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WESTFIELD GIRL SCOUTS Westfield Girl Scouts Prepare Yearlong Projects, Activities

Written by Girl Scouts for Girl Scouts

The Girl Scouting year in Westfield is just getting under way, and we have some great events planned for this year.

If you are interested in joining Girl Scouts, please contact Pam Orbach, Community Manager, at (908) 233-2827.

Events for this month include:
- Service Team Meeting, will be held October 6, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., Washington Rock Girl Scout Council offices on Grove Street in Westfield.

- Nut Sale will be held from Friday, October 8, to Wednesday, October 20. Any troop wishing to participate should contact Christine Mason at (908) 233-4599.

- Leaders Meeting, Thursday, October 21, 7:30-9:30 p.m. at Edison Intermediate School cafeteria. All leaders are urged to attend.

- Westfield Girl Scout Hayride, Saturday, October 16, 4:30 to 9:30 p.m., Trailside Science and Nature Center. Raindate is Saturday, October 23. The hayride will include a campfire with toasted marshmallows, songs, games and snacks. Three 1-1/2 hour sessions will be held. Younger girls will be assigned earlier times. Registration forms must be submitted to Donna Burslem no later than Friday, October 1. Please call Mrs. Burslem at (908) 232-5533 for further information.

- New Leaders Community orientation is available by calling Betty Riker at (908) 233-5705. Any new leaders who have not yet attended this training are urged to contact Mrs. Riker so that a session may be scheduled.

School representatives are need for both the upcoming TROOPS project and the Mitten Tree project.

The TROOP project collects donations of coffee, tea, hot chocolate, unprepared popcorn, videos, books, travel-size games, unused greeting cards and holiday decorations. These donations are given to the American Red Cross who then ships them to our servicemen.

The Mitten Tree project collects donations of new mittens, gloves, hats, scarves and socks. These are then given to New Jersey's homeless.

The TROOPS project runs from Monday, November 1, to Friday, November 19. The Mitten Tree project will be held from Monday, November 22, to Friday, December 10.

A representative from each of the schools in Westfield is needed for both projects. Please call Shirley Walsh at (908) 232-5817 if you can be your school's representative.

We are looking forward to another great year of Girl Scouts. Please join us at our Web site www.goleader.com/wgs.

Editor's Note: This article is written monthly by Westfield Girl Scouts for Westfield Girl Scouts and for the public.



COUP D'ETAT COUP DE GRACE

A 1985 news story about an aborted coup d'etat (pronounced koo de ta) in Thailand sent us scurrying to our library in search of the origin of this French euphemism. We thought that this coup might just be a real coup, "a brilliantly executed stratagem," to present to our readers.

Our search was not in vain. In the process we discovered that, indeed, there are "different strokes for different folks."

The phrase, coup d'etat, which was borrowed from the French, literally means "stroke of state." The current definition is "a sudden overthrow of government by a group of persons previously in positions of authority in deliberate violation of constitutional forms."

A coup de grace (pronounced koo de gras) is another French euphemism that literally means "a stroke or act of mercy rendered to someone who is mortally wounded." Coup de grace also conveys the sense of "a final or decisive event or act."

On that note we shall apply the coup de grace to today's column.

Letters to the Editor

Resident Calls Proposed Expansion Plan For Memorial Pool, Park 'Troubling'

My name is Joseph Penczak. I live on Scotch Plains Avenue. Since moving to Westfield two years ago, I have cleared a significant amount of rubbish (and poison ivy!) from my backyard, and have had successful vegetable garden crops.

I've planted a cherry tree and a weeping willow and count my blessings every day that I live in a town as beautiful as ours.

Recently, however, I received a notice from the Recreation Commission about a meeting on September 27 with regards to a proposal of theirs to drastically change the surrounding ambience. I had the opportunity to look at the blueprints for this plan, and find them greatly troubling.

They have plans to redevelop the Memorial Pool complex and the Memorial Park. The plans for the pool include adding several new pools and eliminating the diving tank. The plans for the park include demolishing several hundred trees in the wooded area between the baseball fields and Drake Place, and replacing them with a 62-car parking lot!

Another area of the park is also scheduled to be demolished and paved over to

make room for a 180-foot x 100-foot roller hockey court!

The Commission claims that the primary reason for these plans are to replace a deteriorating diving tank, and to accommodate the increased number of families moving into town.

Yet the plans do not address these issues! The ball fields in the blueprints are no bigger than they are now. The plans call for the conversion of a handball court (which is used by tennis players) into a basketball court, while the basketball courts that are in the parking lot are not used now. The location of the proposed parking lot ensures that it will not be used by pool patrons, as it is two blocks away from the pool!

