

## Dale Neseman

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icated cartoonist, says a political cartoonist is like a sleight-of-hand artist, you watch too closely and all the fun goes out of it. I've found this to be very true.

Sometimes you can render the most pointed, absurd, barb at a local politician only to have him (or her) turn around and ask to have the original drawing to hang in their office. Hello? Did you get the joke? I've decided over the years that, of course, they do get the joke. That's the point.

Most politicians I have had the pleasure to meet, enjoy the wonderful ability to laugh at themselves.

I'll never forget being invited to the mayor's office in the Village Hall where I live in Hamburg, N.Y. The mayor, who was about to retire, was, in a former life, a tough, no nonsense, football coach at the local high school, not to mention my gym teacher.

He was still big, strong and intimidating and commanded respect from everyone from the Village Board to all his former students - like me. I had the pleasure of zinging him for years with my cartoons and figured I was safe from any kind of retaliation.

What could he do to me now? Recall my high school diploma? Still, there was some concern as I sat there waiting for him. Tiny rivulets of perspiration began

to form at the base of my neck as I sat in his outer office waiting for him to get off the phone. I had no idea what he wanted. "Send Neseman in here!" I heard him bellow in that familiar voice. Slowly I crept into his office. He greeted me with a huge smile and his patented, death-grip handshake.

"I just wanted you to see this," his arm swept wide as he gestured at a wall. As I looked in astonishment, he began a low chuckle which developed into full fledged belly laugh.

There on the wall, framed and hanging in neat rows, was a copy of every cartoon I had ever done about him. The one with the pie in his face, the one with his pants down revealing his underwear with little heart designs, and my favorite, the one where he was aptly dressed as Darth Vader. There must have been 25 of them.

"I call it my wall of fame," he beamed.

To my surprise, he had been one of my biggest fans. Of course, he loved the attention, most politicians have giant egos. But it was more than that. He appreciated the humor that was at his expense. He could laugh at himself. I will never trust a politician who can not.

Recently, Mayor Thomas C. Jardim of Westfield asked for a copy of a cartoon I did about him. I was very pleased about that.



**MOTHERLY LOVE...**Fourth grader Britta Greene got a big hug from her mom, Karrie Hanson, at the Sub n' Soda picnic at Wilson Elementary School in Westfield. This annual event traditionally kicks off the new school year for the children. The event, catered by J & M Market in Mountainside, was successful with more than 800 people attending. Chairs Carolyn Cordeiro and Giselle Mascarich and their crew of volunteers from the school made the event run smoothly. Dessert was provided by fifth graders who sold brownies as part of their fundraising efforts for the fifth grade yearbook and end-of-year party.

## Two Students Win Bonds In Columbus Day Contest

SCOTCH PLAINS - Two Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School students were awarded U.S. Savings Bonds as winners of the annual Columbus Day essay contest during recent festivities in Scotch Plains on October 11 at the Scotch Plains Municipal Building.

Matthew DiNichilo won first prize and a \$1,000 Savings Bond, while Timothy Ryan took second prize and a \$500 Savings Bond.

Their awards were made during the Columbus Day celebration sponsored by the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Chapter of Unity Neighborhood Integrity Charity and Opportunity (UNICO) National, the Scotch Plains Italian American Club and the Father Nelligan Council of the Knights of Columbus.

Dr. Ralph Ley, retired professor of Rutgers University, served as Chair-

man of the Essay Contest sponsored by Scotch Plains-Fanwood UNICO. The essay contest was opened to any Scotch Plains-Fanwood high school resident. The subject was "Civilization and Its Italian Roots."

Each of the two winners read his winning essay to the crowd assembled.

The public then re-convened at the Christopher Columbus Monument where a time capsule containing the history and activities of Scotch Plains-Fanwood UNICO, Italian American Club and the Knights of Columbus was buried with instructions that it be opened on Columbus Day in the year 2050.

The program ended with the placement of two commemorative wreaths donated by UNICO and the Italian American Club at the Christopher Columbus Monument.



**AWARD WINNING ESSAY...**Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School student Matthew DiNichilo won first place in the recent Columbus Day essay contest sponsored by Scotch Plains-Fanwood UNICO. Matthew read his essay to the gathered crowd as event organizers look on. The organizers, pictured left to right, are: John Appazzato, Master of Ceremonies; John Farenella, UNICO; Romano Del Roio, Vice President, Scotch Plains Italian American Club, and Ralph Ley, Essay Chairman.

## Teen Center Opens for Year In Town Municipal Building

WESTFIELD - The Westfield Recreation Commission's Teen Center recently opened for the 1999-2000 school year.

The Teen Center is located in the basement of the Municipal Building and is open every Friday and Saturday night from 8 p.m. until midnight.

The center is available to all Westfield High School students who present a valid Westfield High School identification card or proof of Westfield residence. Admission is free.

"Our goal in operating the Teen Center is to provide kids with a place to get together in a safe and enjoyable environment," Mayor Thomas C. Jardim said.

The Teen Center offers a relaxed, drop-in atmosphere with a variety of games including, air hockey, bubble hockey, three pool tables, two ping pong tables, a foosball game, a basketball arcade game, checkers, chess

and cards.

In addition, the center offers two Sony Play Station systems, a big screen television (with HBO), a candy machine, a soda machine and a full stereo system. Teens are able to bring music of their choice to play, as long as it doesn't contain vulgar language.

The Westfield Recreation Commission will soon purchase a new Sega Dreamcast System for the Teen Center. A skeeball game and a pinball machine may be purchased in the near future.

Special event nights, such as Pizza Night and Sub Night, are offered periodically. There will be a small charge for these special events.

Two Westfield High School teachers supervise the Teen Center. Chuck Ropars supervises the center on Friday nights. Carl Barber-Steel supervises the center on Saturday nights.

Both are receptive to suggestions from teens about materials and activities for the center. Jim Gildea, Assistant Director of the Westfield Recreation Department said.

"The Teen Center is a great place where kids can have the fun they have at home in an environment with their peers," Mr. Gildea said. "Parents are pleased to have their kids spend time in a friendly secure atmosphere."

## Parenting Pathways To Present Workshop On Acquiring a Pet

FANWOOD - Parenting Pathways will host a workshop on Wednesday, November 10, entitled "Mommy, Can I Have a Pet?"

The program will take place from 7:30 to 9 p.m. in the downstairs meeting room of the First Savings Bank, 206 South Avenue in Fanwood.

Guest speaker Gloria Binkowski will share information on how to select and care for a family pet and address questions and concerns about bringing a pet into a family.

This free presentation is open to the public. Children 9 years of age and older are invited to attend with a parent and refreshments will be served.

For answers to questions or additional information, please call (908) 889-5826. Parenting Pathways is a Fanwood-based, nonprofit organization established to provide support and education to all parents.

## Newcomers Club Slates New Member Coffee

The Newcomers Club of Westfield invites women who are interested in meeting new people and getting involved in the community to its New Member Coffee today, Thursday, October 28, at 8 p.m. at a members home.

For more information or to attend, please call Susan Hopper at (908) 301-1821.

The Newcomers Club was founded in 1944 and is open to women who are new to Westfield, or have had a recent lifestyle change such as a birth, marriage, job change, or move within the town.

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