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Letters to the Editor
**Thankfully, Youth Services Area
 Endures Great Deal of Wear And Tear**
 On behalf of the Westfield Library Board of Trustees (WLT), I am writing to thank the Westfield Memorial Library Foundation for providing funds to re-upholster chairs in the youth services area of our town library. The library hosts more than 350 youth programs and circulates 160,000 children's titles annually. Not surprisingly, furniture in the youth services area endures a great deal of wear and tear. Replacing the worn chairs has been on the library's wish list for a few years but was stalled by budgetary constraints. A contribution from the Foundation in January allowed the library to have the chairs re-finished. They look like new and are ready to be enjoyed by a new generation of emerging readers.
 For those who are unfamiliar with the Westfield Library Foundation, it is a charitable organization established by Roger Sullivan and others who recognized the need for a long-term endowment to support improvement projects at the library. The Foundation's focus on physical improvements distinguishes it from the Friends of the Westfield Memorial Library, which sponsors day-to-day library programming and operations (including the popular Museum Pass program and Anne Hale speaker series). The Foundation accomplishes its goal by overseeing an endowment fund that is specifically dedicated to library improvements. It is supported by contributions from local individuals and corporations, fundraising events and capital campaigns. The Foundation uses these contributions to assist large-scale capital projects, fill deficiencies in the library's annual maintenance budget and fund special services that may otherwise exceed the library's financial capabilities. The newly re-finished chairs are an example how the Foundation can impact the library and contribute to a positive experience for our patrons.
 Although the library is well-funded, it is not immune to the budgetary contractions that have affected all municipal departments in recent years. However, the generous support of organizations like the Library Foundation and the Friends of the Library, has allowed the library to maintain high quality facilities, provide excellent service and function as an important educational and cultural resource for our community. Once again, the Board would like to thank the Foundation for their contribution and for their ongoing efforts to support the library. We encourage everyone to visit the Foundation's website (www.wmlfoundation.org) to learn more about its activities and consider involvement in this terrific organization.
Michael Fisher
 Finance Committee, WLT
 Westfield

ABCDIJKLMNOPQRSTUDEFINITIONVWXYZ

Diction Deception
 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. Daddock - The rotten heart or body of a tree
 2. Vagissate - To romp or frisk
 3. Abacinate - To blind by placing a red-hot copper basin close to the eyes
 4. Meretricious - Having the characteristics of a prostitute
DAEDALIAN
 1. A rough or coarse cover for a bed
 2. Ingenious or intricate
 3. A guardian spirit
 4. Pertaining to the Babylonian god of the earth
USTULATE
 1. Discolored or blackened as if by burning
 2. Having a beard, as with the bearded seal
 3. Of little or no value; worthless
 4. Versatile; competent
CUCKQUEAN
 1. Having the shape or resembling a hood
 2. A woman whose husband has committed adultery
 3. A lunatic; a depraved individual
 4. A meal table philosopher
SKILDER
 1. To burn with hot water; scald
 2. To live by begging or stealing
 3. To skin or scale, as with fish
 4. To wade in water

WPD, Others Deserve Credit for Their Handling of Houston Burial

The eyes of the nation descended on Westfield two weeks ago as singer Whitney Houston was laid to rest next to her father, John Russell Houston, Jr., at Fairview Cemetery. After national and local broadcast coverage of the burial on February 19, and the initial crowds coming to the gravesite the following day, it appears that the disruption to area residents has all but ended.
 In our view, the Houston burial was handled gracefully by her family and professionally by the Westfield, Cranford, Newark and Union County Police Departments as well as the Union County Emergency Response Team. They provided her family and friends the private gravesite ceremony they deserved while keeping the peace in Westfield with little disruptions. To date, there have not been any incidents of trouble at the cemetery.

