

## The Westfield Leader

— Established 1890 —

The Official Newspaper of the Town of Westfield and the County of Union

Member of:  
New Jersey Press Association  
National Newspaper Association  
Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce

Periodicals - Postage Paid at Westfield, New Jersey

P.O. Box 250 • 50 Elm Street  
Westfield, N.J. 07091

Tele: (908) 232-4407 • E-mail: [press@goleader.com](mailto:press@goleader.com) • Web: [www.goleader.com](http://www.goleader.com) • Fax: (908) 232-0473

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the offices of the newspapers at  
P. O. Box 250, Westfield, New Jersey 07091

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY BY WATCHUNG COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

Horace R. Corbin  
PUBLISHER

Suzette F. Stalker  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Joanna B. Marsh  
MARKETING DIRECTOR

Gail S. Corbin  
GENERAL MANAGER

Michelle H. LePoidevin  
ARTS and ENTERTAINMENT

Paul J. Peyton  
MANAGING EDITOR

David B. Corbin  
SPORTS

Karen M. Hinds  
OFFICE MANAGER

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE

One-year - \$24 • Two-year - \$46 • Three-year - \$66 • One-year college (September to May) - \$16

## THE TIMES of Scotch Plains - Fanwood

— Established 1959 —

Official Newspaper of the Borough of Fanwood and the Township of Scotch Plains

Member of:  
New Jersey Press Association  
National Newspaper Association  
Scotch Plains Business & Professional Association

Periodicals - Postage Paid at Scotch Plains, New Jersey

P. O. Box 368 • 1906 Bartle Avenue  
Scotch Plains, N.J. 07076



## HUNG UPII Absent Father Seeks to Build Relationship with His Son

By Milt Faith, Executive Director  
Youth and Family Counseling Service

**A motivated father writes:**  
I fathered a child when I was 17 years old. "Nancy" (disguised name), the mother of the child, kept "Sean." I went away to college and started a new life. It is now 10 years later. I've returned to my home town because of a good job offer and my family lives here.

I regret many of my immature and irresponsible ways. Nancy is happily married and has two children. I have asked her to permit me to visit with my son. Sean was told who I was. We see each other twice a month and I am trying to build a strong relationship.

One problem: I get upset when Sean refers to his stepfather as dad and calls me by my first name. I want him to call me dad too. Do I have this right? How far do I push this issue?

**Answer:** I am impressed by your attempt to turn things around and establish a bond with Sean. You must remember that Sean was raised by another man. He has (probably) established strong roots with this man.

Realistically, his stepfather is his father emotionally, morally, etc. Although you are his biological parent, the two of you must establish trust, friendship, respect and an understanding of the past. Why not let the relationship evolve and go through the process of developing emotional intimacy?

Let him call you by whichever name he feels comfortable and you will both ultimately be satisfied by whichever name he prefers - dad, your first name, etc. Again, I am impressed by you, his mother and stepfather for being able to cooperate and bring a sense of sanity and care to your son.

**An angry daughter writes:**  
I'm tired of the people who write to you to tell you how their parents ruined their lives. The truth is that my mother was the mother of all guilt trips. And nothing is able to change the damage she did. She never wanted me, always told me that I was an unwanted child and if abortion were legal many years ago, she would have aborted me.

She named me after her mother whom she hated and always told me that I was ugly and stupid like my father. She preferred my sister who looks like her. (My sister happened to be a winner in a state-wide beauty contest). Whenever my dad and she fought, she said I was to blame.

I grew up a nervous wreck always feeling responsible for everything that went and goes wrong. Don't take this personally, but therapy hasn't helped me much. So when it comes to destructive parents, my mother wins hands down. Hopefully, this will be the last letter on mother bashing.

**Answer:** I hope not. I rely on letters to keep the column going! Despite your very unfortunate background, I urge you to continue therapy. If you really feel you are not making the kind of movement you want to make, speak to your therapist. You may even want to consider changing therapists.

