



Letters to the editor, Oct. 12



On the importance of family planning

There are two and a half times as many people now on Earth as there were when my father suggested to my fiancé and me that we adopt our children “because the population explosion is already killing people.” Today we see horrifying migrations of hungry people fleeing from places with not enough space and arriving in places where they challenge the resources of their new country.

I strongly believe that all babies should be born only when they are wanted, preferably by at least two people, but certainly by their mother. We see appalling crime rates reflecting the effects of children being raised without enough resources, especially of love. If all new people were wanted and welcomed, we would have far less crime, war, and migration.

Therefore, I was appalled to learn of the U.S. administration’s new willingness to allow employers to not include contraception in their health care plans for employees. It baffles me that some people claim religious opposition to contraception. Yes, I believe in religious freedom, but does it extend to the right to genocide?

My greatest arguments with my mother when I was a teenager were about whether the pope was the most evil man on Earth. I argued that surely someone must be more evil than a man who was trying to devote his career to God. My mother said that the pope’s insistence that Catholics not use contraception was causing the premature extinction of the human species via overpopulation. What could be more evil than that?

Perhaps I should confess that I gave birth twice and both they and their spouses bring me lots of joy and satisfaction. However, I used Planned Parenthood for six years after my father gave me his advice; he was a good father. I am also very grateful to Planned Parenthood for helping my parents postpone me for five years after their marriage and enabling them to give me a remarkably happy life. I admire couples who can refrain from childbirth altogether, including my daughter and her delightful husband.

I know that children can bring great joy, but if any woman doesn’t want a(nother) child, she shouldn’t have

one, for her sake, the child's sake, her community's sake, and the survival of the human species.

The emphasis on access to contraception as a woman's issue bothers me. It is also a baby's issue and a species survival issue, and I believe these merit far more attention than they have received thus far.

Pat Kenschaft

Montclair



Letters to the editor, Oct. 5



Goose poop politics

In an opinion letter in last week's Local paper, I learned that geese that choose Montclair parks as their home are periodically rounded [up] and gassed in an effort to control their population.

Is the issue all the goose poop? Wow.

Imagine for a moment if rounding and gassing were the solution for many of the people problems we have in this diverse community? Heart-wrenching fact is that for some that still is a viable solution.

Not sure about the costs involved in gassing but instead of pouring monies into such an inhumane act, why not brainstorm other ideas?

Mine is a niche for a new business. A vacuum to suck up the goose poop and transform it into fertilizer. Then a company that works like landscapers that periodically comes to collect the poop.

A drive around town (in between dodging all the current street closures) is all one needs to do to learn how

thriving a business landscaping is in Montclair.

Why not suck up all the dried leaves too, instead of blowing them and all the pollen into the faces, eyes and lungs of passersby?

Couldn't an instant compost be made from the collection of the goose poop and lawn/leaf debris, then bagged and sold to keep our grasses green, flowers happy and gardens flourishing?

Come on, New Jersey. This is the "garden state." This is a smart entrepreneurial town.

There has to be a better solution than gassing.

Marissa Valenti

Montclair



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, SEPT. 21



To residents concerned about pedestrian safety

On Tuesday Oct. 3, at 7 p.m., the Montclair Town Council will discuss a resolution to lower the speed limit on Grove Street to 30 miles per hour.

The Council has already approved an ordinance to widen the median on Grove Street, which will cause motorists to slow down. These two moves are the first steps to make drivers slow down and let pedestrians cross Grove without taking their life in their hands.

In the first half of 2017, 21 pedestrians were hit and sent to the hospital by vehicles on Montclair roadways.

Grove Street had the most pedestrian crashes in town, including one fatality. Typically, Bloomfield Avenue is the most dangerous street in Montclair, but this year, Grove Street has had twice as many pedestrian crashes as Bloomfield Avenue.

The Montclair Pedestrian Safety Committee is asking all interested residents to attend the Town Council meeting Tuesday, Oct. 3, at 7 p.m., at 205 Claremont Ave., to give your support. They need to hear from our citizens who are upset about the rampant speeding on Grove. If you can't come, please email the Mayor and the Council members with your support.

Alex Kent

Montclair

The writer is the chair of the township's Pedestrian Safety Committee

Preserve national parks and our planet

In May, 1818, immediate past president James Madison gave a speech pleading for people to preserve other animals and plants. He was worried about soil erosion, the wanton cutting down of trees, and Thomas Malthus' warnings about unchecked population growth resulting in disease and famine. Madison warned his audience of more than 30 wealthy landowners that if the balance of nature is broken, nature may not be able to restore itself. His speech was published in a pamphlet that circulated widely in the United States and somewhat less so in Europe.