Fairview had to close the cemetery on February 20 after a heavy volume of visitors descended on the cemetery, but since then, all has been quiet as off-duty WPD officers have been stationed at the entrance to the cemetery and near the gravesite to stop Houston grave gawkers.
 Hopefully, Fairview won't need the extra protection in the coming weeks and months as Mother's Day, Memorial Day and Father's Day approach, traditional times when families visit the graves of love ones. Also, the Westfield Memorial Day Parade holds its service for deceased veterans with the playing of Taps at Fairview.
 Now that the burial is past, we expect Westfield will get back to normal life that has made this town such a great place to live -- and Whitney Houston can rest in eternal peace.

No Snow This Year? Escaping the Wrath of Old Man Winter

No snow days? No snow plows or snow shovels? No snow, for that matter? Shorts and tee shirts in January? Perennials poking through the dirt already? We don't want to jinx things but it's beginning to look as if our barely-there "winter" of 2012 is pretty much over, no matter what the groundhog may have foretold on February 2.
 Other than a slushy inch or so of snow on January 21 -- and that freak mini-blizzard back on Halloween weekend -- there has been little evidence of the winter season these past two months. Besides the dearth of snow, temperatures have been mild enough with record highs set several times in January and February. The state's official climatologist says this winter will likely be the third or fourth mildest in New Jersey since detailed records began to be kept in 1895.
 And after the bruising winter a year ago, which featured more than five feet worth of snow between the post-Christmas blizzard and the end of February, we won't complain about a mild winter and the relief it brought to us as we drove and strolled around town. Stores were sold out of heavy-duty snow blowers last year that now sit dormant in our garages. Anyone with a creaky back is thankful for not having to endure snow shoveling this year.
 The unseasonable and snowless winter also brought relief to local, county and state governments' snow-removal budgets. All of the money set aside in advance of the winter season for:

snowplowing, road salting, overtime expenses, fuel and maintenance for public works trucks, front-end loaders and other equipment, costs related to the hiring of outside contractors to assist in big snow-clearing efforts, and other related winter expenses now sits essentially unspent in government coffers.
 We understand government budgets are squeezed in all areas. Whatever portion of those unused dollars that can be used to offset expenses in the coming year would be a welcome move, but why not use some of those unspent dollars on something that would benefit everyone? We're thinking specifically of road repair, resurfacing and maintenance. Despite the lack of significant precipitation and icy weather this winter, many roads in our area are still in great need of attention -- be it local streets, county roads or state highways. There are still potholes and widening seams that need filling, crumbling pavements that need a makeover and decayed curbing that should be replaced. There are some storm drains that need shoring up before they collapse into the ground.
 We're sure local officials understand this. Prudent use of these unexpended winter season funds on refurbishment of streets and roads would benefit everyone. And it would give us a leg up on potential damage to roads next winter, when we might not escape the wrath of Old Man Winter as easily as we did this year.

Westfielder Expresses His View And Solution to Traffic Light Controversy
 As a resident of the Third Ward, and more importantly as a Westfielder, I would like to express my view on the pedestrian traffic light on Central Avenue.
 First of all, I am glad to see pretty much universal agreement on one point, namely that the present light is an improvement over no light at all. Pedestrian crossings, especially by youngsters, in the area of Central and Clover were always a hazard. They are now less so.
 In order for me to support a change in the location of the light, say to the corner of Central and Clover, I would require very firm evidence (not mere conjecture) that moving the light, in some form, to the corner would actually make it safer for pedestrians, especially children and teens. In my mind, there can be no other criterion.
 Those who think that a corner light would be "just as safe" should recognize that many citizens, as sincere and as concerned about life in Westfield as they are, disagree. Can they not give some weight in their thinking to these other opinions? Is everyone who disagrees with them wrong? I myself try to respect everyone's views, but I personally think the light at the corner would be less safe, and in any case, "just as safe" doesn't do it for me.
 I have dealt with "research" reports of all kinds my whole life, and find that the Pennoni report is one of the poorest I have ever seen. It is filled with unsubstantiated opinions. Most importantly, their conclusion is completely confounded. They recommend replacing the current mid-block HAWK signal with a "standard" signal installation without defining what a standard signal is. They then propose a subsequent study to define exactly what that "standard" signal should be. Talk about putting the cart before the horse.
 Having stated my position on a change, I also want to express sympathy for Ms. Enculescu because of the positioning of the light in front of her driveway. She alone should not be forced to bear the burden of this improvement in traffic safety. I feel that many, if not all, of the residents of Westfield have benefited from the light and Ms. Enculescu should not "pay" for it in full. To me the solution is simple -- reduce real estate taxes on that property, or even eliminate them -- permanently. Because property taxes are then spread over a smaller base, everyone's taxes goes up, albeit a few pennies. Ms. Enculescu not only would save tax payments, but the value of her house, as a property with lower or no taxes, is increased if and when she chooses to sell it. Please don't tell me that this would set a bad precedent. God willing, we won't ever have this kind of situation arise again.
Gerald Glasser
 Westfield

