on high school athletics, and, more disturbingly, depicting student-athletes as not very intelligent. This negative depiction of high school athletics, and worse still, the student-athletes themselves, is particularly disturbing in that it appeared on your editorial page during the school budget process.

The messages suggested by this cartoon could not be more wrong.

The fact is, no money in the Westfield schools' budget is better spent, and yields a better return, than the money spent on the Westfield High School (WHS) athletics' programs and teams.

The WHS athletics' budget is consistently lean and frugal, funding only the bare essentials necessary to continue programs for the nearly 1,500 student-athletes participating in them. The WHS athletics' budget comprises less than 2 percent of the total budget and pays for: the 80 hard-working and dedicated coaches, staff and trainers; the basic equipment, uniforms and supplies needed for the teams; bus transportation to and from away games and competitions and rental fees for playing and practice facilities. Every penny of it is needed.

Contrary to your cartoon, our school board should be wondering how it could dedicate more of our resources to support WHS athletics - the best value in the school budget.

Most disturbing is the cartoon's negative depiction of our student-athletes themselves. The Westfield School Boosters have the great pleasure of awarding scholarships, through the generous support of the community, to deserving WHS student-athletes. In reviewing the student-athletes' scholarship applications, we are tremendously impressed by their achievements in academics, athletics, extracurricular activities and service. We wonder: which of the WHS football players is the cartoon suggesting are not very smart? Certainly not those represented by the recent scholarship winners who are now studying and playing football at universities like Johns Hopkins and Washington and Lee?

Our recent scholarship winners also include young men now studying and playing lacrosse at Harvard University and Rutgers University, swimming at Princeton University, playing basketball at Colgate University and Montclair State University, baseball at Wake Forest University, soccer at Bowdoin College, golf at Rutgers, running track at The College of William and Mary and other high-quality young men who have benefited

greatly from their participation in WHS athletics, whether they have chosen to continue participating on sports teams at the collegiate level or to apply their lessons learned from team sports to other endeavors.

We also wonder: which female student-athletes does the cartoon suggest are unable to spell? Certainly not those represented by the recent scholarship winners now studying and playing soccer and tennis at Williams College, volleyball at New York University, lacrosse at Villanova University, soccer at Marist College, softball at Tufts University and Franklin and Marshall College, tennis at Connecticut College, or any other of the many young women who have gained self-esteem and confidence from being part of WHS sports teams.

There is perhaps no better testament that money has been well spent on WHS girls' sports programs than the outstanding products of those programs who have returned as teachers and coaches of the girls' soccer, field hockey and swimming teams, serving as role models for our girls, and whose compensation for bringing their dedication back to our school district is now part of that same budget.

We wonder how anyone who attended the memorial service for legendary WHS coach Gary Kehler just a few months ago, or even just read the outpouring of gratitude from his former student-athletes in this newspaper, could publish a cartoon questioning whether budget money for WHS athletics is money properly spent. Coach Kehler, through WHS athletics, taught boys priceless lessons about their own capabilities that have guided their lives as men. That is what great coaches do, and continue to do at WHS. That is what playing team sports does - it teaches young men and women life lessons about dedication, discipline, teamwork, setting goals, dealing with successes, recovering from setbacks, and so much more. That is the legacy for which we in the Westfield community are responsible to continue to support, and for which we should be grateful.

So, to answer this thoughtless cartoon: Yes, when the Board of Education sits down to prepare the school budget for our vote, we trust they know that the money dedicated to WHS athletics is very well spent, and that our outstanding coaches, staff, trainers and student-athletes are more than worth spending it on, as an integral part of our sons' and daughters' education for life.

John Bennett
 Westfield School Boosters Assoc.

WF Resident Says 'Yellow Pages' Publishes 'Offensive' Advertising

Last week, the 2008-2009 "Union County Yellow Pages" published by Yellow Book USA arrived on my stoop. I threw the copy on the front seat of my car. I eventually picked it up and turned pages looking at the display ads. What I saw printed on pages 235 through 239 was both appalling and offensive to Asian people, women and to people in general.

Starting on page 235, you will find the heading "Escort Service." There are display ad after display ad, which feature women, over 80 percent of them Asian women, in vulgar and tasteless ads. These ads should not be published in a book that is dropped at the front door of every home and business in our community.

Here are the names of the first 10 display ads: Asian Beauty, Asian Honey, Asian Hot Babe, Asian Lover, Asian Pleasure Club, Asian Skin Club, Lace Escorts, Top Asian Beauty, NJ Party Girls and New Jersey's Lollipop Girls.

Here are some of the large type copy in the ads: Exotic and Sexy, Hotel and Residential, Discreet Billing, The Ultimate Girlfriend Experience, One-on-One, Role Play, Swing Clubs and much more.

I called the book's customer service to register a complaint and was told by their representative that "if a business gives us their money, we have to publish the ad." This statement does not pass the "smell test." Of course, a publisher can pick and choose what it prints; there are no ads for adult bookstore and strip clubs in their book.

In the 1990s, I worked for Sprint Yellow Pages and briefly for Yellow Book through an acquisition; Sprint Yellow Pages stopped selling ads to escort services over 10 years ago.

I spoke to the president of "The Local Yellow Pages," Doug Brown. His company publishes a local community yellow pages. They have never accepted display ads for escort services. They do not feel that business reflects the values of the communities they service.

I will not bring this book in my house. I would not want my 7-year-old daughter looking at it. It's time for them to refuse publishing these exploitive and demeaning ads about women.

Daniel Weiniger
 Westfield