How appropriate and serious his warnings are two centuries later. Nature has not been able to adjust to human spewing into the atmosphere and climate change is upon us with a vengeance in recent weeks. The population explosion is indeed causing disease, famine and many refugees.

This week a proposal has been made within the national budget to greatly curtail the national parks and forests that preserve trees, animals, and native plants. Planned Parenthood remains under attack. It is important that Montclairians write to or call Sens. Cory Booker and Bob Menendez and either Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen or Donald Payne Jr. and tell them to preserve all national parks and forests and continue to support Planned Parenthood.

Personally, I want very much for the human species to continue (even though I won't for much longer on this planet myself). For that to happen, we must preserve many plants and other animals and ensure that more humans are born only when they are wanted. I hope the most powerful country in the world will come to its senses and help preserve humankind.

(Incidentally, I read the first paragraph's information in a fascinating book "Founding Gardeners" by Andrea Wulf, which I will return to the Montclair Public Library later this month. I highly recommend buying or borrowing it. It tells in detail of the gardening and environmental efforts of our first four presidents.)

Pat Kenschaft

Montclair

Great living in Montclair

I lived in West Orange for 11 years, after which I moved into The Siena in Montclair. Initially I thought that I wanted to live in NYC; I had met with Realtors to see condos close to the Lincoln Tunnel. My office is in Clifton, so I felt that the reverse commute would be easy and I'd also enjoy the perks of living in NYC. However, after learning from many people that the reverse commute in/out of NYC would hardly be a walk in the park, I ultimately decided to move into The Siena in Montclair instead. I greatly value a short commute to and from work, so decided that this was the best move. And what a great decision it has been!

The Siena has been a great place to live. Having never lived in a condo before, I thoroughly enjoy the world of perks that I had never experienced before — underground parking, the gym and Starbucks in the building, a concierge, a porter, and a candy store — it regularly occurs to me that it doesn't get much better than this! To top it all off, The Siena residents are all "pretty cool" and I have made many friends here.

Now a four-year Montclair veteran, I couldn't be happier and can hardly imagine living without all of the amenities that I have gotten so accustomed to and love. Whole Foods, CVS, and dozens of shops, bars, and restaurants all within walking distance have changed my mind about needing to live in the city in order to enjoy those benefits. Also, with the direct trains going straight into NY Penn Station, my girlfriend and I have made it a point to go in on a regular basis. Basically, living in Montclair truly gives me the best of both worlds!

Since living here, I have noticed the town moving in a more upscale direction. House prices have been increasing, the shops are getting classier and the restaurants are getting better and better. Also, the new solar powered hands-free garbage cans look nice and work well, and the all new parking meters, public flower arrangements, and town signs give the area an even more inviting and trendy appearance.

So to sum it up for all who are reading this, live in Montclair, and agree that this is a great place to live — let's all contribute together to keep the town moving in this positive direction and make it even better so we can continue to call Montclair HOME!

Adam Long

Montclair

Sending the geese on their way

Last week's article "Taking a Gander" (Sept. 21, page A-2) brought up an issue that needs addressing in

Montclair. In 2007, the Township, after failing to use effective means to control the population of Canada geese, obtained a permit from the federal government to round up and exterminate 80 geese by gassing. There was a local outcry. Then, over the next 10 years, the Township contracted with two different NJ companies to whom thousands of dollars were paid for services to control the geese population by hazing the geese and adding their eggs. The result was another roundup at the end of June and the gassing again of geese.

As long as Edgemont and Yantacaw Brook parks remain perfect habitats for geese, there will be geese making their homes in these parks. To achieve an effective, humane solution that will have the long-term effect of minimizing the nuisance issues related to the geese and ending the waste of tax dollars, the focus must be on habitat modification so the parks do not meet the natural needs of the geese.

I urge all residents to keep an eye on this issue and to please support the changes that need to be made to include Montclair in the group of localities who have chosen to respect life.

Sandra Reynolds

Montclair

The house that women 'built'

As the new president of the Montclair Women's Club, 82 Union St., I want to say how proud I am of what we have accomplished and are still accomplishing. Our Women's Club was founded in 1915, and the clubhouse was commissioned and funded by the members. After several years of financial stress, the building has been saved and is now on the Montclair Historic Register.

