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Paul Peyton, ASSIGNMENT EDITOR
Suzette F. Stalker, COMMUNITY
Betsey Burgdorf, EDUCATION & ARTS

Horace R. Corbin, PUBLISHER
David B. Corbin, ASSISTANT PUBLISHER & SPORTS
Ben Corbin, SERVICES

Jeff Gruman, SALES MANAGER
Michael L. Bartiromo, MARKETING PRODUCTION
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Anthony Parenti Always Did What Was Best for Fanwood

After many years of service to Fanwood and the county and state, Anthony Parenti last month retired after six years as a borough councilman. When added up, Mr. Parenti served over 61 years with organizations at the municipal, state and national level.

Mr. Parenti served 22 years as the borough's police chief. He began his law enforcement career with the Plainfield Police Department in 1956 and after one year he left to become a member of the Fanwood Police Department where he served for 40 years, working his way up the ranks to become chief in 1975. He headed the department until his retirement in 1998. Prior to becoming chief, Mr. Parenti founded the New Jersey Police Traffic Officers Association in 1974.

If that was not enough, he was elected to 31 consecutive terms as president of the New Jersey Police Traffic Officers Association and served terms as president of the Union County Police Chiefs Association, New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police, the Middlesex County American Italian Civic League and the Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association of New Jersey (SBOANJ), where he served 21 years on the Board of Directors and 14 years as SBOANJ president.

After retiring as Fanwood police chief, Mr. Parenti became director of the John H. Stamler Police Academy in Scotch Plains, serving in that role until 2007. During his years of service he also served as a volunteer member of the Fanwood Fire Department and Rescue Squad and volunteered on the Union County Local Advisory Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse and on the Governor's Highway Safety Policy Advisory Council.

During his council tenure, Mr. Parenti worked on one of the largest reductions in the Fanwood municipal budget resulting in one of lowest tax increases for Fanwoodians and worked to improve street lighting and clear up traffic congestion in the borough's central business district. A veteran of the Korean War, he helped make the replacement of the street signs honoring our deceased war veterans a reality. Throughout his years as a councilman, he used his expertise as a member of the council's Public Safety Committee. He also chaired the Administration and Finance Committee. He also served on the Public Works Committee and the Health And Senior Services Committee.

Councilman Parenti always made his decisions on council based on what was good for Fanwood. It was never about politics for him.

We need more public servants like him in the future. We wish Mr. Parenti a happy retirement.

Boxer Set Standard as NJ's First Independent State Comptroller

Cleaning up corruption and dishonesty in government has been the mantra the past six years by New Jersey State Comptroller Matt Boxer, who is leaving office for the private sector later this month.

Mr. Boxer became the state's first independent comptroller when he was sworn into office on January 18, 2008. The mandate for the Office of the Comptroller (OSC) included "monitoring contracting procedures used by state and local governments, reviewing the performance of government programs, and conducting and overseeing financial audits of government entities."

Since that date, Mr. Boxer and his office have shined the light on a number issues during his tenure. Just this week state lawmakers passed a bill based on OSC's reports that found that some 7,600 inmates in state and county jails had been receiving unemployment benefits to the tune of $10 million with another $14 million paid in other state benefits. The bill now awaits Governor Chris Christie's signature.

Also, the comptroller's office on January 2nd filed a $2.7-million claim against a group of health care facilities in Neptune and Lawrenceville alleging that they submitted thousands of improper Medicaid reimbursement claims in order to obtain compensation to which they were not entitled.

There also was last year's free school lunch scandal which Mr. Boxer followed up on following the arrest of Elizabeth Board of Education officials, including the board president. Like in Elizabeth, the comptroller found another 15 school districts throughout the state had officials or employees who had lied about their family income in order to receive free lunches for their children from the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), a federally-subsidized meal program designed to assist low-income families by providing low-cost or free lunches to eligible school children.

Following Superstorm Sandy in 2013, Mr. Boxer and his office created a website designed to allow the public to track state contracts and expenditures involving federal Sandy-related funding. His office later found $300,000 in overcharges to towns by companies for the transportation of Sandy-related debris.

