

Rotary's Pancake Breakfast Has Become Local Tradition

By DR. D. MICHAEL HART

WESTFIELD — The Rotary Club of Westfield and *The Westfield Leader* have a shared history of supporting the community. Walter J. Lee, *The Leader's* owner in 1921, was one of the charter members of the Rotary Club of Westfield. Current publisher Horace Corbin also has been very supportive of Rotary functions.

The Rotary Club ran many projects for boys in Westfield, including starting the Fishing Rodeo (now derby) at Mindowaskin, which is still run by the police department; supporting the Boy Scouts and starting the Little League Baseball program. The Rotary decided to have a lunch for the girls for the sake of equality.

On May 17, 1922, the girls from the senior class of Westfield High School were invited to a luncheon at the Westfield Rotary Club, at which Mabel S. Douglass was the speaker. She was the founder and the dean of the New Jersey College for Women, which later was renamed Douglass College in her honor. Ms. Douglass was so inspiring that the Rotary Club Board of Directors met immediately after the meeting and decided to start a student loan program to help worthy students — both boys and girls.

During the next six years, fundraisers were held, with the funds loaned out to those students who were deemed worthy. In 1929, Charles Philhower, superintendent of schools, was the president of the Rotary Club, which, at that time, had 38 members. He started a fund by appropriating \$200 from the general fund and asked all members to make a donation on their birthdays. A set of rules was made up to govern the distribution of scholarship loans to worthy students and was named the Scholarship Fund. The loan fund operated quite well for many years until World War II started.

After World War II, the GI Bill made it easy for returning students to get loans, so not many loans were made. In 1953, a complete review of the fund was done, and the rules were changed for the next year. Instead of loans, grants were to be given. Any student living and attending school within the Westfield club area would be eligible.

There were various fundraisers over the years, changing each year. These included a 1958 University of Penn Glee Club fundraiser project that made \$1,282 and awarded three \$400 scholarships and a 1962 Paper Mill Playhouse party that raised \$275. In 1963, the Tamburitzans singing group from Duquesne University made \$1,500 for the fund, and in 1965, the group made \$3,000 for the fund. Having a different fundraiser every year created an unpredictable income, however, and hence the scholarship committee could not plan on how many awards to give each year.

At a November board meeting in 1966, it was decided to have a Pancake Day at the high school as a fundraiser. A total of \$3,046.72 was raised. It was decided to have annual Pancake Days as fundraisers.

As past president and pancake chairman in 1999, I coordinated the restructuring of Rotary Pancake Day. We included a children's fair that brought in younger families, advertised through the newspapers and flyers and had live entertainment from the middle and high school musical groups.

Also during the annual event, free Rotary balloons are given out and cartoon characters in costume circulate through the room. Additionally, there is a bake sale, a sales table, the 50-50 raffle and advertising on placemats.

The Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, Brownies, the Rotary Interact Club, Rotary Early Act Clubs, the high school Key Club and the YMCA Young Leaders Corps were recruited to serve as volunteers for the event. In addition, the police department offers free fingerprinting ID for kids.

My efforts also led to creation of a database of 600 people, including former scholarship recipients, former Rotarians, Rotary Humanitarian Award winners and friends of Rotary, who are mailed tickets. Free tickets also were given to local churches and charitable groups in town. This greatly increased the profits of the event and boosted the number of attendees, making it truly a community event.

Since the inception of Pancake Day in 1967, the Rotary Club has awarded \$1.9 million in scholarship grants to 1,492 students.

Applications for college scholarships are being accepted at the Guidance Office of Westfield High School prior to April 1. The Rotary Club Scholarship Committee reviews the applications and interviews every applicant. Recipients are selected on the basis of three areas: 1) Financial need 2) Applicant's character, leadership and community service and 3) Academic achievement. The one-time awards are made to high school seniors living in Westfield.