Our board is active, committed and responsive to the community. Some of our projects this year will be Opioid Addiction Awareness and Prevent Child Abuse NJ.

One of our important, ongoing contributions to the community is our programming — daytime and nighttime events — at a very low cost of \$5 for nonmembers; free for members.

Upcoming events include:

Oct. 6., 12:30 p.m. Opening Luncheon, with a performance by Mia Riker-Norrie, founder of Opera Theater of Montclair

Oct. 20, 1:30 p.m. Louis Moreau Gottschalk, 19th-century American composer

Nov. 3, 1:30 p.m. World War II and research for the book "Shot Down over Italy"

Nov. 14, 7 p.m. Women in Transition: Financial Strategies

For more information, visit montclairwomensclub.org

The building needs a new roof, and membership and/or tax-deductible donations will help to maintain this “house that women built” and are still “building.”

We hope to see you at events ... and perhaps as members.

Fran DePalma-Iozzi

Montclair



Letters to the editor, Sept. 21



Ask Gov. Christie to stand up for our health care

Just when we thought the extreme threat from the Republicans in Washington to take away our healthcare had run its course for now, a new plan has hit the senate which would be even worse for the people of the U.S. and New Jersey.

This proposed bill, referred to as Graham-Cassidy-Heller-Johnson, the sponsoring senators, which may be voted on in the next two weeks, would replace the guaranteed Federal funding of New Jersey's Medicaid expansion and Medicaid in general with inadequate and temporary block grants with per capita caps.

According to current estimates by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the proposal would cost New Jersey \$3.9 billion a year in lost Federal funding by 2026, and informed experts expect this would result in the loss of insurance coverage for 500,000 or more New Jerseyans, which we cannot afford. The formula envisioned by Graham-Cassidy-Heller-Johnson for Medicaid would unjustly penalize New Jersey as a “high cost” state and immediately destabilize markets for individual health insurance across the country by

removing Federal premium subsidies now required under the Affordable Care Act.

The senators who are sponsoring this bill are now lobbying their senate colleagues by telling them that there is strong support from state governors for their plan, and the Trump administration is also placing importance on buy-in from the governors of affected states. Accordingly, it is time for our governor to stand up for the people of our state. It is to Gov. Christie's credit that in 2013, despite his philosophical disagreements with the Affordable Care Act, he acted to accept the federal Medicaid expansion in New Jersey, and now over a half a million New Jerseyans have insurance. We need to strongly urge the governor, as one of his last official acts in office, to publicly say a loud "no" to this attack on our healthcare.

Mark Lurinsky

Montclair

The writer is a member of the Healthcare Committee of BlueWaveNJ.

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Alex Kent

Chair, Montclair Pedestrian Safety Committee



Letters to the editor, Sept. 14



More time to see Tango

Vinny Tango is a dear friend of mine. His artwork of Montclair over several years says it all about where his heart lies.

Montclair is most fortunate to have his artistic skill feature so much of the beauty and joy that is our town. The Montclair History Center, 110 Orange Road, has been featuring his art and this exhibition will be there through September. I urge anyone, young and elderly, to visit and enjoy all that Vinny has produced.

Peter Giuffra

Montclair

Hurricane Harvey and Climate Change

The southeast Texas coast has taken a beating that, until now, no one thought possible. Hurricane Harvey, the most destructive storm in memory, dropped as much as 60 inches of rain over the five days that it tortured the citizens of Texas. To climate scientists the storm was no surprise. Computer models have predicted that as the earth warms, correspondingly the oceans will warm, and warmer oceans mean more powerful hurricanes and increased precipitation from those hurricanes.

The water temperature in the Gulf of Mexico was 3 degrees warmer than normal before Harvey got going, and the additional warmth added to the storm's ability to carry moisture and also to its ability to regenerate strength as it moved painfully slowly up the Texas and Louisiana coasts.

Climate change deniers will say that this storm was a bad coincidence. Those who have paid attention to the

increase in greenhouse gases in our atmosphere, the resulting warming of the oceans, and the slow but undeniable rise in sea levels know better. We recognize that this is the beginning of what will be an increase in what might be called “crazy weather.” The amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, worldwide, is more than 400 parts per million. The last time, many millions of years ago, that earth experienced that level of CO₂ in the atmosphere, sea levels were more than 100 feet higher than they are today. The poles were roaming grounds for dinosaurs.