Reader Disappointed in Reps. Vote, Christie Veto of Same-Sex Legislation

I am disappointed in all of our elected leadership -- Mr. Jon Bramnick, Mrs. Nancy Munoz, and Mr. Thomas Kean, Jr. -- and their decision to vote against the same-sex marriage bill and in Governor Christie's decision to veto it. I have always been for same-sex marriage because not allowing a human being equal rights is, well, screwed up.
 I realize now that before I got married six months ago, I didn't fully understand marriage at all. And therefore, I didn't understand the fundamental issue of same-sex marriages.
 Before, I thought same-sex marriage really just came down to church squeamishness, tax breaks and being able to sit by your partner's hospital deathbed. Because, after all, gay people can still live together. They can still be partners. They can still share a housecat and a dish set and a bed. Marriage is just a word with some perks.
 But what I have since learned through my own marriage is that marriage is actually much more. Someone asked me recently if being married is different. Because before I was married my husband, then my boyfriend, and I had been living together for years. Sharing a housecat, a dish set, and a bed.
 I told my friend what I was surprised to learn myself. That something invisible, but all encompassing happens when you get married. That you suddenly feel secure. It reminds me of when I was a child and I would come home from school at the end of the day. And home (in Westfield) was my whole life. And I dealt with the outside world but that home was my center, it was my safety and my comfort and my happiness and it made me stronger. Marriage is like finding your home again.
 This is the invisible difference that I discovered happens, somehow, when you and the world have announced and accepted that you and your partner are married.
 The idea that someone wouldn't want this for a human being -- that someone would have doubts about this, that they would try and stop this, is just heart breaking to me. And the idea that anyone has the right to vote on these rights for someone else is even more so.
Mary Lorraine Snauffer
 New York City

