

The Westfield Leader THE SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD
 — Established 1890 —
 Legal Newspaper for the Town of Westfield,
 Boroughs of Mountainside and Garwood
 And the County of Union, N.J.

Members of:
 New Jersey Press Association • National Newspaper Association • Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce
 Scotch Plains Business & Professional Association • Fanwood Business & Professional Association

Periodicals - Postage Paid at Westfield, New Jersey Periodicals - Postage Paid at Scotch Plains, New Jersey
 P.O. Box 250 • 251 North Avenue, West Westfield, N.J. 07091 P. O. Box 368 Scotch Plains, N.J. 07076

Tele: (908) 232-4407 • E-mail: editor@goleader.com • Web: www.goleader.com • Fax: (908) 232-0473
 POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the offices of the newspapers at P. O. Box 250, Westfield, New Jersey 07091

Published every Thursday by Watchung Communications, Inc.

Paul Peyton ASSIGNMENT EDITOR
Suzette F. Stalker COMMUNITY
Michael Pollack EDUCATION & ARTS

Horace R. Corbin PUBLISHER
David B. Corbin ASSISTANT PUBLISHER & SPORTS
Karen M. Hinds OFFICE MANAGER
Ben Corbin SERVICES

Fred K. Lecomte MARKETING DIRECTOR
Michael L. Bartiromo MARKETING PRODUCTION
Robert P. Connelly OPERATIONS & LEGALS

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE
 One-year - \$28 • Two-year - \$52 • Three-year - \$76 • One-year college (September to May) - \$20

www.goleader.com/subscribe

Letters to the Editor

Reader Calls Westfield Planning Board's Logic 'Stunning, Appalling'

Brian Molloy, Bud Boothe, the Honorable Jack Boyle and Betty List gave superb legal, safety and historical arguments at this month's Westfield Planning Board meeting.

Without refuting any of the arguments against granting a subdivision, the board passed the application for a variance to subdivide the Wychwood gatehouse and allow a driveway onto Wychwood Road.

The board members explained their vote. One member said his third-grade teacher taught him that a point is a point, and a line is a line.

Using the logic of a third grader, he concluded that the lot came to a point, and there is no side fronting East Broad Street. He reasoned that an old deed described the Wychwood Road side of the property had curved until it came to a point at the southeast end of the property; therefore, the property is a point because a point is not a line.

He totally ignored what my fourth-grade teacher taught me: if there is a southeast point, there must be a complementary northeast point. If the property came to a point, it would be called the east point. And more importantly, he ignored the clear and precise legal explanation by Judge Boyle regarding the Broad Street side of the property and how it should be measured according to statute.

Another board member claimed to be a "strict Constitutionalist," which he claimed means people should be allowed to do whatever they want with their property, apparently despite the law, despite town statutes and despite popular opinion.

Another board member said that the safety expert called a driveway onto Wychwood Road less safe. He concluded less safe is not unsafe. Another board member couldn't reconcile the safety issue since Galloway and Scudder are unsafe. He seemed to feel an unsafe driveway fit right into the character of the neighborhood.

Another board member tried unsuccessfully to get a written promise to not tear down the gatehouse. They couldn't get "never, ever," so they asked for the next best thing: a promise to not tear down for five years.

Their logic was stunning. I was appalled by the lack of regard for the law, the safety or the public sentiment. They ran it like a court of law. In the end, they totally disregarded the law. The planning board did a great disservice to Wychwood and to the Town of Westfield.

Richard Lewis
 Westfield

Has The Meaning Of Your Vote Been Taken Away This Year?

We've been trying to figure out the point for having school board/budget elections this year in our area. Except for Mountainside, where three candidates are vying for two seats, there are no contested races. The incumbents are unopposed in Westfield and in Scotch Plains-Fanwood. Only two candidates are seeking election to three open seats in Garwood. Given the hassle, we can understand why so few candidates come forth.

Perhaps even more perplexing, the new "Super-Superintendent," Carmen Centuolo, has expanded responsibilities as designated by Governor Jon Corzine. She has been charged to reject, modify and approve all school budgets in Union County. This is causing a tizzy with school boards accustomed to proceeding with independence.

