

The Westfield Leader The Scotch Plains - Fanwood TIMES

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We Can Still Celebrate Mom, Despite Social Restrictions

This Sunday is Mother's Day, the day each year when we celebrate our mothers, grandmothers and other maternal figures in appreciation of the unique and profound ways in which these women influence and enrich our lives.

Mothers are the first person we bond with as infants; for most of us, she is our first teacher, role model and confidante. Together with fathers, they shape our moral foundation, nurture our development as individuals and guide us on our journey to adulthood.

Mother's Day customarily is observed with family visits where loved ones gather around the table, while also feting Mom with cards, gifts and other expressions of affection. Sadly, with necessary social-distancing rules still in effect, such in-person gatherings will not be possible for the majority of families this year.

Despite such restrictions, the spirit and significance of the day does not have to be put on hold, even if the actual get-togethers are. Through the advent of modern technology and some family creativity, there is still a potpourri of ways to share Mom's special day with her and to show our love and gratitude.

We can visually connect with Mom and other family members through such electronic avenues as Skype and Zoom. We can share photos and

messages via Facebook and other social media platforms. And, of course, we can always tell Mom we love her through a phone call as well. Heartfelt wishes can bridge any distance or circumstance.

This year, we once again wish all mothers, and those who play motherly roles, a happy and healthy Mother's Day. We offer a special nod to all those mothers and others currently serving on the "front lines" of the pandemic, often at great personal risk and with long hours spent apart from their families, — among them doctors, nurses, other health care providers, emergency responders and scientists.

We likewise salute all the mothers and their peers who continue to help maintain the fabric of our society in so many other critical ways during this unprecedented era. They are the teachers, grocery store and restaurant staffers, postal employees, public works personnel, transportation workers and countless more, including the legions of adult and youth volunteers, without whom our communities could not function. They keep us fed, keep us connected, keep us from losing hope.

We extend our thoughts to all the moms who cannot be with their families for Mother's Day this year due to the current health crisis, military service, geographic distance or other reasons. We hope that they and their loved ones will remain safe and well, and will be reunited soon.

We Can't Borrow and Print Our Way Out of This Financial Mess

We applaud the Garwood Borough Council and senior Garwood employees for cutting the budget and volunteering to forgo cost-of-living raises. In a time where so many residents are fearful for their own financial futures, these steps show true leadership and dedication. The Township of Scotch Plains and the Union County Freeholders also delivered flat budgets, despite seeing a severe loss in revenue — kudos to both governing bodies.

We love our teachers, and they are doing a phenomenal job navigating the world of remote learning. But as we all tighten the proverbial belt, we implore the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) to get together and forgo all cost-of-living increases in ALL teacher contracts throughout the state for one year. Furthermore, all state and federal public employees should forgo any raises, including cost of living, and the same for our elected officials. This would save the taxpayers millions, while also preserving public employee jobs. With businesses shut down, layoffs, furloughs and the looming uncertainty about all our financial futures, this isn't just good leadership, it is necessary for our municipal, county, state and national future.

Municipalities in the state are now allowed to forgo the penalty on May 1 tax payments to June 1. But the towns are still on the hook to pay counties and school boards on time, whether they collect the funds or not.

While this "grace period" is a nice gesture it doesn't get to the root of the problem — this isn't a May 1 problem, these hardships could last years. According to NJ.com, 850,000 (1 in 10) New Jersey residents have filed for unemployment. Will we see enormous drops in people

paying property taxes? Will we see a rise in foreclosures? We sure hope not.

The State of New Jersey is broke, and it was broke long before COVID-19 showed up. Residents can't wait to run for the border the day they reach retirement, or before, due mainly to high property taxes and cost of living.

Last week the governor began talking about borrowing \$9 billion from the Federal Reserve. Governor Phil Murphy is going to attempt to get around putting this enormous loan before the voters by claiming an "act of G-d" — decades of the state's fiscal mismanagement is an act of man, Governor. Forgoing interest for a moment, each resident of the state would need to pony up \$882.35 — so for a family of four, that's \$3,529.31. That's more than 10 percent of a year's salary for the grocery store clerks who are now our front-line heroes.

The governor's new method of running the state by executive fiat is unchecked, and no matter how good or bad a job he is doing, this method of governing is unsustainable. We applaud Assemblyman Brian Bergen of Morris County for putting legislation forward that would require any governor to get approval of the State Legislature for emergency orders that last longer than 14 days. It is important that even in times of crisis that there be a check and balance system — we live in a representative democracy, not a dictatorship, and the governor's comments make it clear that he believes his power is absolute.

This country and this state need to get serious about bringing manufacturing back. We can't beg, borrow and print our way out of this mess. We have to pick ourselves up, tighten our belts and start innovating.

Letters to the Editor

County Clerk Offers Update for Voters

Following are important updates for Union County voters regarding deadlines for the upcoming Primary Election in New Jersey.

