



Letters to the editor, Aug. 2



Return trips to Lackawanna Station for Planning Board

The supermarket designer says using train sheds “ would be gorgeous”it’s time for this developer to finally do something great for Montclair’s downtown.

The Planning Board’s recent Lackawanna Plaza July 23 (next is Aug. 6) hearing showed that it’s clearly a lack of developer interest, creativity and design expertise with historic buildings that continues to delay bringing a supermarket back to this space. He has ignored our Planning Board chairman’s request to work with the Board’s preservation architect and Historic Preservation Commission experts to finalize a design that would be approved. This developer’s plan remains consistent....demolition.

Other local developers propose more appropriate initial designs for Montclair’s historic neighborhoods and assets so only details have to be addressed by boards and projects are approved smoothly. Instead, this developer continues to make claims about what won’t work and about excessive retrofit costs that were shown to be illogical when questioned. Any decision is still under review since the developer has other testimonies to present including a historian he sought out who is willing to discredit Montclair’s iconic 1913 Lackawanna station’s historic designation, including its listings on the local, state and national historical registries.

Questions from Planning Board members showed they were not blindly buying the developer’s statements and those of his representatives about what is possible. The board hired their own supermarket design firm who testified about what can be done with the site and stated that building a supermarket under the sheds...“would be gorgeous.” He believed a smaller sized market would actually be more profitable and successful within this highly competitive supermarket area given rapidly changing food buying habits. This consultant also suggested the Planning Board hire their own market research analyst to determine the best size and type of market for Montclair’s hybrid urban-suburban location.

Two supermarket industry consultants have now testified—one was the developer’s own location analyst not a

store designer. Both effectively agreed that an open store interior could be used to preserve the station's original train shed metal stanchions. Further, that this unique design could become a magnet for wider area customer draw, pulling them away from their current grocers, for an exceptional shopping experience here. With the right expertise and motivation, our downtown can be an affordable grocer in an exciting and welcoming setting.

To be fair, it is not an easy project to do because there is a difference in elevations within the mall. Parking is always a problem to be dealt with for any Montclair development. Residents and boards were thrilled when this third site plan proposed much smaller scale development and most historic station elements were preserved but it was not immediately clear that two thirds of the train sheds would not be.

He owns and is developing all larger properties in town: the coming 8.5 story hotel; the six and seven story Seymour Street project with several buildings as well as Lackawanna Plaza. The Seymour project also required the township to virtually force the developer to ultimately create a design that worked with our local character. By building here, he is significantly benefiting from Montclair tax payers and our visitors by building in town. It's time to give back.

When actual plans are presented we too often only see oversized bulky buildings and attempts to justify too little parking. Maybe its time to put their money where their mouth is in this town. Maybe Montclair is due for a give back from this developer, a great supermarket built under the sheds and an attractive development to enhance our downtown by opening Toney's Brook.

Lastly, preserving our historic nature is preserving economic value and why developers want to build here. Maintaining and creating open green space in town is a goal within the 2015 revised Master Plan approved by the Planning Board.

This is the only big chance to enhance the downtown. If you care enough to help and not just vent on social media, attend or communicate at planning meetings and with elected officials using email or during public comments at the Council Conference meetings. Find contact information and meeting schedules on the town site.

Linda Cranston

Montclair

The writer is the founder of SaveMontclair, an organization dedicating to saving the "historic charm and small-town character" of Montclair, according to its website.

Stop 3D-printed firearms

As a movement fighting for gun violence prevention at every level of government from local and federal level, we confront a new challenge: Do-it-yourself, downloadable gun blueprints, many of which are made out of

plastic, and are therefore invisible to metal detectors. The State Department is planning a special exemption, letting the company Defense Distributed release online blueprints for these guns. These types of “ghost guns” have been tested and deemed “viable killing weapon[s]” by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. At the moment, it is legal to make this type of firearm if several pieces of metals are included, though they can be easily removed. However, as of Aug.1, that will no longer be a requirement.

Therefore, people who cannot pass a background check to buy a firearm, such as terrorists, domestic abusers, and other violent criminals will be able to download and print an untraceable, unregistered firearm with no serial number, posing an immense new challenge to law enforcement when they need to investigate gun-related crimes.

After being pressured by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said he would “take a look” at this issue. Although defense distributed was initially barred from distributing such blueprints, after a long legal battle, they reached a settlement allowing them to post designs for a variety of firearms, including the AR-15, a weapon regularly used by mass shooters, unless we take action. For this reason, we urge you to contact the State Department now and let them know you demand the safety of our communities and country be their top priority, and that they stop legalized distribution of 3D printed firearms.

Maria Eva Dorigo

Montclair

Thanks on a great MHS All-Class Reunion

A special letter of recognition and accolades should be given to the committee of the Montclair High All Class Reunion- what a great weekend they planned and hosted for the alumni from Montclair High School.