The "Super-Super" has modified (reduced) each of the districts' proposed budgets not to exceed a 4-percent property tax increase in each case. In government language, this is a budget cut, although spending and taxes are actually to be increased. Perhaps, that's the reason for the "Super-Super."

The 4-percent increase limit also insures that there will never be a reduction in property taxes. For if a town or school board found a way to reduce the increase, say by actually lowering expenditures, that entity would be penalized the following year. Effectively, the rule, as written, insures that there will never be a reduction, even if a town or school board could do so.

If town residents now vote on a budget as determined by the "Super-Super," are they voting to approve it, to disapprove in order to lower it, or disapprove it in order to raise it? Upon a budget rejection, the law says the town council shall decide the budget. In the past, the council could raise, lower or leave the budget "as is."

What about this year? Could the council alter a budget already determined by the "Super-Super?"

This leads to our final question on the matter. Why have a budget election this year? As best as we could estimate, with input from town clerk Claire Gray and Dennis Kobitz from the County Board of Elections, the school board election in Westfield will cost about \$60,000 (our guess). Ballots are printed at \$10,000. Ballots are mailed, voting machines installed, poll workers paid, clerks tally results and many other soft costs exist.

Last year, 3,000 people voted in the Westfield school board election out of 19,000 registered. Turnout has been dismal. The turnouts in Fanwood, Scotch Plains, Garwood, Mountainside and elsewhere are similar.

A \$60,000 expense for the Westfield election equates to about \$20 per vote. Perhaps instead, each man, woman and child could have their property tax reduced by \$2 this year by not having the election.

In the past, we have always urged everyone to get out and vote. Has the meaning of your vote been taken away this year?

Governor, There is No Waste In MS; Borough's Effort To Have Workers Pay More in Health Care Was Rejected

My name is Robert F. Vigilanti. I have been the mayor of the Borough of Mountainside, Union County, for the past 20 years. I have been a member of the governing body for 30 years. I, and all members of the Mountainside Council, are volunteers. We do not receive health care and are not in the state pension system.

As you know, having lived in Summit, Mountainside is a community of less than 10,000 residents.

What you may not know is that Mountainside has always had a very low tax rate. In fact, we are proud to have the lowest effective tax rate in all of Union County and one of the lowest in the state. We also have the second highest property values in the county. In the latest issue of *New Jersey Magazine*, Mountainside was rated as the number one community in Union County and 16th in the state as one of the best communities in New Jersey in which to live.

For years, Mountainside has shared services with other communities and the county. We presently share our board of health, welfare director, tax assessor, borough engineer, 911 medical dispatchers and all of our inspectors. We also have a part-time tax collector, a part-time administrator, and volunteer fire department and rescue squad. Mountainside also participates in a high school send-receive relationship with Berkeley Heights.

Governor, there is no waste in our community, and it is an insult to my community for you or Trenton to suggest that there is. In a recent speech, you

mentioned that one way that communities, such as Mountainside, could save tax dollars is through tougher negotiated contracts with our employees. Governor, this was not possible. As a borough, we entered into negotiations with a union offering a fair contract based on the CPI and the cost-of-living rates. We offered the employees a 3 percent per year increase for three years.

They rejected the offer and filed for mediation and arbitration. The State of New Jersey appointed an arbitrator that granted the union a 4-plus percent award per year for four years and refused to mandate that the same union contribute to their health care cost at the same level as the private sector. Thus, how do we save by "tougher negotiated contracts?"

Trenton's reluctance to increase the public retirement age, mandate increases in contributions for health care and to stop multiple pensions are a greater waste of tax dollars than anything else.

Governor, with all due respect your plan of stopping aid to the small communities is, in my opinion, Trenton's way of having the younger brother, the small communities, pay for the sins of the older brother. The small communities did not cause Trenton's financial problems. The small towns are not a drain on the state's budget. So why are all of the small towns being punished? You must look at each town individually on a "case by case" basis.

Why are you not including some of the large cities that receive the lion's share of state aid? It is in these cities that you are likely to find the greatest waste of tax

dollars. Why not look to the larger cities where some of their officials were found guilty of fraud? Why are you not looking at the larger cities that for decades have received massive state assistance and have nothing to show for it other than negative results?

Governor, please listen to the mayors of New Jersey, especially those from small communities with populations under 10,000 residents. They can tell you what the New Jersey residents really feel.