Pancake Day is Saturday, March 8, from 8 a.m. to noon at Westfield High School. Tickets are \$7 at the door. The proceeds go to the Rotary Scholarship Fund. There is a children's fair with face painting, Moonwalk, miniature golf, balloons and prizes. School and community music groups will provide entertainment.

For more information on the Rotary Club of Westfield, visit the club's website at westfieldrotary.com.

Dr. Hart is a member of the board of directors of the Rotary Club of Westfield and past district governor of Rotary International District 7510.

Painful Ideas Suggested to Deal With The New Jersey Fiscal Crisis

These are comments collected by the newspaper from the public and elected officials who suggested ways to deal with the \$100 billion of debt and liabilities faced by the taxpayers of New Jersey but wished to remain anonymous. You can view the Governor's message of the crisis at goleader.com. This will air soon on local TV-34 and TV-36.

Governor must declare a "Fiscal State of Emergency."

Boards of education, counties and municipalities are ignoring the Governor in that they are not limiting their expenditures and not preventing further tax increases. These entities must prepare contingency budgets to deal with the emergency.

Include all state, county, schools, judges and local government entities in an emergency-reform initiative.

Protect all legitimate employees with total compensation of less than some par number, such as \$55,000 per year.

If layoffs are made, make them from the top down, not bottom up — particularly eliminate featherbed political jobs and those holding more than one position. Eliminate many of the unnecessary paid commissioner positions.

For all government employees (including executives and officials) above par compensation (including state, county, schools and local government), institute a pay cut per a sliding scale starting at zero for those at par and increasing gradually to 15 percent [or so] at \$175,000 [or so], continuing with the slope above that. No exclusions. Include university presidents, UMDNJ, football and basketball coaches. Institute a maximum compensation allowable in the state, such as \$400,000 [or so]. Freeze the levels until the emergency is over.

Remove all part-time employees and professionals from the benefit system. Remove ineligible, fraudulent people from the benefit system.

Eliminate people from collecting more than one government salary and compensations. This goes beyond dual-office holding, include the combination of government employees that are also elected officials.

Eliminate paid unused sick days. Pay only sick days when someone is sick. Get a doctor's note, or such verification. Sick days must not be paid vacation days.

Shift all employees of state, county, education and municipal to self-managed 401(k) plans. Make eligibility and details similar to private industry and similar to Social Security age definitions.

Consolidate the 600 or so school district teachers contracts, the 560 or so municipal contracts and 21 county contracts. Have one statewide set of contracts that is limited by the available funds allocated by the Legisla-

ture, no benefits of an undefined/unfunded nature.

As a group, require the counties, school districts and municipalities to deal with the property-tax problem and make them establish priorities based on the limited funds. In that they spend the money, they must be held directly accountable and must not operate independently of each other when dealing with the property tax.

Conduct unannounced audits throughout all levels of government and education. Streamline operations; eliminate no-shows jobs, duplication and abusive patronage.

Pay all bills fully and honestly, establish escrows and sinking funds where necessary and pay down the debt.

State government must not spend more than 90 percent [or so] of revenue and must apply the balance to debt reduction. No more unsupported borrowing. No more gimmicks. No more unfunded mandates. No more unfunded legislation. No more judicial mandates that unconstitutionally cross over into the jurisdiction of the Legislature.

Develop fairness and competitiveness in healthcare. Have employees share in the costs and have decision-making options so that efficient and fair decisions are made.

Insurance and healthcare industries in the state are a disgrace. Many elected officials and politicians own law firms and companies doing business with the state and profit from it. There are many conflicts of interest that must be eliminated.

Eliminate businesses from paying employees off-the-books. Require verified Social Security numbers for all employees and address the illegal-alien problem in business.

Prosecute businesses that hide cash and don't pay their fair share of taxes. Re-evaluate non-profits that operate for the sake of tax avoidance, yet consume public-funded resources. Eliminate abusive overtime.