You have to resolve the issue of guilt - don't let your mother nor your family background dump on you and hold you as a psychological hostage. Be wary of guilt. Remember, guilt can last forever. "Guilt is the gift that keeps on giving."  
**A surprised mother writes:** My eight year old son went away to sleep away camp last month. He lasted two days and was sent home because he was "homesick."

"Josh" (disguised name) is a bright, capable boy who loves baseball and all sports and we sent him to an athletic sleep away camp for two weeks. He agreed to go although it was obvious as the date of departure arrived that he had some anxiety.

My husband felt that this would be a good experience and I guess I overlooked Josh's saying that he wasn't sure he wanted to go, that he would miss the family. I also overlooked his staying home instead of playing with friends, and his loss of appetite (this is a kid who loves food).

When the camp called to take him home (he cried, threw up, etc.), my husband felt he should stay longer since we paid the nonrefundable money. I said "no." Josh is home now and he seems more "up" and is out playing with friends eating again, etc. Any advice?

**Answer:** Children's needs and experiences vary. Josh did not seem

ready for sleep away camp and would have done better at a day camp. I hope you checked him out with his doctor to make sure he is okay medically. He seems to have separation problems and it was appropriate to have him return home considering the physical and emotional symptoms he was displaying.

He expressed a great deal of anxiety and needs to be near home. Hopefully, he will be more ready next summer and I would encourage you and Mr. to spend good time in preparation. Did you ask him why he was unhappy with camp? Sometimes a child will tell you directly what the problem is.

I would not make a big issue out of this unless other symptoms appear or the ones continue which he exhibited at camp. To enjoy another perspective of the camping experience, try to find an old album (remember them?) by Allan Sherman, I believe it was called Camp Granada and has a song titled "Hello Mudda, hello Fadda." It will provide you with some laughs - something we all need.



## IN THE CATBIRD SEAT

The catbird seat is a southern regionalism that is defined as a "position of prominence, power or good fortune."

The idiom was used by a very popular baseball announcer, Red Barber, who announced play-by-play broadcasts (1940s to 1970s) for the Brooklyn and, later, the Los Angeles Dodgers. Barber, in fact, called his autobiography, "The Catbird Seat."

In his book, "A Browser's Dictionary," John Ciardi explains Barber's use of the idiom in this way: "The Catbird perches high overhead pouring out excellent song." Ciardi goes on to explain that the phrase stands for "a fair equivalent of the way a pitcher must feel in his heart going into the ninth inning with a 15-run lead."

Incidentally, a catbird is "a North American bird whose call resembles a 'cat's meow.'" A cat's meow, in turn, is an expression of the 1920s indicating "excellence." We certainly hope that you will always be considered the cat's meow and receive a lifetime membership to the catbird seat!

## Getting Rid of Unsolicited Mail Is Just A Few Phone Calls Away



By CARL LOUIS PEER

Have you ever wondered about the origin of all the unsolicited mail you receive informing you that you have been pre-selected for credit?

One source for your name and address is credit reporting agencies. Information in your credit file is usually protected unless you take some action to initiate access to your credit file, such as applying for a loan, a job, or insurance.

If you do not initiate the transaction, potential lenders can obtain only your name and address from the credit reporting agencies. The lender will order a mailing list from a credit reporting agency of persons who meet certain criteria.

The list will include only names and addresses. This is called "pre-screening." (Note however that if you are a spy, the FBI can discover from the credit reporting agencies where you keep your money and where you work.)

But receiving a letter that you have been pre-selected does not mean that you will obtain the credit. Once you accept the lender's "offer" the lender may then order your credit report and find that you do not qualify for the credit.

When you receive a "pre-selected" offer you can determine whether you were pulled from a credit reporting agency list because the Federal Trade Commission requires that "pre-screening" offers contain the following disclosures: that the information contained in your consumer file was used in connection with the transaction; you received the offer because you satisfied the criteria for credit worthiness used to screen your offer; that credit may not be extended if... after you respond it is determined that you do not meet the criteria used for screening or any applicable criteria bearing on credit worthiness; or you are unable to furnish collateral; and that you may prohibit the use of information in your consumer file in connection with future pre-screened offers of credit by writing a letter or calling a toll free number.