Sir, you presently have the opportunity to start the state on the right path to recovery. New taxes, new loans, toll increases and the consolidation of all small communities are surely not the answers. Reducing state costs and waste, finding and prosecuting non tax-paying workers and businesses, mandating public employees to pay their fair share of health care, mandating retirement at age 65, stopping all elected officials and public employees from being enrolled in multiple pension programs and eliminating unnecessary agencies would be a much better path to begin on.

Governor, if you begin on the right path, this would not only ensure you a second term, but you could be known as one of the best Governors in the history of New Jersey. If you fail to correct the problems facing New Jersey, or insist on the consolidation of every small town, you will still go down in New Jersey's history, but for different reasons.

Governor, if I may be of assistance I would be available at your convenience.

Robert Vigilanti
 Mayor of Mountainside

Glover Says Marks' Effort to 'Make Him Irrelevant' on Council 'Will Fail'

While Mayor Marks most likely will continue, as he has done several times since I began my term in office, to try to push my seat and position on the Scotch Plains Township Council to irrelevancy, let me assure him once again that he will fail in this effort.

I will not allow his unconscionable and rude behavior and antics to go unanswered. Let me make this simple for Mayor Marks to understand. I will continue to faithfully represent our citizens' demands for an open, fair and fiscally responsible government, as well as their calls for better stewardship of our township's infrastructure, and resist his efforts to marginalize our citizens' voices.

The mayor and the Republican-led council members defend the status quo by attacking anyone that suggests having an open dialogue about our township's budget with its citizens.

Once again, they are unwilling to make the proposed budget easily accessible and available to the public, and are dismissive of the potential value of citizen input because they believe the public is not capable of understanding a municipal budget.

I have asked for the proposed budget to be posted on the town's website. There has been no response. What don't they want you to see? After all, it's the taxpayers' money.

Regarding a much-debated issue, the potential use of the township's reserves to help us get through what will be a difficult budget year, I'm perplexed by Councilwoman Coronato's passionate plea not

to dip into our reserves during these difficult times.

She voted, in the past, to push these reserves to their lowest level in over a decade. I'll share with you that she and the mayor did this solely for political purposes and not because our community was confronted with a slowing economy.

Need I remind those who were living here at the time that they followed this fiscally irresponsible stunt shortly thereafter, by voting a tax increase of approximately 18 points, the largest in our township's history.

Councilwoman Coronato has stated that building the township's very own \$500,000 mini-golf course was in response to the public's call to the council to come up with innovative new sources of revenue. The mini-golf course, which is falling significantly short of its originally anticipated revenues, is simply an example of her poor economic judgment.

I have spoken to many of our citizens regarding this uncertain difficult economic period and the hard choices they and their families are confronted with, and the decisions they have had to make, affecting everything from healthcare to their children's college choices.

Many of these families are making tough decisions related to their individual finances. Without exception, they have shared with me that they expect the same of their municipal government.

Kevin Glover
 Councilman
 Scotch Plains

Glover, Samuel Should Try to Be Civil, 'Instead of Complaining'

As a 19-year-old student of the Catholic University of America and a lifetime member of Scotch Plains, it is very disappointing to see many of the views expressed nowadays, both by Scotch Plains and Fanwood Residents and Americans as a whole.

Everyone is so quick to criticize without looking at all the facts. They make outrageous statements without backing anything up.

I'm going to try and keep this brief and to the point, while also trying to hit as many issues as possible.

First, the Iraq War. Let's keep in mind that the troop surge is going well, that no war has ever done anything but help the economy (despite the expression in last week's paper that this war is doing the

opposite) and that most wars are not over in a day (or even a year).

Let's also remember that the majority of troops support the war and our current President, and do not want to pull out at any point other than the point when we're truly finished.

As for Councilman Glover and Mr. Samuel, I would love to see you try, for just a month or two, having a civil argument instead of complaining and criticizing on an almost weekly basis.

Let's also try not to believe everything the media tells us - the news is there to sell, not to tell the truth. I hate to be critical myself, but it is so very frustrating to see what this nation is coming to.