In 2012 the OSC was able to return over $100 million in improperly paid Medicaid funds to the state and federal budgets. In a press release issued at the time Mr. Boxer said, "Our mission as an office has always been to stand up for the taxpayers of New Jersey and deliver results on their behalf. There is no more direct way to meet our mission than to identify wasted taxpayer dollars and then take action to recoup those dollars for the public."

In a May 2012 report on the compensation paid to New Jersey community college presidents, OSC discovered that Union County College paid more than $150,000 to its then president Thomas Brown's retirement fund during 2010, an amount Mr. Boxer said was 14 times the required contribution. When Mr. Brown retired in December 2010, he received a separate $1 million lump sum retirement distribution that had been funded by the college over a period of years.

We have only touched on a few of Mr. Boxer's many reports. He has also looked at the operations of independent authorities and Rutgers University policy of issuing contracts.

Marc Larkins, chief executive officer of the New Jersey Schools Development Authority, will be taking over as the new comptroller later this month.

We wish Mr. Boxer the best in his future and hope that Mr. Larkins will continue the efforts of his predecessor to continue to rein in abuse of practices and spending at all layers of government in the Garden State.

Letters to the Editor

Wonderful Acts Of Kindness Deserve Recognition

On December 9, 2013 my Mom slipped and fell on ice in the Dunkin Donuts parking lot in Fanwood. I would like to thank the two Fanwood police officers who came to her assistance in addition to the Union County Office of Emergency Management first responders who transported her to Overlook Hospital. In addition, I would like to express my gratitude to several patrons who gave blankets and towels from their cars to keep my Mom warm as she laid on the cold pavement in the rain. Your kindness is greatly appreciated. If any of the individuals are reading this, I would love to return your towels to you. You can e-mail me at freykl@comcast.net and I would be glad to drop them off. It was refreshing to see such wonderful acts of kindness.

Karen Frey
Westfield

We Don't Know Who You Are, But We Are Very Grateful

Every week at Imagine we order about 10-12 pizza pies from Ferraro's in Westfield to provide dinner for the families and individuals who attend Imagine peer grief support groups. Providing dinner means that families have one less thing to worry about after a spouse or child has died, as they rush to pick up children and get to Imagine on time.

It provides a chance for families to catch their breath, transition from their day and talk and socialize with all the other Imagine participants. One little boy told us the pizza was one of his favorite parts about coming to Imagine. We thought it was because the pizza is just so good but he then told us it's because he gets to see all of his Imagine friends, not just the kids in his age group.

I am writing to say thank you to all the people who have donated a pizza pie, or two or three, to Imagine through Ferraro's online takeout ordering website. We are tickled pink every week when we call to place our order and are told that we have one or two or six pies credited to Imagine.

We don't know who you are, but we are so very grateful for your generosity. And we are grateful to Ferraro's for providing us with pizza week after week at a very nice discount!

We are grateful to this great community for all the ways you support and embrace people in need.

Mary Robinson
Imagine Executive Director

Communities Had Manger Displays While Scotch Plains Had Live Animals

For approximately 65 years, Scotch Plains has had a live animal manger at Christmas. Children of all ages would visit the manger to see the animals. We used to have statues in the manger, but the animals would knock them over or sit on them. During my last term as mayor, we replaced the old building and the statues with a silhouette on the back wall.

Then three years ago, the manger expenses were deleted from the municipal budget. Many people called the municipal building that first year very disappointed. Over the years, many communities had manger displays at Christmas, but Scotch Plains was the only one in the area with live animals. So last year and this year, several residents and businesses in Scotch Plains joined me in making donations to pay for the expenses of the manger.

We had many families who visited this year. It was a joy watching the expressions on the children's faces. I wish to publicly thank everyone who made this possible. Thank you: Bob and Marion Roberts, Darby Road Pub, Complete Care, Dr. Andrew Coronato and Paulette Coronato, John's Meat Market, Al Smith, Frank and Anne Rossi, Robert Johnston, Alfonso and Stacy Gialanella, Gabe and Marilyn Spera, Christian and Laura Ellison, and the members of our municipal family who donated their time.