They have managed to capture in one weekend every two years all that makes Montclair special — an All Class Reunion — not for a specific decade or sport, but for the entire Montclair alumni. It’s an unbelievable feeling to walk into an event or park filled with people who all have one thing in common – that Mountie pride. You see it in all the blue tents set up with generations of families under them and wearing Mountie T-shirts, you see it as old friends find each other and hug, you see it as they line up to buy new Mountie T-shirts to bring home.

I look forward to this weekend every two years — it takes the committee that long to put together an event this large to celebrate a great town like Montclair. I have friends from far and wide come home just for this celebration of Montclair and all that makes it so special—San Diego, New Orleans, Miami, Chicago, Atlantic City and Philadelphia. The planning and discussion start on social media months in advance. This is a weekend that is easier and more (sometimes) enjoyable for so many to come for than the holidays. It’s just us, the way we all were when we were in high school, laughing and having fun and grabbing lunch on the avenue somewhere, most of our old teenage spots are gone such as Blimpie’s, Calabrese and Danny’s, but places like The Office (great after party) Tierney’s and Just Jake’s are still here and now we can actually have a seat at

the bar.

We spend the usual time reminiscing like everyone does at a reunion, taking a tour of the high school, tracking down old friends, driving past our old house (mine's gone now), but it's still our hometown and we are glad to have everyone home for the weekend.

And now we get to see and meet the new Montclair. The Crosby that welcomed us for brunch, 18 Label St. that opened its doors for a fabulous welcome party, Yogi Berra Stadium for a baseball game, and of course, the place we are all celebrating for bringing us together in the first place, Montclair High. Friday night school tours and a Sunday service. Thank you to the local businesses old and new that welcomed back everyone and celebrated along with us. Those of us still local will see you in the next few weeks and months - those who visit will see you again in two years.

Special accolades should also be given to the Montclair Parks & Rec., Sanitation and Police and Fire Departments, many of whom are not only graduates of Montclair High, but who worked the entire day of the Nishuane Park picnic to make sure everything was clean, safe and everyone felt welcomed.

The biggest thank you must go to Toi Blount, Robin Curry, Brendan Gill, Jimmy Eason and the rest of the All Calls Reunion Committee for a great weekend, for the vision and planning and especially for not reminding anyone that I am not only an Immaculate Conception High School graduate, but a Mountie because of my Montclair roots. #mountiepride #lionpride #lovethatBlueandWhite.

Barbara P. Hughes

Montclair



Letters to the editor, July 26



Don't blame preservationists for Lackawanna hold up

In a town like Montclair that is characterized by its fine old buildings, its long standing neighborhoods and its unique social fabric, its only logical that due attention is given to preserving Montclair for what it is. Don't blame preservationists for holding up redevelopment if not enough importance is being given to preserving the towns fine old buildings.

The decision makers of redevelopment have a duty in maintaining the Montclair's historic character because its what maintains the real estate values and protects property owner's investments in the residential neighborhoods. Montclair's major real estate worth is indisputably its vast inventory of vintage residential properties. Preservation of the fine old existing streetscapes is a vital factor in maintaining real estate values. It attracts newcomers to invest in maintaining the fine old houses and neighborhoods.

Preserving the neighborhoods' buildings, especially the landmarks, means maintaining real estate values in actual indisputable statistics. This patrimony of historic buildings, is what gives Montclair its attractive trademark. Preservation maintains the town's character and standards of quality. Its also considered a way to prevent suburban sprawl from harming a town's desirable character.

Montclair has a diverse, rich and unique social fabric that must me maintained to order to preserve the character as well. The Fourth Ward's valuable Black history landmarks are disappearing and cannot afford to lose any more because of their significant social legacy.

The Lackawanna Station is also a valuable fourth ward landmark that must not be lost to redevelopment. Preserving the valuable train station landmark is important for the value of Montclair center as well as the whole town. Preserving the landmarks could be considered a sentimental option but its significance in today's world is reflected in economic return.

FRANK GERARD GODLEWSKI

Essex Fells

End the abuse of children on our border

Like millions of other Americans, I watched in horror as thousands of children, hundreds under age five, have been separated from their families at the United States border, expressly to terrorize families seeking asylum in our country, a fully legal right, so that others will no longer see the United States as a refuge and will not even attempt to come.

As federal courts demanded reunification of these families, we are witnessing the utter lack of planning and total incompetence and indifference to the welfare of these children, who are returning with evident signs of neglect and deep psychological trauma.

As a grandmother, and a retired psychotherapist in community mental health, I am heartbroken that the United States government itself is inflicting these outrages on children. For many years, I worked in the South Bronx with parents who were suspected of neglect or abuse, trying to help them resolve their problems. Never did I dream that I would see official neglect and abuse on such a scale.

But the United States is not alone in official child maltreatment. As a member of Jewish Voice for Peace, I have become aware of the maltreatment of Palestinian children in detention in Israel. These children are detained and prosecuted in military courts. In detention, they experience physical violence, blindfolding, verbal abuse, humiliation, intimidation, interrogation without right to an attorney, and nearly half are taken from their homes in the middle of the night. There is now a resolution in the U.S. Congress, HR 4391, endorsed by 30 members of Congress (all democrats), to ensure that United States taxpayer funds will not be used to support human rights violations against Palestinian children. None of the 30 are from NJ. In November, let's elect representatives who will stand up for children, at home and abroad.