If you do nothing when you receive a pre-approval letter, the only information the creditor obtains from the credit reporting bureau is your name and address and that you meet the pre-established

criteria that the lender submitted to the credit reporting agency.

You have the right to stop credit reporting agencies from releasing your name and address in response to a potential creditor's pre-screening request. The federal Fair Credit Reporting Act requires that the credit reporting agencies establish a procedure for you to opt out.

You can contact the major credit agencies by telephone and request that your name and address be removed from unsolicited credit and insurance offers for two years. If you return a completed "opt-out" form to the credit bureau, you will be off the list permanently. Think about all the trees you will save.

You can contact the three major credit bureaus individually or call one number to "opt-out" from all three of the major credit bureaus. (888) 5-OPTOUT (1-888-567-8688). The three major credit bureaus are: Equifax, P.O. Box 740241, Atlanta, Ga. 30374-0241, (800) 685-1111; Experian (formerly TRW), P.O. Box 949, Allen, TX 75013, (888) EXPERIAN (397-3742); Trans Union, 760 West Sprout Road, P.O. Box 390, Springfield, Pa. 19064-0390 (800) 916-8800.

Calling the OPTOUT number is probably the easiest way to perform the two-year opt out or to initiate the permanent opt-out. Remember, if you only make the phone call you'll be off the list for two years, if you want to get off permanently you'll have to request the notice of election (opt out) form, complete the form and return it.

If it were as easy to stop all unsolicited phone sales calls we might also be able to save some answering machines, and enjoy some more privacy. There is federal legislation requiring individual companies to place your name, at your request, on a "do-not-call" list, and the Direct Marketing Association (DMA) has guidelines and programs to remove your name from member marketers' telephone list (for details see DMA's Web site: [www.the-dma.org](http://www.the-dma.org)), but there is no legislation pertaining to telephone solicitation that is as easy and as comprehensive as the out provisions concerning credit reporting agencies.

Carl Peer is an attorney in Westfield.

## Diversifying Investments Decreases Your Risk

By KAREN ENSLE

About 70 percent of the total risk of investing can be eliminated through diversification.

This means "not putting all your eggs in one basket." In other words, selecting investments such as growth mutual funds or unit investment trusts that automatically hold a variety of securities, or assembling a diversified portfolio yourself.

If you choose the second approach, it is important to include companies that represent many different industry sectors. Select both companies that do well in all types of market cycles because they produce products and services that people buy continuously (e.g., food, toothpaste, prescription drugs) and companies that are more "cyclical" in nature (e.g., entertainment, autos, airlines) that rise and fall with the economy.

According to the National Association of Investors Corporation (NAIC), 12 industry sectors are suggested for adequate stock portfolio diversification. Below is a list of these sectors and some examples of the types of industries that are included in each:

1. Credit Cyclical - construction, forest products.
2. Financial Services - banks, brokers and insurance companies.
3. Consumer Growth - health care and entertainment.
4. Consumer Staples - food, alcoholic beverages, tobacco.
5. Consumer Cyclical - autos, appliances and merchandising.
6. Technology - computers, electronics and aerospace.
7. Capital Goods Industrial - machinery and equipment.
8. Energy - coal, oil and natural gas.

9. Materials - chemicals, paper, containers and metals.

10. Transportation - airlines, air freight and railroads.

11. Utilities - electric, gas pipelines and telephone.

12. Conglomerates - large companies that produce products services in two or more industry sectors.

Another important concept related to equity investing is asset allocation. An analogy for asset allocation is "selecting different baskets (asset classes) for your eggs." In other words, placing the money you have to invest in different types of assets, typically stocks, bonds, real estate and cash. Then, within each asset class (e.g., stock) investment selections (i.e. specific companies like Ford or General Motors) are made.

Investment researchers have also discovered that having money in only one overall asset class (e.g., stock) will not produce the highest return with the least amount of risk. The best portfolios combine assets so that when one zigs (falls in value), another often zags (increases). Since no one knows exactly how asset classes will perform in the future, the next best thing to a "crystal ball" is to invest in several asset classes, as well as different investments within each asset class. This way, you are shielded from being completely exposed at any one time to low-performing investments.