Parking is only a problem at the pool itself, and only during a few hot weekends in the summer. The lot is never filled during the soccer/softball season, presumably the rationale behind the perceived need to destroy the woods for a 62-car parking lot.

The plans also call for the installation of lights around the fields. Does that mean they intend to keep the park open after dusk?

There are too many unanswered questions to look the other way. No environmental impact was done (are there endangered/threatened species in the woods), no traffic study was done (Drake Place is a narrow, dead-end street with no sidewalks and no curbs), no needs assessment was done (How many Westfielders are clamoring for a roller hockey court? Who is to pay for this? At what cost? What about the significant property value losses?)

Every autumn, the leaves from the trees in the woods fall into my backyard. I rake them into a large pile, call my little children out (ages 3, 7 and 10) and pretend to be "Big Brown Bear" — whooping and chasing them into my "big bear" arms and tumbling together into the leaf pile.

When my 7-year-old heard us discussing the Recreation Department's plans, tears came to her eyes and she asked, "Does that mean Brown Bear won't be coming anymore?"

What do I tell her?

Joseph Penczak
Westfield

Proposed Law by Common Cause Deserves to Be Instituted by Council

Common Cause has stood up for good government for almost 30 years. It has been a major force in developing laws on ethical accountability for our elected officials at all levels of government.

I have been a part of Common Cause for most of its existence, including two years as Chairman of Common Cause New Jersey from 1983 to 1985.

Dedication to good government is a major part of why I am running for Town Council in Westfield's Second Ward.

I want to lend my support to a proposed ordinance being considered by Town Council. This law would require competitive requests for proposals from professional service pro-

viders prior to the awarding of contracts.

Common Cause New Jersey has recruited a Citizen's Army of activists around the state to introduce laws into local communities that set high standards for ethical behavior. Common Cause suggested a model law to our Town Council that became the basis for this proposed law.

Regrettably, there is a need for this sort of law in Westfield. Just this past year, the Republican majority on Town Council voted down the renewal of a contract to the town's insurance risk advisor of many years' standing and awarded it instead to a firm of a former Republican Mayor and current finance chairman of the Union County Republican Committee.

There was no request for proposals from the town from competing providers or even any presentation of its credentials from the firm that received the award. The Republican majority even invoked an obscure provision of the Town Code to force the convening of a special meeting of Town Council to insure that they had adequate votes for their purposes.

It is certainly clear to me that this is not the way business should be done in Westfield. I am committed to being an advocate for good government practices as a member of Town Council.

I would encourage the Republicans on Town Council to join the crusade for good government and lend their support to the expeditious passage of this law.

Joe Stoner
Candidate
Second Ward
Westfield

TV-36 Instructor Aided Residents During Storm

The recent storm inspired acts of heroism, good deeds, caring gestures or concern for better preparedness in the future from many people.

Some of these acts were chronicled in the newspapers and on television, and others weren't.

One person who somehow escaped notice for his five trips to a closed and locked Westfield High School, starting at 6 a.m. Friday morning after the storm, to program the TV-36 bulletin board with emergency messages, was David Davis, French teacher and TV curriculum instructor.

He volunteers his own time and technical expertise at a moment's notice from the Westfield Police Department, while teaching during the regular school day and advising TV students after school. Thanks again this time, Mr. Davis.

Philip F. Falcone
Westfield

Westfield HS Teacher Says TV-36 Was Misrepresented in Story

Editor's Note: The following letter was written by a Westfield High School teacher who supervises the TV-36 operation at the high school.

In reference to your September 23 article concerning Westfield High

School's (WHS) TV-36, it is important to correct some of the errors therein. Overall, WHS-TV-36 is misrepresented, and some of the information is either wrong or missing necessary context.

Our full name is WHS-TV 36. The "WHS" part provides important context. WHS put the bulletin board together when there was none. It was not designed for emergency messaging.

During the storm and subsequent water emergency, the article states that "the biggest problem faced by police was the inability to gain quick access to TV-36 [sic]." People are evacuating their flooded homes, vehicles are stalled in flooded streets, live power lines are down and there are over a hundred 911 calls an hour at the peak. If getting to WHS-TV 36 was the biggest problem, why then, in some cases, did time pass before someone called me to put on a message?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Residents Could Soon Feel Loss Of Neighborhood if Pool Plan Passes

Editor's Note: The following resident resides in Westfield's Fourth Ward where the Westfield Memorial Pool and Park are located.

This letter concerns the future of the lives of residents in the neighborhood surrounding the Westfield Memorial Pool and Park who will soon feel they've "lost their neighborhood." This past Monday the town introduced a plan to the public to reconfigure the Memorial Pool and Park Complex.