Many of these difficult issues will be discussed by the Legislature over the next several months to deal with the fiscal crisis in New Jersey and to arrive at government budgets for 2009 and beyond. The Governor seeks your ideas at nj.gov/governor. Click on the "Direct Citizen" input link.

You can provide your anonymous comments to The Westfield Leader and The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times at goleader.com/feedback and you can submit your public comments to editor@goleader.com.

See More At goleader.com

'Great Decisions' Comes To Westfield Adult School

WESTFIELD — The Westfield Adult School and the Westfield Memorial Library are co-sponsoring "Great Decisions 2008" in March and April. "Great Decisions," established in 1954 by the Foreign Policy Association, is the longest-running civic-education program in the United States dedicated to foreign affairs.

Participants view PBS broadcasts and discuss global issues shaping U.S. foreign policy. Briefing books provide historical background; summaries of opinion ballots are shared with the White House, Congress, Departments of State and Defense, the press and the public.

Participants can register for the full series of eight discussions or attend any individual session. The series runs on

Wednesdays at the library, located at 550 East Broad Street, from March 5 through April 30, from 1 to 3 p.m.. This semester's subjects include Iraq End Game, European Union at 50, Talking to Our Enemies, Russia, U.S. Defense and Security Policy, Latin America, U.S.-China Trade Policy and Private Philanthropy.

For more information, or to register, visit westfieldnj.com/adultschool, call (908) 232-2942, or e-mail adultschool@westfieldnj.com. Registration is also available in person at Westfield High School, Monday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. beginning February 25.

Library Gaston Award On Tap in March

WESTFIELD — On Sunday, March 9, at 2 p.m., The Friends of the Westfield Memorial Library will present "From Shakespeare to the Sunset Boulevard: The Story of the Broadway Musical," featuring Robert Butts, conductor and lecturer. The library Community Room is located at 550 East Broad Street in Westfield.

This program precedes the 30th Gaston Award, given annually to a town member or group who have demonstrated a sincere interest in the library and helped support and further the library's activities.

This year, Jane Stepanski is the recipient. Ms. Stepanski has been on the Friends board since 1991 and has served as the annual trip chairperson, vice president and president. Recently, she also was a liaison to the Board of Trustees for the Westfield Library renovation.

In the community, Ms. Stepanski was a docent at Miller Cory, has been a fundraiser for United Way and the Westfield Symphony and is a Twig with Children's Specialized Hospital.

The public is invited.

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ATTEND A FREE SEMINAR EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DIVORCE

The Law Firm of Dughi & Hewit, P.C. is pleased to announce that Mario C. Gurrieri, Esq., Chair of its Family Law Department, Richard A. Outhwaite, Esq. and Kristin M. Capalbo, Esq. will present to the public a free seminar entitled "Everything You Need to Know about Divorce" at The Westwood in Garwood on Thursday, March 13, 2008 and Saturday, March 15, 2008. Mr. Gurrieri, who has specialized in matrimonial law for over 35 years, Mr. Outhwaite for over 17 years and Ms. Capalbo for over 4 years, will review the law, explain the legal process and answer your questions concerning separation, divorce, division of assets, domestic violence and post-divorce Court review of alimony and child support as well as the law governing civil unions.

Information will also be provided on divorce mediation, an alternative to the traditional contested proceeding. Divorce mediation offers the potential for significant savings while assuring that your rights are fully protected by avoiding the expense, stress and delay involved in Court proceedings.

If you are experiencing marital difficulties and contemplating divorce, or if you are simply curious about your rights in a separation or divorce, this Seminar will be of value to you. If you are already divorced, the Seminar may be of value in explaining post divorce rights and obligations of former spouses.
Free Personal Consultation to All Attendees.

WHERE:

The Westwood
438 North Avenue
Garwood, New Jersey 07027
908-789-0808
www.thewestwood.com

WHEN:

Thursday, March 13, 2008 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Saturday, March 15, 2008 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Reservations Required (no names needed)

Call: (908) 272-0200

Refreshments will be served

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