Joan Papen
Scotch Plains

Westfield Leader Letter Helps In Resolving NJ American Water Issue

I recently had a letter to the editor published in *The Westfield Leader* (NJ American Water- Do They Care?; Dec. 26, 2013) where I was complaining about a NJ American Water repair that was taking over three months to resolve.

I want to thank *The Westfield Leader* for publishing my letter, as I am sure it had some impact on the resolution of the problem as five days later, NJ American Water arrived and the problem was fixed (just in time before our January 2 snow storm!). It's great to know that we have the right to air our grievances in a public forum and that it can make a difference. I thank *The Westfield Leader* for that.

In fairness to NJ American Water, it was just a matter of getting the right person on the phone. I received a call from Mr. Binge from NJ American Water on December 30 who promised, "My apologies. It will be fixed tomorrow…" And it was. Thanks to Mr. Binge and his team.

No more leaks, no more puddles, no more safety issues. Thanks.

Joshua Suri
Westfield

Westfield Doctor Asks, Should You Take Multivitamins?

Recently, two clinical studies published in the Annals of Internal Medicine made big time headlines. They reported that multivitamins had no beneficial effect on cognitive function and cardiovascular disease. Previously, in the same journal, there was a review article of 26 clinical studies on the effects of vitamins and minerals in various conditions the results of which were reported as negative. Regarding the effectiveness of multivitamins, one author of the current editorial said, "We don't need a lot more evidence to put this baby to bed." Another expert, regarding their safety, claims, "It's dangerous" to consume them. They are both out-of-order statements because there are no solid data to support either claim. In fact, Dr. Francine Grodstein, one of the authors of the cognitive function study who did not participate in the editorial, wisely admits that in order to determine the potential benefits of multivitamins requires more, sophisticated, long-term clinical studies which, in my opinion, will probably never happen.

So what's going on? The answer is simple, but understanding it is elusive even by most medical experts. The answer is that, unlike insulin's effect on lowering blood sugar or vitamin C's in the treatment of scurvy both of which are easy to demonstrate in clinical studies, the evaluation of multivitamins on chronic diseases is infinitely more complicated because it involves too many unknown or variable factors to be properly statistically analyzed.

One of my favorite neurotic philosophers, and there are many of them, David Hume, once exclaimed, "Certitude is for fools." Given that, I can tell you using my general nutraceutical formula, "Certitude minus one," that practically all, if not all, of the long-term multivitamin studies are poorly designed and seriously flawed. Here's, however, one flaw that most of us could understand. In both studies, a placebo was given as a control group to compare against the multivitamins. We now know that a placebo is not an inert sugar pill but, through the power of the mind, has, in itself, a significant clinical effect which could equal that of the multivitamin masking the latter's effect.

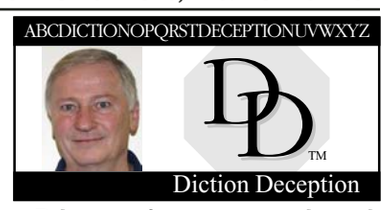
Oftentimes, in my philosophic medical moods, I often wonder why it is difficult to demonstrate the clinical benefits of multivitamins which contain many of nature's essential ingredients to maintain a healthy life. I also paradoxically wonder why there is a lack of detectable significant toxicity. Does the body and mind somehow just ignore their presence?

So where are we? To summarize: The benefits of the consumption of multivitamins for chronic diseases are largely unknown. (The same holds true with so-called healthy diets). Their safety record seems acceptable. Are we, therefore, dealing with Pascal's Wager- nothing to lose but something of significant value to be gained by consuming multivitamins? Unfortunately, there's nowhere to turn to find the truth and the decision is up to you and your mindset.

