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**TIMES** SINCE 1959

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**Letters to the Editor**

**Mindowaskin Park Has Always Provided a Spot of Peace and Beauty**

I would like to extend a sincere thank you and appreciation to the town officials and the Friends of Mindowaskin Park who were involved in the replacement of the historic lampposts at the Mindowaskin Park overlook. They look fabulous! As a third-generation Westfielder, Mindowaskin Park has always provided a spot of peace and beauty to me. I encourage everyone to visit the park, a gem which we are fortunate to have in our town, especially in the summer when the Westfield Band performs.

**Paula Infantino Long**  
Westfield

ABCDIJKLMNOPQRSTUWXYZ



**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. Souter - A shoemaker
2. Iatrolology - The science of medicine
3. Oeuvres - Literary works
4. Terpsichorean - A dancer

**GRIFFIER**

1. A jeweler's gouging tool for working in a depression, as in engraving metal
2. A recorder or registrar
3. A shelf behind an altar for candlesticks
4. Coarse iron ore

**UNGULATE**

1. Having hoofs
2. To saturate; soak
3. Showing patience; calmness
4. To give a wavy form, margin, or surface

**VENATIC**

1. Acting by poisoning
2. Fond of or living by hunting
3. Easily bribed or corrupted
4. Nomadic; roving

**DEPASCENT**

1. Impoverished; poor
2. Feeding
3. Lacking adequate mental power
4. Apathetic; disinterested

*See more letters page 5*

## Help Available Locally For Those Affected By Mental Health Issues

Mental health concerns have recently made news again. Media reports have featured U.S. veterans who continue to struggle with psychological "battle scars" long after their tours of duty have ended, sometimes compounded by homelessness/unemployment. Last month saw the suicide of a decorated Sayreville police detective with seemingly everything to live for. These cases represent just a few of the many individuals from all walks of life who are in dire need of - or could have been helped by - community resources to address their particular circumstances.

Several such organizations dedicated to helping people with a wide range of mental health issues - and their families - exist right here in the Westfield area. The services they provide are invaluable, easily accessible, and designed to provide lifelines to individuals who may feel they have nowhere else to turn.

Among them is the Union County affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), an advocacy, educational and support organization that seeks to improve quality of life for those with mental illness and their loved ones, as well as to eradicate the stigma still frequently associated with mental illness.

The Union County chapter meets monthly, with guest speakers who are experts in their fields. On Tuesday, April 26, Senator and former New Jersey Governor Richard Codey, a longtime champion of better care and treatment of the mentally ill, will be

the featured speaker at NAMI-Union County's 7:30 p.m. meeting at American Legion Martin Wallberg Post No. 3 in Westfield. Further information about the local affiliate is available at [naminj.org/support/affiliates/union/](http://naminj.org/support/affiliates/union/).

A second local organization is Caring Contact, formerly known as CONTACT We Care, through which those in crisis can connect with trained, empathetic listeners by phone or text. The training that volunteers receive includes Mental Health First Aid Training and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training. New volunteers are always welcome. For more information on this organization, visit [caringcontact.org](http://caringcontact.org).

Finally, Youth and Family Counseling Service of Westfield recently launched a new initiative called Bravest First, which offers mental health and substance abuse treatment to military veterans and their families, regardless of their ability to pay. Further information is available at (908) 233-2042 or [yfcnsnj.org](http://yfcnsnj.org).

We applaud the work of these organizations, as well as other area programs that provide avenues to wellness and/or support for those who need them. Additionally, we encourage anyone in need of such services, or their loved ones, to contact these organizations. Individuals with mental illness, who are in crisis or contemplating suicide, and those who care about them, should never feel they are alone.

## Lyme Disease Is Most Reportable Communicable Disease in Westfield

The Westfield Board of Health met on April 4, 2016.

In February, 37 retail food establishments were inspected by the Westfield Regional Health Department. All were satisfactory, except for three that were conditionally satisfactory and two were related to a complaint investigation that is being followed up on. One restaurant had its third unsatisfactory or conditional satisfactory rating and was the subject of a board hearing. The restaurant's owner agreed to improve procedures. A suspension of the food license was held in abeyance and will be implemented for any rating less than satisfactory during the next year.

Seventeen residents were diagnosed with Lyme disease in 2015, making it the most common reportable communicable disease in town. Lyme disease is spread by ticks and the risk of disease increases in the spring. To help prevent Lyme disease, residents should avoid direct contact with ticks. Some simple precautions include the following:

- 1) Clear tall grasses and brush from your yard to make it less tick friendly.
- 2) Avoid wooded and bushy areas with high grass and leaf litter.
- 3) Walk in the center of trails.
- 4) Use appropriate insect repellants.
- 5) After an outing, check your children and yourself for ticks and remove any ticks found.
- 6) Check your pets for ticks daily, especially after they are outside, and remove any ticks found.

Other appropriate precautions from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention can be found at [www.cdc.gov/lyme/prev/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/lyme/prev/index.html).