What we watched in Texas is going to be the future for many more places. The human suffering we watch with a mix of pity and horror is being felt in other places on the globe. We all want to do what we can to help the victims of this disaster in Texas and well we should. The question I want to ask is will we ever summon the will to address the causes that made what might have been a normal hurricane into a deluge of biblical proportions?

The rest of the world has recognized that climate change is largely caused by the burning of fossil fuels. The United States is pretty much the only country where that fact is up for debate. We have 5 percent of the world’s population and consume more than 20 percent of the world’s fossil fuels. And yet we possess the technologies to transition to renewable energy sources that would add nothing to greenhouse gas emissions.

The problem is political, not technological. There are presently more jobs in renewable energy than there are in fossil fuel extraction in the United States. When we decide to jump into renewable energy with both feet, the boost to our economy will be huge. Imagine locally sourced jobs rebuilding our electrical grid for a more decentralized and local production of energy, local jobs for providing solar and wind power projects, American manufacturers building solar panels and wind turbines. The economic possibilities are enormous. And our children will thank us for doing it. Or we can continue to ignore and deny the train coming down the tunnel towards us, and our children may curse our memory for being fools.

We have a choice. If you feel strongly about fighting climate change, let your state and national representatives know. Find out what the politicians you support think about fighting climate change. If you think we should have a national energy policy different from “drill baby drill,” urge them to put a price on carbon. Time is running out, and we have the power to change the future. But Washington and Trenton need to hear from us all.

Dean Squires

Montclair

Organic vegetable garden tour

On Saturday, Sept. 23, the Cornucopia Network of NJ will sponsor an organic vegetable garden tour including four gardens.

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 Sept. 23 and parking is permitted along the driveway to the right of the Board of Education Building at 22 Valley Road.

The Pulaski Park Community Garden at the corner of Mt. Vernon and Howard (east of Broughton, north of Bay) in Bloomfield will be open from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Our 21 4' by 8' plots have been fully rented for our third season, and we started a waitlist for the next six plots which will soon be added. Regular get-togethers and workshops bring together the community in the garden; visit on Facebook [openspacetrustfund](#).

Outside the Inness Annex on North Fullerton and Chestnut Street, Montclair High School has over 15 raised beds with a variety of vegetables, greens and experimental plant projects. The beds are used by biology and STEM students and are in full use year round with the summer help of Montclair Community Farms. Twelve of the beds were recently created as an Eagle Scout Project by a local troop. Vegetables and greens are used by the ninth-grade cafeteria and are also donated to Toni's Kitchen and Human Needs Food Pantry. The beds and ongoing maintenance are funded and supported by DIGS (District Initiative for Gardening in Schools) and MFEE.

It is in a public place and therefore available all the time. While visiting the vegetable beds, notice the bird/butterfly habitat and various native habitat gardens the students have created all over Rand Park.

I raise most of my family's vegetables year round in my back yard at 56 Gordonhurst Ave., with no poisons or power machinery. I will open my garden from 9 to 11 a.m. I've had several disappointments this year resulting in unprecedented empty space, but it still appears I will have home-grown vegetables for every dinner at home in the next year.

Pat Kenschaft

Montclair



Letters to the editor, Sept. 7



The Blue Centurions

This is a follow-up on my letter “War on Cops,” published in the Aug. 24 edition of Montclair Local.

According to the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund, 148 police officers have been killed in the line of duty this year. Sad, but true, what a commentary for the United States of America. This trend of killing police officers across this great country of ours has become fashionable.

Segments of the criminal element feel they have a green light to shoot and kill police officers to get even for people who have been shot by police. Disrespect for law enforcement and mistrust is at its highest level.

Today I viewed a post on Facebook by NFL player Isaiah Crowell, who plays for the Cleveland Browns, showing a man wearing a black hood with his hand over the mouth of a uniformed police officer, holding his head back while slicing his throat with a knife with blood pouring out of his neck. *(Editor’s note: The picture referred to by the above letter writer was posted and immediately deleted in the summer of 2016. Crowell posted the picture in reaction to the killing of two black men — Philando Castile in Minnesota and Alton Sterling in Louisiana — by white police officers, and was widely criticized. Crowell issued an apology shortly after and pledged to donate his first game check of the season to the Dallas Fallen Officer Foundation.)*

Why is this tolerated in America, an athlete who plays a game for two hours on a Sunday, tossing a ball around making millions of dollars vs. police officers putting their lives on the line 24/7 making \$60,000. The real heroes are the police, not the NFL football players refusing to stand for our national anthem.