\*\*\*\*\*  
This Money 2000 message has been supplied by the Rutgers Cooperative Extension. Money 2000 is a program designed to increase the financial well-being of New Jersey residents through increased savings and reduced household debt.

## Downtown Improvement Efforts in County Should Attract Stores, Enhance Quality of Life

In an age when consumers demand both convenience and low prices, many downtown shopping districts have suffered over the past few decades in the wake of shopping malls such as Woodbridge Center and The Mall at Short Hills. With real estate prices soaring during these good economic times, a vibrant downtown combined with highly rated public schools and, of course, a quality housing stock, are major attractions for today's home buyers.

A priority of the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders over the past three years has been economic development. One of the efforts this year has been a new grant program called "Downtown Union County." A total of \$5 million will be distributed sometime in September to 14 of the county's 21 municipalities. Improvements will include everything from planters, better lighting and benches to replacement of overhead utility wires with underground lines.

Locally, Westfield, Scotch Plains and Fanwood all submitted applications and were awarded a combined total of \$1.2 million. Westfield intends to use its grant of \$450,000 to upgrade the Central Avenue entrance to the town beginning at Cacciola Place and continuing to North Avenue. The town will also receive \$10,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds to implement a facade renovation program for businesses along the Central Avenue corridor.

Scotch Plains will use the \$450,000 it will be receiving to upgrade the streetscape on Park Avenue, the main commercial thoroughfare in the township. The grant covers Park from East Second Street to Mountain Avenue. Fanwood, which will be getting \$300,000, intends to use to enhance the appearance of Martine Avenue between South and LaGrande Avenues.

The Downtown grants are right up there with the HEART (History, Education, Art and Reading Too) Grants for the arts in terms of improving the quality of lives of Union County's half million residents. For the Downtown grants to work, though, their must be a partnership between the county, municipalities and business communities. If our downtowns are up-

graded to feature tree-lined streets with enhanced lighting and safer pedestrian crosswalks, but no effort is made to bring in a solid mixture of retail establishments, these grants will be for naught.

In addition to these efforts, the local business communities are beginning to see the importance of working together. The efforts of the volunteer group, Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association, has resulted in a number of successful efforts aimed at promoting the business community. Fanwood is looking to formulate a similar organization. Westfield, which has a Chamber of Commerce, created a special improvement in 1996 which assesses downtown properties to support a budget aimed at promoting the business district by improving the district's economic viability. The Downtown Westfield Corporation (DWC) works with the Chamber on promotions and recruiting efforts for the downtown.

In fact the DWC has outlined a \$1.2 million Downtown Improvement Plan that includes the area covered by the Union County grant. At the request of the DWC, the town has submitted an application for a \$10,000 Union County Planning Grant. The proposal would include the following streetscape proposals: Bank Square, at East Broad and Elm Streets; Rialto Park, on along the Central Avenue side of the theatre; Central Avenue Promenade, in front of Banna Republic and Bombay; and Boulevard Gateway, to be located off South Avenue at Boulevard.

The town will soon begin upgrading many of its downtown lots including the one behind the Rialto which will only enhance the Westfield shopper experience. In addition, the town has privatized the collection service for downtown receptacles while increasing pickups to four days a week.

Other downtowns that will receive enhancements from county grant money include Union, Summit, Clark, Roselle Park, New Providence, Kenilworth and Garwood.

The efforts mentioned above will help create pedestrian and shopper friendly towns. Now if towns attract the right kind of mixture of stores in their communities, the shoppers will come.

## Letters to the Editor

### WYACT's Performance of Oliver! Exceeded Expectations, Was Flawless

Recently I was invited to attend a production of *Oliver*, at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark. When I accepted, I was unaware that it was an amateur production by a young actors cooperative.

Having been to my share of obligatory high school and college productions, I had learned to expect valiant effort but not much more. I could not have been more wrong in WYACT's case.