(FYI, I do know something about dietary supplements and healthy diets. I coined the term nutraceuticals which means that such products are proven to be effective in clinical studies. I designed the Nutraceutical Research and Education Act, NREA, to encourage high- level clinical research on them. It was introduced in Congress in 1989 by Rep. Frank Pallone of New Jersey, but withered away because of the lack of support from the nutrition and other health oriented communities).

Stephen L. DeFelice, M.D
Westfield

Union County Freeholders
Elizabeth, New Jersey
(908) 527-4200
Al Faella, Mgr. afaella@ucnj.org
Christopher Hudak, chair
chudak@ucnj.org
Sebastian D'Elia, Public Info.
(908) 527-4419
sdelia@ucnj.org



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. Illaqueate – To entrap or ensnare
2. Hogmanay – New Year's Eve
3. Mazer – A large drinking goblet or bowl
4. Fraischeur – Coolness; freshness

CAPYBARA
1. A large Asiatic flying squirrel
2. A street vender; a seller of fruits and vegetables
3. A large, tailless, partcially web-footwed rodent of South America
4. A West Indian slow-moving coasting craft built for carrying goods

TICPOLONGA
1. An extremely venomous Indian snake
2. A slingshot
3. A fool or imbecile
4. A skin disease caused by a fungus; ringworm

RUNCATION
1. Characterized by being pierced with holes
2. Pertaining to plundering or looting
3. Furrowed or grooved
4. A weeding

GINGILI
1. A Brazilian parakeet
2. A gipsy
3. Sesame seed or the oil from it
4. Sharpness; eagerness

See more letters on page 5

Letters to the Editor

Furniture Assist Thanks Supporters

We thank everyone who donated toys to the Furniture Assist holiday toy drive. We are also grateful to Ron Bansky at Allstate Insurance, whose office was a local drop-off point. His staff was so helpful.

Now that the holidays are over, we hope that people will continue to keep us in mind for donations. Right now, we are especially in need of pots and pans, dishes, utensils and linens. We are open to receive donations on Sunday mornings. Please visit our website, www.furnitureassist.com, for details and directions.

As always, we are grateful for the generosity of residents of Westfield and the surrounding areas.

Peggy A. Rothbaum, Ph.D.
Westfield

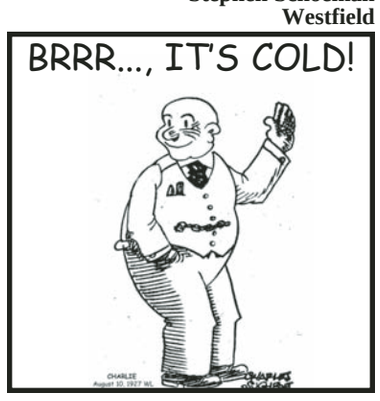
Pause And Reflect, Support America

George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin if they were here today, and we so need them here today, would see America burdened by self-inflicted political problems. They would see a younger generation shamefully ignorant about America's history. They would hear the cynics and naysayers say that America's best days are past and that the future lies elsewhere in the world.

They would have heard the new mayor of New York City state in his inauguration address, "I will take dead aim at the tale of two cities." His reference being to New York City, which he claims is "the exclusive domain of the 1 percent!" Preposterous! And they would have read *The Huffington Post's* statement, "The American Dream Might As Well Be Dead: Here's The Proof." (October 25,2013). Also preposterous!

But they would know that there are still dreams to be dreamed! Still horizons to cross over. Still the American frontier spirit. Still the land of vast natural resources and vaster individual skills that have always carried America through challenge after challenge. Still the freedoms and liberties the envy of the world!

All of us should show our love and appreciation of America every day, but especially on America's birthday and especially at this time in America's history. So I propose that this July 4th and every July 4th every homeowner, every apartment dweller, and every merchant in Westfield display Old Glory!

And let us on July 4th pause from our activities for five minutes of thought and reflection about all that America has done and continues to do for us and think about all the qualities that have made America the envy of the world! On this day let us truly be a United States of America from sea to shining sea! America will feel better and so will we.

Stephen Schoeman
Westfield