During a conversation I had recently with some police administrators, they told me that a lot of the young police officers today start their tour of duty with the “feeling of being shot while doing their duty” and wonder if they will return home to their families at the end of their tour. You don’t have to be a psychiatrist to know that this is not a healthy situation that can lead to unfortunate consequences at the drop of a hat, for both the police and the violator.

Are there problem police officers? Absolutely; however they are in a small minority and will be held accountable by police administrators. Fortunately for us, the police officers in Montclair are highly trained and led by a trio of experienced, dedicated and highly respected command officers in the likes of Chief Todd Conforti, Deputy Chief Tracy Frazzano, and Deputy Chief Wilhelm Young. We also have a mayor and council who support our police department and have provided them with the necessary tools to perform their duties. The Township of Montclair can be very proud of their police department and “the Legacy of Leadership” since its inception.

Remember, police officers put their pants on one leg at a time just like the rest of society, and have the same trials and tribulations, but still come to work every day, putting their lives on the line to serve and protect the

citizens of Montclair.

I respect the views expressed by Margret Mikkelsen in her letter to the editor, and her rights to do so. However, the facts speak for themselves; too many cops are being shot and killed and it has to stop.

Thomas J. Russo

Montclair

The author is former chief of police and director of public safety for Montclair.



Letters to the editor, Aug. 31



A neighborhood ruined

I am watching my neighborhood being destroyed. The Crosby Bar which has recently opened at the corner of Forest and Claremont has now opened a biergarten.

Every Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday night from about 7:30 p.m. upwards of 3 a.m., there are people screaming, running up and down the street, acting as if it is a giant frat party. Adding alcohol to this mix is a deadly combination. The police are usually called in two to three times a night to try to get them to tone it down.

This past weekend I encountered a young man vomiting and not making much sense. I held onto him until his friend arrived to take him home.

My thought is how this would have played out in Upper Montclair.

Dorothy Goeller

Montclair

No epidemic of cop-killing

I finished reading former police chief Thomas J. Russo's Aug. 24 letter to the editor with a heavy heart. His argument that there is an epidemic of killing cops that should be met with a re-institution of the death penalty is framed in a way that is intentionally hard to dispute. Who is in favor of killing cops? No one in the general mainstream of civil society. Criminals kill cops. I have never read a serious defense of killing cops.

The issue that Russo does not address is that some cops kill civilians. That sits differently with me. When I hear of a police officer dying in the line of duty, I am saddened; I hurt for their family; I am grateful the officer chose to serve their community; I am angry that current gun laws gave the criminal the chance to have a deadly weapon to kill the officer; I know that the most common scenario for a police fatality is a domestic dispute; and I am frustrated that we cannot seem to develop consistently effective non-lethal means for officers to defend themselves.

When a police officer kills a civilian, I am enraged.

Philando Castile. Walter Scott. Tamir Rice. Charleena Lyles. Terence Crutcher. John Hernandez. Bettie Jones.

Ninety-four unarmed people were killed by police in 2015, 48 in 2016, and 30 in 2017 so far.

Russo refers to an epidemic, but officer fatalities remain well below their peak in the '70s and lower than in the early 2000s. Sixty-eight officers were fatally shot, stabbed, or assaulted in 2017. That's horrible and heartbreaking, but it isn't evidence of an epidemic of cop killing. We should all be concerned that the number of unarmed people killed by cops is catching up to the number of cops murdered by criminals. I don't think it is unreasonable to expect our police to kill many fewer people than our criminals do.

There are use-of-force policies proven to reduce police killings. Ordering officers to meet force with superior force is not one of them. You can learn more at useofforceproject.org.

I mourn all this loss of life and in neither case do I lose sight of the humanity of the persons involved and wish them put to death. I am not a Christian, nor any religion at all, but I am convinced that state violence, whether in the form of the death penalty or extra-judicial killings of people not convicted of any crime, diminishes us all and therefore have great respect for religious leaders who continue the call to end the death penalty. I hope in my life time to see it ended across the country.

Margaret Mikkelsen

Montclair

Wake up!

The film “An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power” recently played in Montclair and is a hair-raising exploration of the effects of climate change already. It begins by Al Gore taking us to the Arctic and seeing the dramatic retreat of the glaciers. “Where does all this water go?” he asks.

“To Miami Beach!” he answers and takes us there, where we see cars driving through water as their now-routine practice. When storms hit, folks must stay home, echoing the worst storm in history that assaulted Texas this week.

