

The Westfield Leader **The Scotch Plains - Fanwood TIMES**
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Legal Newspaper for the County of Union, New Jersey
 and for Westfield, Mountainside, Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Cranford and Garwood

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Letters to the Editor

From Mayor Brindle, Gone After 50 Years

I am disappointed to confirm that Lerner David, an international law firm that has been headquartered in Westfield at the corner of Rahway and South Ave since their inception over 50 years ago, has announced their relocation to Cranford when their lease is up in November. When I met with their managing partner last summer, I learned they wanted to stay in Westfield but needed more modern office space with parking to accommodate 150 employees and that a search process had been underway for quite some time. Unfortunately we have no existing space to accommodate one of our largest taxpayers. I remain committed to solving our commercial and parking shortage to attract commercial tenants like Lerner David, as well as tech firms, consulting firms and more. These businesses come with employees that not only increase our tax base, making us less reliant on property taxes, but also provide desperately needed daytime

foot traffic to maintain a vibrant downtown.

Solving our parking shortage is an economic development imperative, and long-term, viable, profitable solutions to our vacant storefronts depend on a growth-oriented answer to parking.

I am deeply frustrated, but not discouraged, by this announcement. We have already begun the process of course correcting by establishing a new master plan that should result in a town center where retail, commercial and parking work together to support an economic vision.

If you commit to being an active participant in the process to ensure your voice is heard, I will commit to doing everything I can to make sure Lerner David is the last employer to leave Westfield. #lookingforward #thinkbold #masterplan #letsdothis.

**Westfield Mayor
 Shelley Brindle**

ABCD EFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ



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. Crepitaculum - A rattle-like organ as of the rattlesnake
2. Battue - A hunt conducted by driving game from cover to a place near waiting hunters
3. Palaestic - Pertaining to wrestling
4. Chthonophagia - An abnormal impulse to eat clay or soil

OMPHALOCLE

1. One who adores women
2. An umbilical hernia
3. A naval officer of ancient times
4. In Greek mythology, a disciple of Omphale the queen of Lydia

OMOPHAGIA

1. The eating of raw flesh
2. Subsisting entirely on fish
3. Eating only green plant life
4. An abnormal impulse to eat bones

MAUGRE

1. A doll, puppet or idol used in worship
2. To mutter or grumble
3. In spite of; in opposition to
4. The crow or crop of a bird

PALPLESS

1. No congruent; unsuitable
2. Without substance; inconsequential
3. Having no feelers; such as with insects
4. Incomplete

Keep an Eye on Our Neighbors As We Navigate Another Winter

The effect last week on our area from the deadly polar vortex that wreaked havoc on the Midwest may have been brief, but it served as a crucial reminder of the force nature can wield. While temperatures here quickly rebounded, we are not out of the winter woods yet. Despite that taste of spring earlier this week, six weeks of winter still remain, with the potential for more frigid air, high winds, snow and ice. We can be optimistic, but we also need to be prepared. Let us not forget the arctic curtain that descended on us for two weeks almost around this time last year, nor the nor'easters that whipped through the region during March.

Severe weather conditions pose risks for everyone, but especially the elderly, the disabled or ill of any age, the homebound, others with restricted mobility, and those with limited financial resources or family/social contacts.

These individuals are particularly vulnerable in the event of a utility malfunction leaving them without heat or electricity; a storm that prevents them from leaving their home to obtain groceries or medication; snow-blocked ventilation outlets that can lead to carbon-monoxide poisoning; slippery conditions that can result in a fall; overexertion from shoveling snow, or other winter-related tasks. When an emergency occurs, those without relatives or friends living nearby, or those with diminished physi-

cal or cognitive capacities due to age or illness, may not know where to turn for help, or are reluctant to reach out.

Yet avenues of assistance do exist right within our borders. Among them are Mobile Meals of Westfield, which serves residents of Westfield, Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Cranford, Garwood, Mountainside and Clark who are unable to shop or prepare meals for themselves, and also provides a friendly visit. Information is available at westfieldnj.com/mobilemeals or by calling (908) 233-6146.

A new program begun in Mountainside called "Snow Buddy" pairs local volunteers with senior citizens, the disabled and veterans who require help with snow removal. We hope this initiative will be adopted by neighboring communities as well, as a way to ease a seasonal worry for many people who cannot or should not be shoveling snow, while also offering valuable volunteer opportunities.

While shorter daylight hours and the numbing cold of winter create the natural urge to hibernate, we remind everyone to be especially vigilant this time of year and to check up on those within their family, neighborhood, religious or social community who may need assistance. We have a long tradition of pulling together as communities under any circumstance, and supporting those at risk. Let us navigate another winter the same way.

Garwood Driver Thanks Good Samaritans

Wednesday, January 30, was a particularly cold night as I found out after departing from a wrestling match in Westfield. As I drove down Second Avenue in Garwood between Oak and Cedar Streets, my car shut off as I drifted to the corner of Cedar Street.