The primary election was moved from June 2 to Tuesday, July 7, by Governor Phil Murphy's Executive Order 120, in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

This order includes the postponement of the primary for President, U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, and county and municipal elections.

All statutory election deadlines have changed and are now calculated by using the July 7 election date.

This did not affect any deadlines that occurred prior to April 11, with the exception of the deadline for changing party affiliation, which was rescheduled from April 8 to Wednesday, May 13, by order of Governor

Murphy. Based on the new Primary Election date of July 7, it is important to note that the voter registration deadline for new or moved voters is Tuesday, June 16 and the deadline to apply for a mail-in ballot will be Tuesday, June 30.

The Primary Election timeline with revised deadlines is available on our website at UnionCountyVotes.com and on our free Union County Votes mobile app.

During this period my staff continues to be available during regular business hours to any questions regarding the Primary Election. Please call the Election Division at (908) 527-4996, or contact my office by email at unioncountyvotes@ucnj.org. We look forward to serving you.

Joanne Rajoppi
Union County Clerk

Mental Health Council Provides Resources for Awareness Month

In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month, the Westfield Mental Health Council would like to take the opportunity to share some of its resources with the community. The council was formed last year to provide individuals and families with resources to assist with the identification, treatment and support for those with emotional and behavioral concerns. In addition, its volunteer members prioritize the need to de-stigmatize mental illness and increase knowledge of mental wellness within the town.

Through the council's research and discussion process, the C.A.K.E. initiative was launched to share within our community the importance of compassion, acceptance, kindness, and empathy. C.A.K.E. is focused on embedding these four behaviors in everyday life and interactions with neighbors, family, friends, co-workers, and others, while combating the stigma of emotional and behavioral distress. C.A.K.E. is meant to promote a more supportive town environment to help weather any storm that strikes the town and/or its residents.

As is evident, with the COVID-19 pandemic, Westfield is seeing an increase in C.A.K.E. behaviors; whether it be local restaurants supporting first responders, residents posting messages of encouragement around their homes and on social media, or other individual acts of C.A.K.E. within the community to lift one another. This is a unique time to understand, and learn from the current situation, that practicing C.A.K.E., as residents are do-

ing now, can help us grow and learn more about our own mental health and wellbeing.

Additionally, symptoms of psychiatric disorders, including depression and anxiety may increase during the COVID-19 pandemic due to many factors, including grief, the need to socially distance, loss of employment and financial stability, as well as loss of opportunities. Furthermore, even when social-distancing restrictions are lifted, individuals may continue to experience some level of ongoing pandemic-related distress. The Westfield Mental Health Council hopes to be available with educational resources, activities and events to help address and support the community. Please visit westfieldnj.gov/mentalhealthcouncil to learn more about the council.

As a show of unity for Mental Health Awareness Month, a C.A.K.E. coloring page has been posted on the Mental Health Council website, and residents are encouraged to color the page and post it in their front window in order to actively show their support for mental health. The Council also encourages examples of C.A.K.E. behavior to be submitted to CAKE@westfieldnj.org so that they can be shared with the community. Offering "a slice of C.A.K.E." to one another during Mental Health Awareness Month will allow Westfield to emerge from this pandemic stronger and full of vitality and support for one another.

Ron Holmes & Lauren Kaplansagal
Westfield Mental Health Council

Township Seeks Legislators Assistance with NJDOT Issue

I write to seek your assistance with the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT). For the last three months, Scotch Plains officials have corresponded with NJDOT representatives regarding the removal of numerous trees on the lot at the corner of Glenside Road and Route 22 in Scotch Plains. We understand that the coronavirus pandemic has impacted work across our state, however, these issues predate the pandemic outbreak.

Scotch Plains has tried repeatedly to get answers regarding NJDOT's decision to remove such a large number of trees but we have received very little information. We have also tried to get NJDOT to remove the debris left over from the tree removal but NJDOT has failed to clear the area of debris despite repeated requests from my office.

On March 2, 2020, Scotch Plains Councilwoman Elizabeth Stampler even sent a letter to Christopher Tomlin, the executive director of the North Region, NJDOT to try and obtain answers on all the issues dis-

cussed above as well as request that new trees be planted to replace the ones that were removed but the letter has gone unanswered.

Now today we have seen that NJDOT has removed even more trees from the property despite our concerns and the concerns of numerous residents. We had previously requested that NJDOT reach out to discuss any plans on the property, but they have failed to keep us informed.

We would appreciate if you can assist with this matter and have NJDOT cooperate with the Township of Scotch Plains. We have reached a significant level of frustration. Please let me know if you need anything else from my staff or I.

Thank you for all you do to serve the residents of our Township and State of New Jersey.