Town fliers were sent to the residents within 200 feet of the park/pool notifying them of this proposal. Renderings of the proposed plan were made available to the public Monday, September 20. How convenient of the Westfield Recreation Commission to offer this to the public, leaving little time for residents to gain support before *The Westfield Leader* deadline.

The redevelopment of Memorial Pool and Park will include two new pools (both of which will be constructed closer to residents on West Broad Street by utilizing an additional 90 feet in that direction), an illuminated hockey court with stadium seating and basketball court on the Florence Avenue side, additional parking off Scotch Plains Avenue near Drake Place, and several additional entrances to the complex.

The proposed plan represents an effort by the Town of Westfield and Recreation Commission to increase membership in the community pool

and to create a park conducive to additional recreational activities. The pool alone currently accommodates residents of not only Westfield, but also other towns as well.

When the Memorial Pool was first proposed 30 years ago, the town made a commitment to the residents surrounding the proposed pool area, assuring them that the peaceful and quiet character of their neighborhood would be maintained. As a gesture of good faith and community spirit, the town offered residents membership to the pool.

Where has the concern for the community gone now? When neighborhoods in the area of East Broad Street and Chestnut Street recently demanded attention for their safety issues due to traffic fatalities, steps were immediately taken to improve those conditions.

Police have increased their efforts to protect commuters and pedestrians in the downtown area. What about West Broad Street and the surrounding area?

Where are the concerns for the safety of residents in this neighborhood? Traffic conditions surrounding the pool, which include Scotch Plains Avenue, Downer Street, West Broad Street, and the Marion Avenue/West Broad Street entrance to the pool, already pose high risks for pedestrians, children biking to the pool, and normal vehicular traffic on these roads.

The West Broad Street traffic in that area is already heavily traveled without the pool factor. Do we want additional traffic putting our children at risk when they try to cross those already busy streets to attend the pool? More whistles blowing and racing pistols being fired due to an additional competition pool? More public address announcements? More noise pollution as a result of two pools closer to West Broad Street residents?

Increased parking along surrounding streets and more bright lights at night?

If there is a need for "additional recreational opportunities for Westfield residents," perhaps one solution might be another pool complex in another part of town. Why cram all this recreation into a residential area already stressed by traffic and noise caused by the current pool complex?

Instead of a ShopRite on North Avenue, why not a pool? Oh, that's right — too much traffic!

Judy Buldo
Westfield

Memorial Park, Pool Plan Just Another Controversial Proposal by Rec. Commission

First it was Brightwood Park, then it was Tamaques Park and now it is the Memorial Pool complex and Memorial Park. All of these facilities have faced expansion or significant alteration plans at the hands of the Westfield Recreation Commission.

Brightwood, a natural setting consisting of 43 acres, was put forth as the location for construction of a multi-purpose field on the park's border with Scotch Plains. Following objections from many residents in the area, however, that plan has all but been killed.

Another plan called for paving over part of the green lawn at Tamaques to expand parking capacity by some 80 spaces. That plan, while not completely derailed, will be, at the very least, significantly scaled back.

Now, Memorial Park and Memorial Pool were put on the front burner with separate and ambitious preliminary renovation plans totaling over \$3.3 million. Once again, Westfield residents had to take time out of their busy schedules to come downtown to the Municipal Building to voice their displeasure on a proposal before the commission.

While we agree with the need to maintain Memorial Park and its facilities, the plans for the pool expansion, quite frankly, troubles us.

Pool permits sold out for the first time this summer — the hottest on record in New Jersey — with 1900 family memberships taken. Although the pool renovation plan was in the works before the sell-out season, the commission apparently has felt some urgency to make changes that will allow for more family memberships.

The overall plans for the recreation area near West Broad Street and Scotch Plains Avenue, as reported in last week's *Westfield Leader*, call for significant changes to both the park and pool complex. The pool complex plan calls for the elimination of the diving tank and the addition of a slide and splashdown pool, permanent lap competition and adult leisure pools. In addition, the town wants to reclaim some Westfield-owned property that some residents have been using as backyards so that the pool complex can be expanded.

At Memorial Park, there are also plans to add a 62-

space parking lot in a now-wooded area near Drake Place. Woods would be cleared to construct this lot.

Wasn't it only recently that the Town Council passed a shade tree ordinance to stop developers from "clear cutting" building lots of trees prior to construction? It seems to us that the proposal before the commission strongly conflicts with the town ordinance.

One commission member told us that the strong objections of residents attending the meeting, estimated at 200, was a "real eye opener" and that it looks like the plan will have to go "back to the drawing board."

When a plan this massive is being discussed, we suggest that neighbors and residents get involved at the beginning to accurately gauge the needs and wants of the town. It's not too late. Since some changes seem to be necessary for both the park and pool, how about getting them involved now?