After mumbling a multitude of unpleasant words to myself, I stood out in the cold hoping that a car would come by. After approximately five minutes, a woman in an SUV stopped and said she would call for help. After she left, a couple of men in a truck stopped and asked me if I needed help but they did not have jumper cables. They stayed with me, however. A few

- minutes later a man and his wife arrived and did have jumper cables and the foursome managed to get my car started.
- I was entirely grateful but my brain seemed to be as frozen as my hands, so I forgot to ask them their names. I also believe that they may have been happy just to get back into their warm vehicles. In any event, I would sincerely like to thank those individuals for the much needed assistance.
- Thank You!
- David B. Corbin**
 Asst. Publisher/Sports Editor
 The Westfield Leader

Westfield Property Tax Revaluation, Some Observations

A recent *Westfield Leader* contained a letter stating that the "Westfield Revaluation is Patently Unfair." The stated five-day deadline to make an appointment with Realty Appraisal to discuss the new assessment is indeed quite short. We even had to contact a friend on a short vacation through the deadline to get permission to open their mail and email them their appraisal so that they could make an appointment in time, if they wished. I recommend that Mayor Brindle announce another "window" for folks who missed their opportunity and desire a meeting with the appraisal company.

The purpose of the revaluation is to make a current estimate of the market value of your home on October 1, 2018. It takes into account the size and location of your property, the size and features of your home, the current condition, reflecting any major recent improvements, and sale prices of comparable homes in the recent past (typically the year before October 1). The town has publicly announced a website www.westfieldnj.gov/revaluation, which includes informative FAQ and a worksheet to compare your 2018 taxes on the new and old assessment bases. If one is unhappy with the result, it is best to address it now, rather than waiting to make a formal appeal with the town prior to the May 1 deadline.

My recent meeting with the appraisal company was quite pleasant, covering all the issues I wanted to discuss; and they did not rush me. They first went over their printout for my property, including the square footage of the home, its features and overall condition, reflecting the ear-

Letters to the Editor

Taking the Reader Through The Excitement

As a father of a Freshman wrestler, I have found myself reading quite a bit about my son's team wherever I can find articles. While the writing in all of the other publications is crappy and full of typos and mistakes, Dave Corbin from your paper has been impressive in his coverage.

His attention to detail and ability to take the reader through the excitement of the actual matches is refreshing and credible. Thank you and please thank him.

**Marc Jacobs
 Westfield**

The Rain Tax Cometh

(CBSNewYork) — New Jersey is one of the highest taxed states in the country.

Now, residents and businesses could be taxed extra... when it rains.

Save it for a rainy day. Some of your hard-earned dollars may be taken away as the weather turns ugly and rain drops fall on the Garden State. A new bill calls for the creation of local or regional storm water utilities, giving local counties and municipalities the power to collect a tax from properties with large paved surfaces such as parking lots, CBS2's Meg Baker reported.

That's businesses and homeowners. The bill passed in the Senate and the Assembly and is now headed to Gov. Phil Murphy's desk.

Senate President Stephen Sweeney said most states already have storm water utilities that collect and filter runoff from storms. In New Jersey, the runoff goes directly into streams, rivers and bays, carrying with it pollution like lawn fertilizers that contaminate the waterways.

Former governor and current state Senator Richard Codey said it's necessary.

"They are crazy. As it is, there are too much taxes in New Jersey," Elizabeth resident Ramon Columba said. Republicans have dubbed the bill the "Rain Tax." Another tax makes New Jersey even more unaffordable, and state Sen. Tom Kean Jr. agrees.

"We all want to protect our environment. We all want to preserve it for future generations. But this is a weighted tax. The citizens of New Jersey... really with no oversight and no way to defend themselves against tax increases," Sen. Kean said.

A Rain Tax?



Banning Trump From Ballot Over Tax Returns Is Wrong

New Jersey state lawmakers have once again introduced legislation that would ban candidates for United States President and Vice-President on election ballots in New Jersey if they have not filed their five most recent federal tax returns with the New Jersey Division of Elections in the Department of State. A similar bill was vetoed by former Governor Chris Christie a few years ago.

"Under the bill, each candidate would also submit written consent for disclosure with the division no later than 50 days before the General Election," according to the bill, Assembly Bill No. 1230/Senate Bill No. 119. The legislation is sponsored by Senator Loretta Weinberg (D-37th, Teaneck) and Assemblyman John F. McKeon (D-27th, Madison). All tax returns from the candidates would be placed on the Division of Elections' website.

The bill also would disallow any elector from New Jersey from voting for a President/Vice-President ticket if those candidates have not submitted tax returns. The latest version of the legislation cleared the state Senate Government, Wagering, Tourism, and Historic Preservation Committee by a vote of 3-0, with one abstention, on January 31.