Prescription opiate abuse is a continuing problem. Parents and families should understand which prescription drugs are in their medicine cabinets and households. In addition, they should know which are most likely to be taken and abused by teenagers and young adults at home. There is also a potential for abusing correctly prescribed opiates, for example, after sports injuries and other needs for pain control.

Parents should do the following:

- 1) Know what medications you have; take inventory and account for your medicines.
- 2) Properly secure your medicines.
- 3) Prevent unauthorized refills.

4) Properly dispose of your unused, unwanted and expired medicines (please see below).

5) Talk to your children about the dangers of prescription drug abuse.

6) Learn to identify high-risk behavior and what to do if you suspect abuse.

You can safely, conveniently and anonymously dispose of unused, unwanted and expired medicines, including pet medications, in a drop box in the lobby of the Westfield Police Department, 425 East Broad Street. It is open every day, 24 hours a day. More information is available at the American Medicine Chest Challenge at [www.americanmedicinechest.com](http://www.americanmedicinechest.com) and the National Institute of Drug Abuse at [www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/prescription-over-counter-medications](http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/prescription-over-counter-medications).

Nine pre-school immunization audits were completed in March. Initial compliance rates ranged between 92 percent and 100 percent for five programs, including the Lincoln School. The programs were counseled and four will be re-audited in April. Altogether, records for 305 children in public school and 920 children in private and parochial programs were reviewed. Nineteen children were improperly vaccinated, 11 of whom were in one program.

The health department is sponsoring health screenings with Overlook Medical Center. Bone density screenings will be on Mondays, April 18 and April 25, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Overlook Downtown Center, 357 Springfield Avenue in Summit. In addition, a stroke prevention screening will be on Thursday, April 21, from 9 a.m. to noon, at the Garwood Municipal Building, 403 South Avenue. There is a \$10 charge for each screening. For more information and to register, please contact the Overlook Community Health Department at 1-800-247-9580.

Information about all of the health department's activities is available on its website, [www.westfieldnj.gov/health](http://www.westfieldnj.gov/health). The complete minutes of the April 4 meeting will be posted after review and approval at our May 2 meeting, which starts at 5:30 p.m. in the municipal building. The public is invited to attend.

**Lawrence D. Budnick, MD, MPH**  
President, Westfield Board of Health

## New Jersey Tax Freedom Day Stretches Out to May 12

Tax Freedom Day is coming nationwide on Sunday, April 24, and Thursday, May 12, in New Jersey. This is the day that Americans will have earned enough money to pay their taxes for the year. According to the Tax Foundation, New Jersey has the second-highest state and local tax rate in the country, with more than 12 percent of income going to pay one tax or another. The top state income tax rate is 8.97 percent.

It ranks sixth highest among states levying an individual income tax. State, local and income tax collections per person were \$1,257 in 2012, ninth highest nationally. The state and local governments collected approximately \$2,924 per person in property taxes in 2012, which ranks highest nationally.

Americans will pay \$3.3 trillion in federal taxes and \$1.6 trillion in state and local taxes this year for a total bill of almost \$5 trillion. On average, New Jersey homeowners pay an average of \$7,171 in property taxes, one of the highest levels in the nation. Many who read this newspaper, of course, pay double that amount.

In 2015, Westfield homeowners paid an average of

\$15,389 in property taxes, second only of the 21 towns in Union County to Summit, which paid \$16,623. Scotch Plains residents paid \$12,148, Fanwood was at \$11,083, with Mountainside at \$11,064 and Cranford paying \$10,360, according to the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA). In 2012, income per capita in New Jersey was \$56,731, with \$4,876 paid in state income taxes.

According to a Business and Industry Association report, more than two million people left New Jersey between 2005 and 2014, costing the state \$18 billion in adjusted gross income.

According to the Tax Foundation, "Tax Freedom Day provides Americans with an easy way to gauge the overall tax take - a task that can otherwise be daunting due to the multiplicity of taxes at various levels of government and hidden; taxes and fees that are often buried in the cost of living."

Our state lawmakers need to reduce the tax burden or a lot more people will be leaving the state for southern states or Arizona. An effort is underway in Trenton to eliminate the state estate tax. At least that's a start.

## Truth Is That New Jersey Retirement System Is Now A Ponzi Scheme

Thinking for yourself has not been a prerequisite for being appointed a freeholder in Union County. In fact it is a detriment that might lead to questioning why millions of dollars are awarded annually in essentially no-bid contracts (through the county, the UCIA, and UCUA) to those who also happen to be substantial donors to political campaigns.

So we get people who do what they are told which is dangerous enough when it is only political payback that they rubber stamp, but when it comes to spreading the propaganda about local pensions being adequately funded because localities have been paying what they are told to pay belies an ignorance of the real state of the New Jersey retirement system that will cost eight million taxpayers including 800,000 current and former public employees far more than Decotiis, Fitzpatrick, and Cole, LLP ever got their hands on from gaming the system.