Sean Gaynor
 Scotch Plains

SP Council Took \$500,000 From Your Pockets and Put it in Town's Account

Last year, the majority on the council, over Kevin Glover's objection, insisted on a 5-point (just shy of \$500,000) increase in the municipal portion of your tax bill. Based on their extensive experience and expertise, they claimed they knew that 2007 would be a very bad year for tax collections, and costs would sky rocket. In fact, they said perhaps the increase should have been more. Mr. Glover, on the other hand, wanted to remove three points from the increase, leaving only a 2-point increase.

As it turned out, we could have had only the 2-point tax increase Mr. Glover proposed with no dire consequences. Tax collections in 2007 were, in fact, as good as in the past. The surplus in our capital account increased by \$100,000. This was appropriated by the majority and was part of their 5-point tax increase. The capital surplus (different from the prior surplus) increased by \$300,000. The surplus in our current fund increased by \$75,000, and the surplus in the recreation reserve increased by \$70,000. This is a total increase in these accounts of \$545,000, \$45,000 more than last year's tax increase. The fact is they took \$500,000 out of your pockets to put in the town's bank account. Yes, it was only \$122 for the average household in Scotch Plains, but wouldn't it have been better in your account?

This year, the members of the majority are ridiculing Mr. Glover for proposing as a goal to have a 0-point tax increase instead of joining him in this goal. Mr. Glover and his advisors have been working to develop and propose a comprehensive long-term fiscal plan for our Scotch Plains budgeting, which will help us weather the rocky economic road ahead. Let us all work with them to find a flashlight rather than complain about the darkness.

On another matter, I thank the editor for inviting me to clarify an error in last week's *Times* that discussed that week's Scotch Plains Township Council meeting. In the article, the category in which Councilman Glover proposed an increase in anticipated revenue to lower our taxes for last year was misstated. As a result, the conclusion was drawn that his suggestion was proven wrong. Nothing could be

further from the truth.

Mr. Glover said that the receipts from delinquent taxes would be \$874,000, so that the budget should anticipate \$800,000 for that category and not the \$600,000 that the 4-1 majority voted for. As it turns out, the receipts from delinquent taxes was \$874,000, as Mr. Glover predicted. This is not to suggest that Mr. Glover is clairvoyant. He is just diligent in fulfilling his duties as a councilman.

If the experienced members of the council were as diligent as Mr. Glover, they would have known what the number would be from their much-heralded years of experience. What is more surprising is that the manager brushed Mr. Glover's proposal aside by saying the collections in that category had never been that high. Maybe the experienced members of the council should be more respectful of Mr. Glover's suggestions this year. You can pull rank and claim experience one time, but if this experience leads to an incorrect result, deference to that experience is not any longer called for.

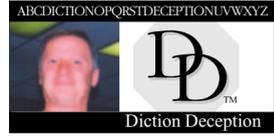
Dick Samuel
 Scotch Plains

Parents Should Stay on Sidelines at Egg Hunt

I was shocked and appalled at the behavior of some parents at last Saturday's Easter egg hunt, held at Mindowaskin Park. What I thought would be wholesome fun for my 3-year-old turned out to be a scrum of highly competitive parents shoving their way in, so their own kids could stuff their baskets full.

Meanwhile, less aggressive kids got nothing. One would have thought the plastic eggs were filled with scholarships for Ivy League schools, instead of coupons for chocolate bunnies and treats. The Lions Club, which does a fine job sponsoring and organizing the event, should require that parents watch from the sidelines for future Easter egg hunts, not actively participate in something that is clearly meant just for very young children.

Stephen Sautner
 Cranford



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. Brummagem - Anything cheap and gaudy, such as imitation jewelry
2. Vafrouis - Crafty or cunning
3. Diaphanous - Transparent or translucent
4. Bawbee - A half penny or small coin

CACHINNATE

1. To annoy, torment or delay
2. To infuriate
3. To shackle, to chain
4. To laugh loudly or too much

SCORPER

1. A jeweler's gouging tool used for engraving metal
2. A homeless person; a beggar
3. A lecher or lewd person
4. An expert on social behavior among ethnic groups

VOGIE

1. In the know; up to date
2. Cheerful; merry
3. Mischievous; devilish
4. Fussy

VITRIC

1. Bubbling over with enthusiasm
2. Potted or pitted
3. Enraged; on the verge of insanity
4. Having the nature of glass

See More Letters on Pages 5 and 18

Letters to the Editor

Poll Workers May be Problem, Not Machines

I've worked the polls in Union County for a number of elections, and I am not at all concerned about the voting machines. However, I have always been amazed that the system of hiring poll workers is so dysfunctional. Given what I know about the people running Union County this past decade, I have to wonder if this is orchestrated by the power brokers.