Bella August

Montclair



Letters to the editor, July 19



Curb military spending and impulsive war

I strongly hope that Senators Bob Menendez and Cory Booker and Congressmen Rodney Frelinghuysen and Donald Payne Jr. will vote to repeal the 2001 Authorization for Military Force that allows the president to declare war alone so that again Congress will be required to approve before the country enters a new war. We are already spending a million dollars a minute on the military and I believe there are many preferable uses for much of that money.

The United States is largely financing Saudi Arabia's bombing of Yemen, which is causing terrible human suffering with little gain for our country — or others that I can see.

I hope that the negotiations in Korea go well and that we can cut our military spending there.

The president clearly does not share my concern with cutting taxes or curbing military action. I hope that Congress will regain its power over the latter and that all humanity can live in peace.

Pat Kenschaft

Montclair

Councilman: protect net neutrality in Montclair

Access to a free and open internet is an essential part of a functioning modern society, and should be the right of everyone — not just a privileged few.

Unfortunately, that right is under attack.

At the Federal level, Donald Trump's FCC has voted to repeal net neutrality protections.

Without the protections of net neutrality, customers will be subject to the unfettered greed of corporate internet service providers who will be free to charge exorbitant fees, filter content and block access from users.

We can't let the internet be held hostage.

Montclair is a progressive and forward looking community. As such, municipalities throughout New Jersey and throughout the United States look to Montclair to set an example for social and economic justice.

We understand that limiting access to something as essential as the internet is deeply wrong.

That's why, as Montclair's deputy mayor and Third Ward representative, I have introduced a resolution to protect net neutrality in Montclair.

We can't wait for the federal government to do the right thing.

I sincerely hope that my council colleagues will recognize the importance of keeping the internet open for all citizens, and of safeguarding this vital part of our lives from corporate interests that would seek to limit and restrict it.

SEAN SPILLER

Montclair

Editor's note: The author is Montclair's deputy mayor and Third Ward Councilman.



Letters to the editor, July 12



Jean Clark was a visionary

To second Gray Russell's heartfelt devotional to the late Jean Clark ("Town Square: Jean Clark had a vision for earth," July 6), add to her list of environmental achievements for the community the creation of the Bonsal Preserve.

She was the visionary who, in the late 1950s, recognized that an isolated, abandoned plot of land at the edge of town, slated for property development, could instead be set aside as wilderness. She lobbied township officials, shepherded the process through Department of Environmental Protection Green Acres approval, and approached the Bonsal family to generously seal the deal with the funding required.

We will forever be grateful for Jean's foresight, and inspired by her example to preserve the values and world she cherished.

Jonathan Grupper

Montclair



Letters to the editor, July 6



Dismayed by delays at Lackawanna Plaza

Thank you for continuing to closely follow the redevelopment (or lack thereof) at Lackawanna Plaza. As a resident of Glen Ridge, I am eager for a new grocery store and whatever else the site ends up having. I am also dismayed at the continual delays with this project.

It seems to me that the developers are at fault in this latest incident. Aren't they commissioned to do what the town wants? Why should the developers' ideas about what the space should be trump what residents want ("Looking at options, June 21, 2018)?"

I fervently hope that there can be some resolution and that they can move forward soon. I thank the residents and town council-people who have spent so many hours trying to resolve this issue, and I look forward to a project that can meet the needs of everyone in the community - sooner than later!

Sarah Stonbely

Glen Ridge

Street light repair desperately needed

As anyone who lives and/or drives in Montclair knows the intersection below the railroad trestle where Watchung Avenue meets Park Street is dangerous, even in the best of circumstances. Unfortunately, the overhead street light has been out for way more than a month.

I and my neighbors have made any phone calls to Public Service Electric and Gas to report this problem and have repeatedly been told by a human voice that this will be fixed. Absolutely nothing has been done to correct this problem and I doubt that PSE&G would like to be responsible for a major accident at this intersection.

Would anyone reading this letter who has more influence than the average citizen has please have this light replaced. It is the light pole right in front of the Watchung Park sign directly across from the trestle.

Marc Grossberg

Montclair

Open organic garden tour

On Saturday, July 14, the Cornucopia Network of New Jersey will sponsor a tour of seven organic vegetable gardens at various times of day.

Nick DiMinni at 11 Bruce Road in Montclair has a European inspired vegetable and herb garden with a grapevine-covered pergola and a Zen garden with many perennials. Composting is practiced. It will be open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Katie McGhee, Scott Gurian, and housemates at 136 Garner Ave. in Bloomfield have a couple of raised vegetable beds, a rotating vertical planter, and several composts. Their garden will be open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Montclair Community Pre-K Garden Project at 49 Orange Road offers a self-guided tour. The MCPK gardens include raised bed learning and herb gardens, a rain barrel, a six-bed edible garden started entirely from seed by Pre-K students, a butterfly garden, three composting bins, a four-season garden, and the berry patch which features two varieties of raspberries and a grapevine. It will be available all day on July 14 and parking is permitted along the driveway to the right of the Board of Education Building at 22 Valley Road.