One thing that needs to be looked at is the role of the 11-member commission. Are they an independent board? Who do they answer to? Shouldn't they first maintain the ball fields and parks that we have before proposing one expansion after the next?

Shouldn't the Recreation Director report directly to the Town Administrator and the Town Council? We believe these questions must be answered. There have been too many controversial plans coming out of this commission these days. Many of the town parks, including Memorial, seem to be at their maximum usage already. Perhaps the town should consult with neighboring communities and even the county about the availability of space.

The county recently purchased land across from Kean University in Union for park land. The land should be available for all towns to use. After all, county taxpayers, including Westfield, funded the purchase. The inconvenience to our sports leagues of playing outside of Westfield does not, in our judgement, come close to destroying the peace and quiet that all residents in this town are entitled to.

Let's stop plans that destroy trees and impact negatively on the quality of life of surrounding neighborhoods.

Letters to the Editor

Elizabethtown Water Company Must Be Held Responsible for 'Negligence'

Editor's Note: The following letter was sent to State Senate President Senator Donald T. DiFrancesco and copied to The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood.

The Elizabethtown Water Company has failed miserably and negligently to inform all the residents and visitors within its service area of the danger of contaminated water resulting from Tropical Storm Floyd. At the very least, the water company should have taken these actions.

First, sent a flyer in the mail to each customer. Second, placed four by four brilliant orange or red signs at each intersection and along each main thoroughfare in its service area to notify visitors as well as customers. Third, called each of its customers. Fourth, established a siren warning system to alert customers of the dangerous water situation.

None of this was done. Only because my wife and I happened to have dinner in a restaurant in Clark did we learn from a sign at the restaurant that we should not be drinking the water.

The Elizabethtown Water Company is guilty of gross and perhaps even criminal negligence which might have or even may, God forbid, result in someone's serious illness or even death.

The water company should have in supply at all times the notices and flyers to be sent and exhibited. It cannot be assumed that all customers read the local newspapers, watch the local television channels, or listen to the local news on radio.

Indeed some customers were without electricity. Even now there is considerable public confusion about and fear of the safety of the water.

Also to be faulted are the health departments of the municipalities in the service area of Elizabethtown Water Company which did not take the steps I have outlined. They, like the water company, knew about the impending monstrous storm, a storm so potentially catastrophic that President Bill Clinton flew back from a meeting in New Zealand to be at the White House to help co-ordinate what was feared would be one of the worst natural disasters ever to hit our country.

Hurricane Floyd at one point almost a category-five hurricane, the most powerful hurricane category, was one of the strongest hurricanes in Atlantic Ocean ever recorded. The United States Hurricane Center for days had been predicting

that this very powerful storm loaded with moisture would move over New Jersey.

Neither the Elizabethtown Water Company nor municipal officials were at the helm to provide the warnings I have outlined.

The State of New Jersey should pass legislation and adopt regulations requiring the steps I have outlined. Furthermore, the state should investigate what safety measures and precautions Elizabethtown Water Company took to protect its filtration plant which was flooded as a result of the terrible storm.

The water company should have built sufficient dam barriers to prevent flood waters from reaching the filtration plant. The state should also consider bringing civil or criminal action against the Elizabethtown Water Company if it is established with a preponderance of the evidence or without reasonable doubt that the water company was negligent in providing sufficient warnings to its customers and visitors within its service area of the unsafe water.

Dr. Stephen Schoeman
Scotch Plains

More Letters On Page 8

Resident Supports Ordinance to Remove Professional Contracts From Party Politics

Editor's Note: The writer of the following letter is a member of the Common Cause Citizen's Army.

As a Republican, I was delighted to read that Westfield Fourth Ward Councilman Lawrence A. Goldman presented to the Westfield Town Council the Common Cause ordinance, which would remove the awarding of professional services contracts from party politics.

If enacted, this nonpartisan bill will be the second Common Cause campaign finance reform resolution passed by Westfield.

As elections have become increasingly centered around fundraising, paid political consultants, and negative TV ad blitzes, New Jersey voters have be-

come less relevant and more alienated. In fact, a majority of New Jersey citizens no longer vote. While the amount of campaign spending has increased, the percentage of people voting has hit its lowest point since the Secretary of State started polling turnout data in 1920. (There was a 38 percent voter turnout in 1997, the last statewide election.)

Faced with these problems, Common Cause New Jersey started a good government, grassroots campaign effort called the Citizen's Army Movement. The ordinance, Councilman Goldman introduced is one of the Citizen's Army's weapons.

In cooperation with the League of Women Voters, I fully support Councilman Goldman's ordinance.

David Golush
Westfield