It certainly worked in their favor in Elizabeth in 2006. When a contentious Primary Election didn't go their way, and the only independent Democrat on the city council won re-election, they had the money to challenge it in court. If you look close enough at any election, you will find poll worker errors. In this case, poll workers allowed 40 registered Republicans to vote Democratic. A judge threw out the election results and ordered a second primary, and the machine won that one.

I get my conspiracy theory from the fact that every county will tell you it is hard to find enough people to work the polls. Yet, I don't see enough of an effort on Union County's part to hire poll workers, and on any given election in places like Elizabeth, you will see county city workers being used as challengers alongside poll workers and as campaign workers handing out literature outside of the polls.

With such a shortage of poll workers, why doesn't the Democratic machine encourage these employees to be poll workers instead? Union County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi is an educated and professional woman, yet when she raised alarms about voting machines recently, however, justified as her concerns may be, the fact that she chooses to ignore the process by which poll workers are hired to work these machines makes her motive's suspect to me. Why didn't she demand an overhaul of the system that hires poll workers after the Elizabeth fiasco when she called the special election "unprecedented (in Union County) from my historical knowledge."

The re-do election required the services of 103 poll workers and cost taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars. Ditto for State Senator Nicholas Scutari, who plans to introduce legislation to create a Voting Machine Integrity Unit within the state Division of Gaming Enforcement to thoroughly test and certify all new voting technologies before they are implemented. Sequoia already submits their machines to a federal certification process.

Yet Mr. Scutari isn't embarrassed that a poll worker who operates the voting machines could be hired by simply providing his or her name and Social Security number. The gaming workers who are in charge of the slot machines are required to have a license issued by a regulatory agency, such as a state casino control board or commission. Applicants for a license must provide photo identification. Poll workers are never looked at face to face or interviewed, and do not have to submit work experience or references. We have a far more thorough approach to ensuring the fidelity of our fast food workers.

When Sequoia voting machines showed a discrepancy in the last primary election, the company maintained the errors were caused by poll workers who inadvertently pressed buttons on the control panels. The poll worker then has to push a button that sets the machine for either party. Yet, time and again, it is found that poll workers have a difficult time performing this task.

I can tell you from experience, the person manning the machine is usually determined early on in the day. It will be the person least capable of signing voters into the book, which simply requires knowledge of the alphabet.

People are focusing on the wrong machines. Sequoia may have quirks, and perhaps a certain amount of human error will just have to be dealt with as needed, but it's an embarrassment that no one in New Jersey has the political will power to address the fact that it is more likely that the election process is being compromised by man-made political machines.

Tina Renna
 Cranford



Your State Legislators

<p>---LD-21---</p> <p>Sen. Thomas Kean, Jr. (R) 203 Elm Street Westfield, NJ 07090 (908)-232-3673</p> <p>Asm. Jon Brammick (R) 251 North Ave. West Westfield, NJ 07090 (908)-232-2073</p> <p>Asm. Eric Munoz (R) 57 Union Place, Suite 310 Summit, NJ 07901 (908)-918-0414</p>	<p>---LD-22---</p> <p>Sen. Nicholas Scutari (D) 1514 E. Saint Georges Ave. Linden, NJ 07036 (908)-587-0404</p> <p>Asw. Linda Stender (D) 1801 East Second St. Scotch Plains, NJ 07076 (908)-668-1900</p> <p>Asm. Jerry Green (D) 17 Watchung Ave. Plainfield, NJ 07060 (908)-561-5757</p>	<p>LD-21 includes Westfield, Mountainside, Garwood, Summit and Cranford.</p> <p>LD-22 includes Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Plainfield, Clark and Linden.</p> <p>E-mails</p> <p>senkean@njleg.org senscutari@njleg.org asmbammick@njleg.org asmunoz@njleg.org aswstender@njleg.org asmgreen@njleg.org</p>
---	--	--