Mike Roberts and Teresa Frantz have an 18-year old perennial and herb garden at 396 North Fullerton Ave. in Montclair. Their gardens will be open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.. In the vegetable and herb garden, they grow many varieties of lettuce and micro-greens. In the front, a row of lavender lines the sidewalk and perennial and wildflower beds surround the front and south lawn. Over the front entrance is a rare 15-year old white Japanese wisteria.

Alan Smith's front-yard garden at 148 Forest St. in Montclair, will be open for a self-guided tour from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Many plants are volunteers, but he buys tomato plants.

The Pine Street Community Garden at 73 Pine St. in Montclair, will open from noon to 6 p.m. In the driveway a surprising combination of containers demonstrate growing abundance in a very tight urban setting.

Pat Kenschaft at 56 Gordonhurst Ave in Montclair, will open her garden from 9 a.m. to 11 am. She has raised most of her vegetables year round (and some fruit) with no poisons, power machinery, or commercial fertilizers for decades.

Pat Kenschaft

Montclair

'Hey Schoolgirl' in the second row...

"...teacher's lookin' over, so I got to whisper way down low." A hit 45 RPM vinyl recorded by Tom & Jerry, the duo that went on to be better-known as Simon & Garfunkel.

When I was in high school or shortly after, I also sang in doo-wop groups and two part harmony duos with two different partners. Donald Petrone from Montclair and Jimmy LaMont from Caldwell. Can't remember who was singing with me at the Meadowbrook Record Hop in Cedar Grove on this particular Sunday.

Tom & Jerry were also on the same bill, along with two other acts. One was a known vocal group and the other was an unknown singer.

After we performed my partner and I climbed the steps to the balcony seating area and looked down the dance floor stage. We saw Tom & Jerry sitting at a table with two girls. We went over to them to tell them how much we liked their record. They said they enjoyed our performance and asked us to sit.

I seem to remember they were from New York and one or both lives in Pennsylvania.

It was Tom and Jerry's one and only hit record. They later came back strong as Simon & Garfunkel.

On TV just before I started to write this I saw a promo for Paul's farewell tour. They showed pictures from different stages during his career. The very first picture was of him wearing a gray tuxedo jacket from his Tom & Jerry days.

Paul with Art and Paul's solo career gave us great music that will live forever. For old times sake I say 'Who-bop-a-loo-chi-bop, let's meet after school at three.'

Vincent Tango

Montclair



Letters to the editor, June 28



Best reunion ever

During this past April 20 and 21, the graduates of Montclair High School, classes of 1957 and 1958, gathered for a Super Sixty Reunion held on the Saturday evening ceremony at the Glen Ridge Country Club.

Some classmates had not seen each other for almost 60 years. Classmates from many states and the world convened for this special nostalgic occasion. Stories of high school and Montclair memories and dear friends were such a special part of this time. Visits to former homes, Montclair parks and gardens, New York City, Woodman Field and, of course, Montclair shopping areas were a popular haunt.

On a personal note, let me thank all the committee members and others who worked so hard to put this memorable reunion together and a special thanks to Anne Gullord Stires without whom this could not have happened.

Personally, it meant so much to me to see dear friends, my old neighborhood and reminisce about wonderful days of my youth and growing up in such a great place as Montclair. This will be an experience I shall never forget and I am sure the others all feel the same way.

We hope to reach out to all of the alumni of Montclair High to continue to gather regularly to enjoy and savor this part of their years in school and to resolve to celebrate and regularly organize reunions to remember and relive the joys that come with the comradery that we shared at this great reunion.

A Mountie born, a Mountie bred...savor the memories.

Gordon Shurtleff

La Jolla, Calif.

The author is a Montclair High School alum from the Class of 1957.

Animal control or cruelty?

Last week's article regarding the populations of geese and deer in Montclair ("Oh, Deer!", page A-3) raises a number of important issues. With regard to the geese, the article reveals that the township has twice paid to have the geese in Edgemont and Yantacaw Brook Parks rounded up and killed. The ducks disappeared as well, though it is unclear why. These two roundups (one in 2007 and one in 2017) happened without notice to the community even though residents had expressed concern about the geese and volunteered to help with resolving geese conflicts. I believe these roundups are normally carried out secretly because they are highly controversial, unpopular, and ineffective. Montclair can do better.

Canada geese fall under the jurisdiction and protection of the federal government's Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Receipt of a federal permit is required to kill geese. It is clearly stated in the Act that lethal measures are discouraged and that the goal must be "to eliminate or significantly reduce the continued need for killing or removal of birds or destroying eggs/nests."

It is time for the Township to rethink their practices, to include the community in the process, and to commit to using only effective nonlethal methods. Habitat modification and feeding bans are the first step in a successful campaign to reduce geese conflicts. The Township says it does hazing, treats the eggs, and brings in collies, but something is clearly amiss if the result is the roundup and killing of animals. Has there been any habitat modification to make the parks less attractive to geese? Has a feeding ban been enforced? Perhaps the collies would be more effective if they arrived more than "a few times a week."