Alexander Mirabella, Township Manager, Scotch Plains
This letter was originally sent to Senator Nicholas Scutari, Assemblyman James Kennedy, and Assemblywoman Linda Carter (LD21)



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. Tridder — A species of sandpiper
2. Pistareen — Concerned with petty affairs
3. Lallation — Imperfect pronunciation of the letter "R" making it sound like "L"
4. Miniate — To paint with red lead

SAGENE

1. Wise; intelligent
2. A fish net
3. Refined; reserved
4. Of or like an arrow or arrowhead

ASTRAGALUS

1. Faulty secretion by the sebaceous glands
2. The anklebone
3. The act of binding fast, or confining
4. Relating to the genesis or evolution of the stars

DEXIOTROPIC

1. Having whorls that rise to the apex in counterclockwise spirals
2. Readiness of mind in managing operations; mental adroitness
3. Turning or turned to the right
4. Pertaining to the east coast of a country, continent or large island

PERKIN

1. A kind of weak cider
2. A closely woven cotton cloth, used for sheets
3. The common European partridge
4. An expert; specifically, a skilled theologian used as a consultant

GWACC Conducts New Virtual Farmers' Market in Westfield

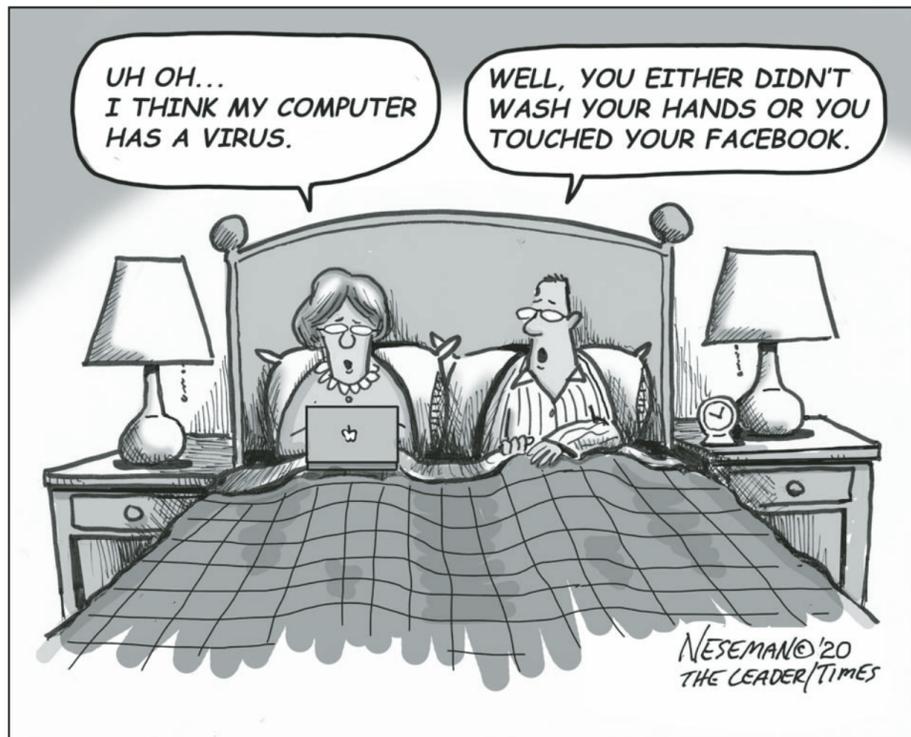
The GWACC (The Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce) organized the first Virtual Farmers' Market at the North Avenue Train Station Parking lot in Westfield on Saturday, May 3. The Governor's March 21st executive order explicitly cited Farmers Markets as essential businesses and this new-look Farmers Market offers a combination of online shopping and weekly pick up to keep shoppers connected with local farmers and producers.

The Farmers Market will continue every Saturday morning with pick up scheduled alphabetically by last name starting at 10 a.m. and completing by 12 noon. Customers can place their online orders all week until 11:59 p.m. on Thursday night. Each vendor will prepare and package the individual orders on Friday and bring them to the market on Saturday morning. Pick up is by car only. If you don't have a car, please ask a friend to retrieve your order. Car windows should remain closed while in the market area. Nothing is available for purchase at the market and all orders must be placed online by Thursday night. The volunteer market managers are Chris and Lisa Devine and they have worked many hours to make this Virtual Farmers Market a reality.

There were just over 200 customer orders the first Saturday morning and the process went very smoothly while social-distancing protocols were followed. The vendors and volunteers directing traffic had appropriate face coverings as the purchases were loaded into car trunks by the vendors.

To begin the ordering process, please go to the GWACC website, www.gwaccnj.com/farmers-market and click on "Place Your Order Here." There are a wide variety of products currently available and additional products and suppliers will be added each week. The initial market vendors were Clifford Family Farm, Donaldson's Farm, Old Village Farm, Goat Hill Farm and Reason's Wine. La Bon Bake Shop will be added May 8 and we hope to include more vendors each week.

Gene Jannotti
CEO - GWACC



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[Fanwood, Plainfield and most of Scotch Plains are in the 12th Congressional District]

LD-21 includes Westfield, Mountainside, Garwood, Summit and Cranford.

LD-22 includes Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Plainfield, Clark, Rahway and Linden.

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