In his veto statement, Mr. Christie stated: "This transparent political stunt masquerading as a bill is politics at its worst." The former Republican governor called the legislation "clearly unconstitutional."

Gov. Christie recommended amending New Jersey's Open Public Records Act "to eliminate the disclosure exemption for legislative records that the Legislature bestowed upon itself." The Legislature

did not follow Mr. Christie's recommendation.

Assemblyman Jay Webber (R-26th, Parsippany) in March of 2017 stated that, "This body (Assembly) and the New Jersey State Senate and the governor of the state of New Jersey has no authority to add additional requirements to who can run for president of the United States," according to northjersey.com.

According to nj.com, "under a 1924 federal law enacted after the Teapot Dome scandal, the Ways and Means chairman has the power to request an individual's tax returns from the Internal Revenue Service."

In our view, New Jersey's bill is a political stunt that won't have any impact on the 2020 campaign, as the state has not been carried by a Republican since President George H.W. Bush in 1988, when the then Vice-President was running for his first term as President. We believe New Jersey lawmakers are overstepping their authority. If legislation is necessary, it should come from Congress, not state politicians. Perhaps it should be made to be law for the 2024 Presidential Election, when Mr. Trump will not be a candidate.

Banning Mr. Trump from the ballot would disenfranchise voters who want to vote for the President. It sounds like the Democratic Majority in the House realizes that they won't have support in the U.S. Senate or the White House for such legislation to become law and, thus, are pushing "blue" states like New Jersey to take action to ensure Mr. Trump's name does not appear on ballots in 2020.

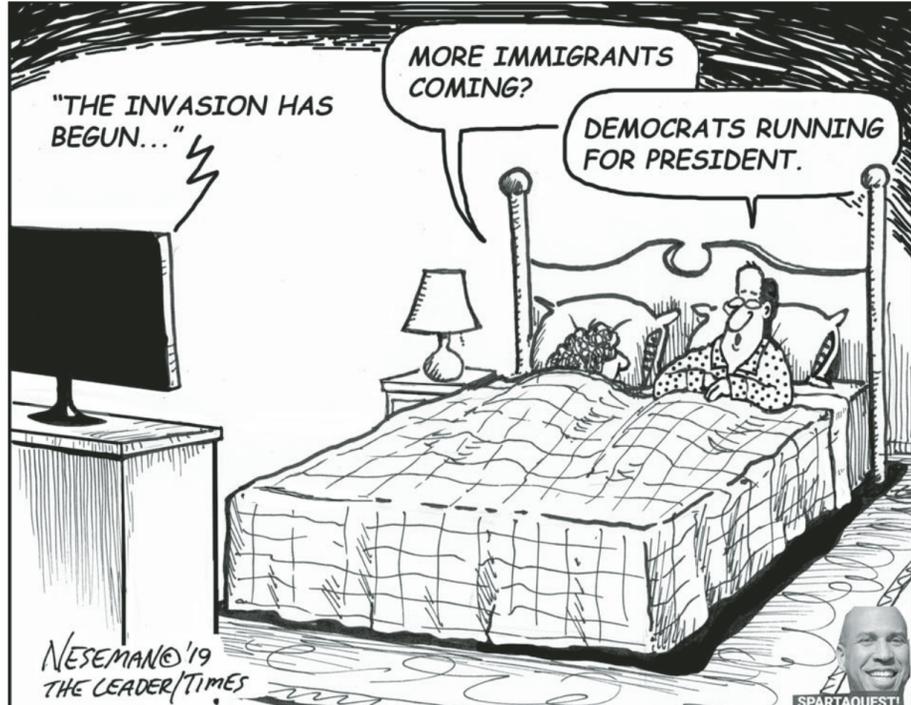
Looking For Creative Ways For Spending Your Tax Dollars

My understanding is that Westfield has a surplus of about \$12 million and is looking for creative uses for the money. I suggest making Westfield a greener town by using the money to help Westfield reach a goal of having all municipal and school system electrical power come from renewable power (solar panels). This could be accomplished by adding solar panels to all appropriate municipal building roofs and the adding solar panel roofs to municipal (or school) parking lots adjacent to municipal buildings or school buildings.

We already have a start with solar panels on some school roofs and the library. Adding the additional panels could get Westfield to the goal of having all municipal and school system electrical power come from solar panels. Not only would it make Westfield a greener town, it would save money by reducing our cost of paying for electrical power. In addition, the parking lots could include a couple of charging stations for electric cars so that they could be charged while sitting in the spot. These could also be used by new municipal cars that are all-electric vehicles.

Westfield could be a leader in setting the example for how towns can do their part to reduce our country's use of fossil fuel that is causing our climate change problem.

**Walter Korfmacher
 Westfield**



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LD-21 includes Westfield, Mountainside, Garwood, Summit and Cranford.
 LD-22 includes Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Plainfield, Clark, Rahway and Linden.