In the article it is stated that the geese that were removed were taken to be "put down" at a poultry farm. This follows the roundup of these animals which is, in itself, a horrifying event for wildlife.

This is Montclair. Why is this happening? Why do I have to write this letter?

Next up, the deer.

Sandra Reynolds

Montclair

Reunite all the families, now!

It is absolutely cruel and heartbreaking to see children separating with their children.

It is inexcusable, selfish, and frightening to have a president and the whole entire administration behaving this

way.

This is wrong to remove people that aren't American. We saw that in slavery and we saw that in Germany.

To separate children away from parents leave a psychological scars and behaviors that no child should experience. I heard a nine month old baby was separated from the mother. It is horrible.

We need a country that has empathy and compassion. We need a country that is not afraid to speak out and willing to be arrested. We have to come together for the common good of this country as never before to solve this and many problems. It is the only way.

I hope everyone will vote this coming November to make the government blue and not red. Tonight, for moms and dads out there that have children, godchildren and nieces or nephews, hug and kiss and be blessed that they are with you and not a stranger that don't love them.

Cherie E. Hayes

Montclair



Letters to the editor, June 21



Town must stand up to Lackawanna developers

Dear Township Planning Board, I've been a resident of Montclair for 25 years. Please keep a few critical points in mind as you make your decision on the redevelopment of Lackawanna Plaza.

First: Montclair is a highly desirable community for developers. The town and our citizens should be in the position of strength when it comes to development; our needs and requirements should not be compromised.

We have more to give the developers than they can ever provide to us.

Most developers only care about maximizing their profit. Anything that causes a developer to spend a few more dollars will be objected to as unrealistic and unfeasible as a start.

The shed structures are a unique feature of Montclair's commuter history. Once gone we will be poorer for the loss and the box that will replace them will degrade the uniqueness of our community.

The 1980 development shows that the structures can be incorporated. The failure of that development is unrelated to the use of the shed structures in its design.

Your decision will impact our community for more than a few generations. This is a long-term decision.

There is plenty of evidence before you that this developer can and should incorporate the shed structures.

Call the developers bluff and send them back to the drawing board. Again, we are a desirable community. Should the developer say they'll walk, let them. They or someone else will be back in short order.

JAMES LUKENDA

Montclair

Water trees in wilting heat

Montclair has new trees! They need your help.

Our beautiful green, tree lined streets have over 200, newly planted young trees in the ground between the sidewalk and the street.

That's the good news. The bad news is that temperatures are rising and many of the trees appear to be wilting.

This is where we all come in. If you are fortunate enough to have a new tree in front of your house or business, please be civic minded and share some time and water with your new leafy friend. Get to know your tree, it could be there for a very long time and may even grow up with your children. Take a picture of you, your child and the tree or with your neighbor who is sharing the watering or a selfie with the tree you have adopted. Share your pictures with the Montclair Local and other social media to spread the word.

We are losing more trees than we can replace due to storm damage and EAB, Emerald Ash Borer, which is attacking all of our Ash Trees.

Watering is especially important this year to protect the trees we have already paid for and planted. Don't

forget, it will also add value to your property, make our town more attractive, provide habitat for birds and hundreds of critters as well as cool our city when it's hot.

Sandra Chamberlin

Montclair

'Appalled' by Edgemont House parking

I am appalled at how incompetent our township officials have been regarding the planning of the parking at Edgemont Field House. Failing to engage the users of the parking, as well as the neighbors, in planning discussions demonstrates a lack of regard for them.

A circular drive is one of the most difficult one for anyone to use. I have struggled for years using the one at the high school. I am sure the number of useable parking spaces is actually reduced. Drivers have difficulty getting into a curve and they use more space to get parked. I've experienced that at the high school.

Aesthetics seems to override practicality.

Why is the Valley Road entrance so important? Has any consideration been given to the Edgemont Road entrance? For families that is the more convenient entrance because it is nearer the playground. Also parking on Edgemont Road is generally easier than on Valley. Why not make that entrance inviting?

The Township supported the use of the field house by seniors. Why is it not now striving to make it accessible to seniors? It is time for township leaders to respect seniors as residents. It is time for them to get behind a plan for a senior center, offering appropriate parking that recognizes the physical needs of seniors who wish to engage in stimulating activities.

Mary Lee Jones

Montclair

Gov't must stop separating immigrant children, parents

It is tragic when children are separated from their parents even when the separation is caused by the death of a parent, but when families are escaping from frightening threats to migrate to another country, it is inexcusable.

Every religion honors the sacredness of family unity. I am one of many, many Americans who is horrified to learn that the leadership of my country is intentionally violating this principle for those seeking safety here after fleeing terror in their own country. "Give me your tired, your poor," was basic to my instruction of what it is to be an American. We are a nation of immigrants, and our diversity is one of our strengths and joys.