Letters to the Editor

Valentine's Day With a Veteran; Thank You To All in Scotch Plains

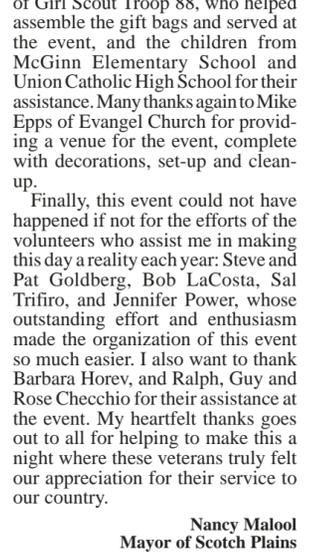
The 4th annual Valentine's Day with a Veteran, held on February 10th, was enjoyed by almost 50 veterans in attendance. The night would not have been possible without the generosity and cooperation of so many, and I want to take this opportunity to thank all involved.
 The veterans dined on delicious food donated and prepared by the following businesses: Apple Blossom Flower Shop, Dairy Queen (Plainfield), Flannery's Pub (Fanwood), Hung's Shanghai Restaurant, John's Meat Market, Maria's Restaurant, Nunzio's Pizzeria, Popeye's, Portusa BBQ House (Plainfield), Scotchwood Diner, Snuffy's Pantagio Renaissance, Stage House Restaurant, and Swiss Pastry Shoppe.
 Bags filled with health and beauty aids and exciting raffle prizes made the veterans' night and were provided through the funding from Wakefern Food Corporation, Scotch Plains VFW Post 10122, Scotch Plains American Legion Post 209, and Scotch Plains Sons of the American Legion, Squadron 209.
 Special thanks to the veterans from Scotch Plains who attended once again to show their support, including Joe McCourt, Alex DiPace and Don Wussler. I appreciate the efforts of Girl Scout Troop 88, who helped assemble the gift bags and served at the event, and the children from McGinn Elementary School and Union Catholic High School for their assistance. Many thanks again to Mike Epps of Evangel Church for providing a venue for the event, complete with decorations, set-up and clean-up.
 Finally, this event could not have happened if not for the efforts of the volunteers who assist me in making this day a reality each year: Steve and Pat Goldberg, Bob LaCosta, Sal Trifiro, and Jennifer Power, whose outstanding effort and enthusiasm made the organization of this event so much easier. I also want to thank Barbara Horev, and Ralph, Guy and Rose Checchio for their assistance at the event. My heartfelt thanks goes out to all for helping to make this a night where these veterans truly felt our appreciation for their service to our country.
Nancy Malool
 Mayor of Scotch Plains



Mountainside Resident Comments on National Political Discourse 2012

In response to Mr. Corbin's plea for increased civility at meetings of the Westfield Council, I wrote to *The Leader* on February 23 commenting on the utter disrespect public officials display toward each other. A prime example of this was evident Sunday when [Maryland] Governor Martin O'Malley mentioned on "Face the Nation" that bond ratings agencies Fitch and Standard & Poor's had criticized Governor Christie's recent budget. The latter, in his inimitable graceless manner, responded that Governor O'Malley "is really not worthy of replying to," and that O'Malley is "not that smart and he's not that good..."
 O'Malley, of course, responded in kind. What began as a political discussion on the merits of Governor Christie's budget by Governor O'Malley devolved into a personal attack by Governor Chrisite on O'Malley's intelligence. Has Governor Christie administered an I.Q. test to Governor O'Malley or did he just not have any cogent arguments to counter the Maryland Governor's comments? Thus the nature of political discourse in 2012.
Bill Gottdenker
 Mountainside

HAD NO GAS PROBLEM IN '27, JUST TOO MUCH MANURE



Your State Legislators

<p>---LD-21---</p> Sen. Thomas Kean, Jr. (R) 425 North Ave. E. Westfield, N.J. 07090 (908) 232-3673 Asm. Jon Bramnick (R) 251 North Ave. West Westfield, N.J. 07090 (908) 232-2073 Asm. Nancy Munoz (R) 57 Union Place, Suite 310 Summit, N.J. 07901 (908) 918-0414	<p>---LD-22---</p> Sen. Nicholas Scutari (D) 1514 E. Saint Georges Ave. Linden, N.J. 07036 (908) 587-0404 Asw. Linda Stender (D) 1801 East Second St. Scotch Plains, N.J. 07076 (908) 668-1900 Asm. Jerry Green (D) 17 Watchung Ave. Plainfield, N.J. 07060 (908) 561-5757	<p>LD-21 includes Westfield, Mountainside, Garwood, Summit and Cranford. LD-22 includes Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Plainfield, Clark and Linden.</p> <p>E-mail senkean@njleg.org sescutari@njleg.org asmbarnick@njleg.org aswmunoz@njleg.org aswstender@njleg.org asmgreen@njleg.org</p> <p>7th Congressional District Representative Leonard Lance, 425 North Avenue E., Westfield, NJ 07090 (908) 518-7733</p>
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