After seeing *Oliver!* by WYACT, all other performances are paled. Superb is insufficient; I was awed from the very beginning and stayed so throughout the flawless performance. There was no opportunity to be critical, no areas in need

of improvement, not one infinitesimal faux pas.

The voices in concert and solo were exquisite; I was astonished at the quality and delivery. There were no "wannabe" actors, only consummate professionals who need never worry about waiting tables.

The WYACT Orchestra was magnificent and complimented itself and this spectacularly marvelous performance.

Cynthia Meryl has created a synergy that will not be denied. I am now a faithful follower. Please publish a complete schedule of all WYACT productions.

Stan Peters  
Woodbridge

### Removing Lincoln School Playground Would be Disservice to Community

I am extremely troubled by the objections being voiced by a Westfield resident in regards to the recently completed renovations to the Lincoln School playground.

As a lifelong resident of this fine town, I have always felt that one of our great strengths is our enduring sense of community. Neighbors coming together to share stories, children coming together to play. It is with this interaction as neighbors and friends that we learn tolerance and understanding of one another.

In contrast, it seems that we as a nation are devoting too much of our time to singular activities. We play video games instead of a game of town football. We rent videos instead of taking the family to the movies. We order takeout instead of going to a restaurant. We surf the Internet for hour upon endless hour. We shut ourselves in our homes, and shut our neighbors out.

I am concerned that this growing trend is spreading into our own community.

I'm sure that we all agree that playgrounds are noisy, dusty places. However, playgrounds represent a commitment to an investment in the community. Playgrounds give children a place to develop healthy bodies, develop social skills, to role-play, laugh and generally be kids.

They also create a space for parents and grandparents to spend time with their children. Playgrounds provide us all with a place for neighbors to interact to build vital social networks thereby

strengthening the community as a whole.

Let's embrace the fact that the leaders of our community commit the resources necessary to revitalize an underutilized asset. I call upon the Town Council to find a satisfactory solution to this neighbor's concerns without having to take the drastic step of having the playground dismantled.

Removing this playground would not only be a loss to this neighborhood, but also a loss to our community as a whole.

William E. Heinbokel  
Westfield

### Efforts to Aid Refugees Make Resident Proud

Although I no longer reside in Westfield, I did spend 47 good years there. Thus it was heartening to read your article, "Westfield Committee Sponsoring Family Relocated from Kosovo."

It made me feel proud of my church (First Congregational) and also proud of my community for ecumenically fulfilling the Biblical Commandment, "You shall open wide your hand to your brother, the needy and the poor." (Deuteronomy 7:11).

Of course this is not a new idea to Westfield residents. Do you remember the Vietnamese boat people? Westfield was able and willing then too!

Cathy Zobel  
Media, Pa.

**Deadlines**  
General News - Friday 4pm  
Weekend Sports - Monday 12pm  
Classifieds - Tuesday 2pm

**How To Reach Us**  
E-Mail - [press@goleader.com](mailto:press@goleader.com)  
Phone - (908) 232-4407  
Mail-PO Box 250, Westfield 07091  
PO Box 368, Scotch Plains 07076  
In Person - 50 Elm St., Westfield  
1906 Bartle Avenue, Scotch Plains

**Submission Formats**  
Photos - B/W and Color  
No Panoramic or Polaroid  
Typed, not handwritten  
Upper and lower case  
Need name & daytime phone  
For our complete editorial policies  
request a copy of our Policy Guide

### Boxtops Can Also Aid Pupils at J. Ackerman Coles School

Your July 29, 1999 edition carried a story about McGinn School collecting General Mills boxtops as a fundraiser. I would like to remind local residents that other local schools also collect these boxtops so that our students can benefit from this program.

Residents of Scotch Plains and Fanwood can help J. Ackerman Coles School raise funds for our new play-

ground equipment by donating General Mills boxtops to Coles School. Just drop them off in the box in Coles School lobby, when the building is open.

Boxtops can also be mailed to J. A. Coles School, Kevin Road, Scotch Plains, 07076, Attn: PTA - Boxtops.

Janet M. Mann  
President  
J. A. Coles PTA