The idea that such separation is supported by the Bible is a misinterpretation of the Bible. Jesus did not say we should do what the government says, no matter how misguided that government. Indeed Jesus, like every great moral leader, was full of compassion. Alas, he was killed by a government that objected to His objections.

I beg our national leaders and followers to stop separating children from their parents. Parenting is crucial for the healthy development of a new generation.

Pat kenschaft

Montclair



Letters to the editor, June 14



'Meet me at the Lackawanna'

Lackawanna Station is the most iconic structure in Montclair and has been for more than 100 years.

Everyone reading this will agree that Montclair is a special place, renowned for day-tripping and a place locals are fortunate to call home.

To do the best for our town, we must preserve that which makes it unique; and nothing is more unique than Lackawanna.

A lot of hard work has been done by a lot of people who have come to this project from varying viewpoints (pro-preservation, pro-development, pro-business, pro-neighborhood quality of life).

The design has evolved to a more acceptable use of the space, but the current plan is not perfect – and it

could be. Now is not the time to stop the dialogue when we are on the cusp of something truly extraordinary. At the center of the current debate: the preservation and creative re-use of the train “sheds,” the long upright supports that shielded long-ago train riders until they boarded. This evocative bit of architecture was recognized as important to preserve even in the tear-it-down 1980’s – the naturally-lit, glass-enclosed atrium concept then as now is a way to open the space to expansive new uses.

The train sheds should be used as the supermarket, or a light-filled farmer’s market/café area. If something needs to be torn down for parking, take it from the boxy, unoriginal, generic retail area (aka the Pathway building, circa 1980).

Imagine the High Line Park in New York City if it had been stripped of its train tracks – it would greatly reduce the sense of authenticity and wonder visitors feel now. In fact, the High Line’s landscaping and hardscaping reiterate the theme of train tracks to give visitors an undeniable sense of the history and purpose of where they stand today.

San Francisco’s Ferry Building is a must-see for visitors and a favorite meeting spot for locals; not just for the world-class farmer’s market but for the creative reuse of the space.

New York’s Chelsea Market is a bustling hub of activity which re-purposed every feature of this historic structure. Even if one is not hungry, it’s still a draw for the sense of time and place it imparts.

Philadelphia, Baltimore, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Seattle... the list grows on and on of communities creating vibrant destination markets in historic public places.

The Lackawanna is the gateway to Montclair and a natural jumping-off point in an increasingly pedestrian-friendly part of town. It would shortchange the town to place emphasis on cars over walking, on generic supermarket architecture over wondrous originality, and out-of-town business profits over quality of life for the people who live and visit here. Let’s see this project through to its ideal solution and create a use of space that can be treasured in 100 years just as it can today.

“Meet me at the Lackawanna” sounds just as good now as it did 100 years ago, and that could be even more true in the future. If you want the Lackawanna to be a place you share with pride and enjoy robustly, tell the Planning Board to vote no on the current plan. Just one more trip to the drawing board. That’s all we’re asking.

Thank you for your consideration.

Priscilla Eshelman

Montclair

About my father

After my divorce in 1974, I began writing about my family life when I was a young boy. I was unclear about some things so I asked my mother for help.

About my dad, I told my mom that I always knew dad loved me, but I couldn't understand why he only wanted to work with me around the house and periodically at Nick Soda's Poultry Market where he worked. He never wanted to play sports with me.

Mom told me that dad wanted to teach me only what he could do well, manual labor. She went on to explain much more about why, it was enlightening and sad.

In 1977, this is what I wrote about my dad, I titled it "A Lesson in Nishuane Park 1955."

In his youth my father was never given the opportunity to learn sports. He had to help provide. I remember one summer day a long time ago, I coaxed him to the park to play ball (baseball). All of my friends were there and I was ashamed. He embarrassed me, as he knew he would. I made him feel so small.

I realize now what a big man he was, and in my heart that summer's day, my father made the "hall of fame."

Happy Father's Day in heaven dad, rest in peace.

Vincent Tango

Montclair

Thanks for the piece on the Montclair Fun Run

As a writer, I enjoyed reading the May 31 story about the YMCA of Montclair's Fun Run. It is a challenge to hit all the bases on a story like this. The Y's interests, the MRCA township involvement, exhibits, interesting profiles of individual runners and, of course, the key sponsors like RWJ Barnabas Health/Clara Maass that donated money to support the event.

Importantly, it was useful, including key information about the race and what prospective runners needed to know to register and participate in the race. Without this kind of information, a reader wastes time looking for essentials, and participants sometimes miss proper sign-up locations or times. Kudos for doing it right.

Broeck Blumberg

Montclair



Letters to the editor, June 7



If not Edgemont Park, where else is Montclair's senior center?

Mayor Jackson's remarks that Edgemont Park House is "not a senior center" and so does not need adequate safe parking contradicts the numerous promos on TV34 titled "Edgemont Park House Senior Center." He and the council appear clueless as to the amount of activity there.