Though it may not alter a convenient position, Freeholder Bruce

**April 18 is Deadline For filing income tax**

**Union County Freeholders**  
 Elizabeth, New Jersey  
 (908) 527-4200  
 Al Faella, Mgr. [afaella@ucnj.org](mailto:afaella@ucnj.org)  
 Bruce Bergen, chair [bbergen@ucnj.org](mailto:bbergen@ucnj.org)  
 Sebastian D'Elia, Public Info. (908) 527-4419 [sdelia@ucnj.org](mailto:sdelia@ucnj.org)

Bergen might want to consider:

- 1) There is only one trust fund for the New Jersey retirement system, which is supposed to have \$70 billion in it now though about \$25 billion of that is in alternative investments of questionable value and another \$30 billion are the employees' own contributions that will need to be returned to them upon plan termination;
- 2) There are seven separate plans, but those are only for purposes of defining benefits for their members with safety employees in PFRS and the State Police Plan getting more than teachers in the TPAF who get more than regular public employees in PERS though nobody gets more than judges in the JRS. In fact, two of the plans (PFRS and PERS) include both state and local employees.
- 3) When the JRS runs out of money on paper around 2021, whatever is left in the trust will keep paying them. All public employees are in the same boat. Otherwise, when there were prospective cuts to benefits or when cost-of-living-adjustments were summarily eliminated in 2011, why did it apply to local employees also if 'their' plans were adequately funded?

The truth is that the New Jersey retirement system is now a Ponzi scheme that can only be saved if the state is cleaned up and the money being siphoned off by a corrupt political system is diverted to propping it up. Though anyone benefiting from the status quo is unlikely to see that.

**John Bury**  
Union

## Letters to the Editor

**Sen. Kean (R) on Supreme Court Nomination**

Monday's nomination of Walter Timpono represents the first opportunity in six years for the New Jersey Supreme Court to be fully staffed by confirmed justices. I hope this is the first step in clearing a large backlog of nominations that has left dozens of courtrooms empty and threatened speedy justice in New Jersey.

**Sen. Tom Kean**  
Westfield

*Editor's Note: Mr. Timpono is a Democrat. The Democrat-controlled State Legislature has long refused to consider a Republican nomination by Governor Chris Christie.*

## News Clips

**Bill Requiring Alert in Case of Email Hack**

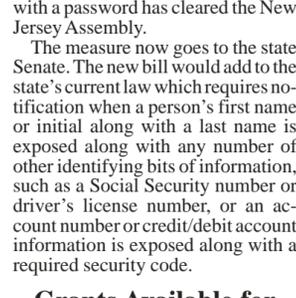
TRENTON — A bill that would require business and public entities to alert their customers or clients when their database of email addresses are exposed to hackers in combination with a password has cleared the New Jersey Assembly.

The measure now goes to the state Senate. The new bill would add to the state's current law which requires notification when a person's first name or initial along with a last name is exposed along with any number of other identifying bits of information, such as a Social Security number or driver's license number, or an account number or credit/debit account information is exposed along with a required security code.

## Grants Available for Comm. Gardens

Grants are available to start a new community garden, or to expand and improve an existing garden. The grants are designed to take the guesswork out of creating a new community garden. Applications are due by Friday, May 6. Application forms are available at [ucnj.org/garden-grants](http://ucnj.org/garden-grants).

## Two Buck Chuck by Turkey Day



**FIRST DRIVERLESS CAR TO COMMIT SUICIDE...**

GET IN THE OTHER LANE! YOU'RE GOING TOO FAST! WAIT, GET BACK WHERE YOU WERE! HURRY, YOU'RE GOING TO MISS THE LIGHT!

NESEMANO/16 THE LEADER/TIMES

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<b>State LD-21</b> Sen. Thomas Kean, Jr. (R) 425 North Ave. E. Westfield, N.J. 07090 (908) 232-3673 Asm. Jon Brannick (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	<b>State LD-22</b> Sen. Nicholas Scutari (D) 1514 E. Saint Georges Ave. Linden, N.J. 07036 (908) 587-0404 Asm. Jim Kennedy (D) 34 E. Cherry St. Rahway, N.J. 07065 (732) 943-2660 Asm. Jerry Green (D) 17 Watchung Ave. Plainfield, N.J. 07060 (908) 561-5757	<b>7th Congressional District</b> Representative Leonard Lance (R) 425 North Avenue E., Westfield, NJ 07090 (908) 518-7733 [Westfield, Mountainside, Garwood, Summit and Cranford are in the 7th Congressional District]
<b>LD-21</b> includes Westfield, Mountainside, Garwood, Summit and Cranford.	<b>LD-22</b> includes Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Plainfield, Clark and Linden.	<b>12th Congressional District</b> Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D) 850 Bear Tavern Road, Suite 201, Ewing, N.J. 08628 (609) 883-0026 [Fanwood, Plainfield and most of Scotch Plains are in the 12th Congressional District]

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