True, if it were a real senior center there might be hot water in the bathrooms, instead of frail seniors washing their hands in freezing cold water all winter. Light fixtures might not be dangling dangerously by threads of duct tape over their heads. And floor tiles would not be lifted by the strength of masking tape.

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Years ago when a senior facility was available this town didn't want it. A council member then (and still) suggested seniors should "find some church basement" for their activities. Maybe when the giant new hotel goes bankrupt, it could be used as a senior center. Until then, Edgemont Park House is functioning as the only one in town, so its patrons deserve sensible parking rather than more shrubbery and Belgian blocks.

Jeff Dimmerman

Montclair

On the lack of parking at Edgemont Park

The Memorial Day services in Edgemont Park provided the first view of the Valley Road entrance without construction equipment.

After many months, we could walk around and observe that the narrow, very curvy driveway, which looks like a series of accidents waiting to happen. The entrance is an unusable disaster. The only place for visitors to park within Edgemont is this Valley Road entrance area.

Where are the parking spaces? Where will the handicapped spaces be situated?

The Senior Center is used for many classes and events and the park did not have enough parking before the renovation and it looks like there is none now.

If town management thinks that parallel parking on a very narrow curvy driveway is really feasible, they are dead wrong.

Who designed this mess? Who ignored the needs of the community? Who did not look at functionality and what actually works in the real world? Who authorized and approved this very expensive and unacceptable plan? Who is responsible? And most importantly, what can be done about it?

We need to hear what solutions town management is proposing. All the pretty improvements such as new benches and new walkways, will be for nothing, if people cannot easily access the park.

Belinda Plutz

Montclair

Lower-income residents aren't just left behind

I had a good laugh at the May 31 article about the NJTV panel ("Lower-income residents being left behind in Montclair," page A-1)..

Left behind doesn't exactly describe how we have been mistreated. If NJTV actually interviewed some of the town's lower and middle income residents, they'd get a different story. The fact is, there has been a deliberate, concerted effort on the part of successive local governments, lasting for decades, to harass, bully, lie to, overdevelop, and destroy the neighborhoods of working and middle class people.

Our taxes have been raised way out of proportion to the declining values of our homes. I keep telling them, rich white people have no interest in living in my home or my neighborhood, and working people can't afford the taxes. I didn't need President Donald Trump to teach me who my enemies are, since they are right here in Montclair: rich people, white people, developers, politicians, churches, New Yorkers — or are you forgetting where Trump came from?

Stephanie Wood

Montclair

Recognize Montclair's many music legends

On May 5, local legend John Finnegan was honored at the Cinco de Mayo festival produced by Montclair BID. Great idea, he deserves it.

However there are some Montclair music legends that need to be recognized because of their stature and outstanding contributions to Montclair's musical community and beyond.

The majority of these legendary musicians have a long history of community involvement. Some have gone on to national and international recognition and made their mark in history of American music and others have garnered local and regional fame.

Most, if not all, have been profiled in both the national and local media, as well as numerous magazines.

During Montclair's 150th anniversary would be the perfect time to honor this group of outstanding individuals. Here are just some of the people that have made and continue to leave their mark on this great artistic community. Al Anderson (Bob Marley), Chuck Burgi (Brand X and Billy Joel), Armel Anderson (Twisted Sister and The Dictators), Ken Neill (Twisted Sister, Ike Brown's Jazz Profits, Tayata and B.D, EYEZ), Richard Pierson (drummer, composer and producer), Denise Hamilton (jazz vocalist), Christian McBride (six time Grammy award winning bassist, co-founder and artistic director of Jazz House Kids), Melissa Walker (co-founder of Jazz House Kids, jazz vocalist), Fatal Hussain (rap artist), Ike Brown (trumpet and Ike Brown's Jazz Prophets).

There are many others that span the musical spectrum from pop to classical music, that are too numerous to name, but hopefully they can be recognized by the township on its 150th anniversary. What a great thing that would be. Oh... and lets not forget the Fabulous Flemtones, a band that has performed at Tierney's for more than three decades.

Bruce Tyler

Montclair

The writer is a drummer, producer and arts activist, a co-producer of Montclair's first Blues & Jazz festival and a member of the Montclair Arts Advisory Committee.

It's MHS graduation time

The ribbons are on the porches and trees, the congratulatory signs are on the lawns. Joy abounds in Montclair, the 151 graduating class awaits for June 21.

Following it will be the 29th Project Graduation which is a way our town gives a safe and proper farewell to our seniors.

Our best to our senior class and the Montclair community that makes it possible.

Peter Giuffra

Montclair

How many more?

I wonder how many more of my friends will die by suicide. After Noah died, I cried and withdrew and lamented. I had already been depressed and in the hellfire of OCD (although I didn't know it yet), and Noah had taken his life. So it became real, something that people actually decide to do.

Then Danielle. How it could it be Danielle? How could she be so good at hiding her struggles? My mother called me after Danielle died. She remarked, "you loved her," and told me she was sorry. A neighbor said that my friends and I had gotten more than our due. "It's disturbing," someone else told me.

I wonder how many more of my friends will die by suicide. I don't want to wonder. I want to use my rage and sorrow. Kids like me should be taught that our mental health matters. It shouldn't have taken the death of my friend to get me to ask for help.

New Jersey lawmakers and voters—here's what you can do. Support bills 1828 and 3408. 1828 expands suicide prevention training for school district employees and 3408 creates a mental health hotline for students in higher education. Don't wait until someone you love dies.

Ari Westreich

Montclair

The writer is a senior at Montclair High School.



Letters to the editor, May 31



'Shedding' light on shameful Lackawanna obstruction

After four years of fooling around, we finally get a serious offer of development at the abandoned Lackawanna site that isn't an enormous monstrosity, and all of a sudden the Montclair Historic Society digs up statistics on "rare train sheds."

The Lackawanna train station isn't a museum. It was a shopping mall, and as a resident who lives in walking distance, I have been without a grocery store for four years. I appreciate rail history, I've visited historic sites in New Jersey and across the world, and train sheds under glass aren't bringing any rail enthusiasts. I can't help but think this is the latest manufactured issue to starve out the working class people who live in our district. We have a Whole Foods market up the road. We don't need another corporate faux boutique grocer, we need an affordable grocer to feed us in this food desert that sells staples, not overpriced trendy food for the affluent. I'm sure they're drooling over the prospect of evicting Popeyes Chicken from the premises and replacing it with an upscale eatery. Has it been there long enough to be considered historic or is a place where working people can afford to eat too shameful for this town's new vision?

THOMAS PLUCK

Montclair

MHS graduation must balance tradition vs. space

A recent article and opinions have been shared on Facebook about the ongoing complaint associated with Montclair High School's graduation location. As a native of Montclair, I remember the packed audience that supported my graduating class, of '82, by sitting on the stone steps, in the heat, at the campus's outdoor amphitheater venue. Mind you, all that truly mattered to my fellow classmates and family members was

seeing the graduate walk the bridge while ending a poignant season in their life. The importance of the event affects the entire family and it is a joyful occasion, which all members of a family should enjoy.

Therefore, since the amphitheater seating is limited the school should open the very large adjacent theater to host the overflow crowd. So I ask, why not use a screen to display a live-stream version of the important event in the high school's theater/concert hall? Many churches offer such an option. Thus, why is the high school unable to offer this service? However, the common opinion I have read, in the Montclair Local, suggest using the "cafeteria" as the additional audience space. This sounds like a neat option, but I suggest the theater as an alternative option.

The large indoor theater serves as a better option for an overflow crowd. Due to the need to set-up the cafeteria, which involves extra custodial labor, the indoor theater venue has available seats which are already provided. Hence, the indoor (cooler or warmer) seating could be offered to the graduate's additional guest as priced seating. Here is the idea: after the three-limit guest seating tickets have been issued, all extra tickets are filled via the indoor theater, but the tickets must be purchased for a \$5 (min) per ticket fee. The cost accommodates all budgets, helps fund the event, and many additional guests would be pleased to join the celebration. But I also suggest this option, if more guests seek to attend, then the standing room only (outdoors viewing "over the fence") option would be offered.

Nonetheless, I am sure others may have suggested a similar option. I am no longer a Montclair resident, hence, I am not familiar with local happenings. But I still love my hometown. Therefore, I would not be pleased to learn how the legendary crossing of the bridge is no longer witnessed by family members and guests due to complaints about audience members seating. Sad. The graduation tradition caters to the earned graduate; thus, please let them participate in such a wonderful memorable tradition, for they have earned such a feat.

Carol Thomas

Boston, Mass.

Act to prevent another gas compressor station

Along with several organizations, including the New Jersey Sierra Club, Food and Water Watch, and 350.org, I am very concerned about the proposed "Gateway Expansion Project" which is the name for the work Williams/Transco wants to do that includes building the second gas compressor station on Eagle Rock Avenue in Roseland. Apparently, the DEP may issue a "Freshwater Wetlands Permit" in mid-June without first having public hearings.

Both state and federal agencies have fined Williams/Transco numerous times for problematic operations of natural gas plants and pipelines. They too often leak, catch on fire and/or explode. Over the past four years there have been at least five workers killed and 120 people injured by accidents at its natural gas facilities.

Despite strong public protest Williams/Transco was allowed to build one gas compressor station in 2013,

ironically next to the Essex County Environmental Center. It is also on a flood plain and next to the Passaic River. This proposed project right next to it doubles the danger.

No new pipeline is proposed, so the gas from these stations would increase the pressure in a 60-year-old pipeline that flows through over 15 municipalities including Montclair on its way to the coast. There is no evidence that this gas would benefit NJ residents; it would only be used to increase Williams/Transco's profits. Why should New Jersey allow our resources to be exported at great risk to our own citizens?

Please email Diane Dow at diane.dow@dep.nj.gov and Debbie Mans at debbie.mans@dep.nj.gov and ask that they deny Williams/Transco's application for a permit, or, at least, hold public hearings so that the public can protest.

Pat Kenschaft

Montclair

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