We see the Philippines in 2013, where a terrible storm killed hundreds and left 1.4 million people homeless as climate refugees. We see them stacking bodies.

We see people in India suffering from terrible heat, where the temperature rose to an unprecedented 128 F degrees in 2016. Syria’s political problems were preceded by terrible climate crises leaving many people refugees.

The film concentrates on installing solar energy as a major remedy to climate change, and I support this. However, there are smaller things communities and families can do.

One congressman said publicly that if the country is serious about climate change, we will prohibit all power lawn machinery. I have maintained our property for over 40 years without any power lawn machinery, and highly recommend it. I believe that leaf blowers should be illegal because they have the further disadvantage of disrupting neighborhood peace and many studies show they do not save time.

The production of beef causes much climate change, so if one can comfortably abstain, that is a great help.

Idling a vehicle for more than 30 seconds destroys the engine needlessly as well as causing climate change.

Why hasn’t Montclair put solar panels on its public buildings? It would not only thwart climate change, but save lots of tax money. Please pressure our township government to do it!

Pat Kenschaft

Montclair



Letters to the editor, Aug. 24



No monuments to treason

In January 1861, Robert E. Lee was a colonel in the United States Army. Jefferson Davis was a United States Senator and former Secretary of War. Both men had sworn an oath to uphold and protect the Constitution of the United States and defend their country. Six months later, they were both leaders of a rebellion against the very country to which they swore that oath. Make no mistake, their contemporaries saw their action as treason and they were denounced as such in the media of the time. Further, in personal correspondence both Lee recognized that his actions were treasonous. Nonetheless, Lee and Davis threw their lot in with a cause to maintain their states' right to hold other human beings in involuntary servitude.

Four years and 700,000 lives later — including the life of our greatest President — the rebellion ended. In its wake, Republican leaders cleansed our country of its original sin of slavery by passing the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to our Constitution. With the rebellion's end there was also the question of what to do with the rebel leaders. Some advocated summary execution. In the interest of national healing, however, the traitorous rebel leaders were not harassed. Only Davis would spend a few years in prison. Still, during the decade known as Congressional Reconstruction — a period in which the newly freed slaves were aided, encouraged, and empowered to participate in the body politic — the former rebel leaders were barred from participating in politics, at least until they were pardoned by President Andrew Johnson.

With the election of 1876, Reconstruction and the federal protection so necessary for the newly liberated African American citizens to flourish in freedom came to an end. Thus began the era of Jim Crow, the enablement of the Klan, the revision of history by southern historians, and the construction of monuments to the treason of the likes of Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, and others.

Let's not mince words. The monuments to the Confederacy that dot our national landscape on statehouse grounds, parks, and other public places are monuments to treason. While they must come down, they are still important artifacts of the great treason they symbolize. Their place is in museums or at historic sites such as Gettysburg where Abraham Lincoln, speaking in honor of the dead Union patriots who fought there to preserve

our country, uttered the most eloquent and immortal words of America's lexicon:

"That from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion — that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain — that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom — and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Bryan Lonagan

Montclair

A monumental debate

While blogging about my powerful experience this summer – the visiting of Holocaust sites throughout Europe with a child survivor – I have been continually disheartened by comments from our President.

Often on our trip, a number of us would reflect on the contrast between how Germany has confronted its past and how we have or haven't done the same here in America.

What was so striking when visiting Berlin was how front-and-center the ownership and denouncement was of their horrific actions during World War II.

To explain it as simply as I can, everywhere I went, in the most prominent places, there were powerful monuments dedicated to the victims of the Nazi regime. And how do they recognize the Nazis themselves, the soldiers who fought, the generals who led them, the leader of the Party? To provide an example, they strategically placed a dirt parking lot over the site where Hitler's bunker was located.

Now, compare that to what we have done here in the United States. How did we confront our guilt of imprisonment, enslavement, and murder of African captives during our country's foundational decades?

Here, we haven't seen prominent monuments honoring the victims, we've seen monuments honoring the generals of the Confederacy. We don't hear frequent and open denunciations of the past and what these perpetrators of hate fought for. We have tributes to those who fought to keep slavery as an American institution. We have even seen many people openly place Confederate battle flags on their cars or fly it at state capitals.

If the world saw swastikas flying from city halls in Germany, and saw monuments to Hitler, Heydrich, Rommel, and others; if there were obelisks to the Nazi soldiers who fought to keep the concentration camps open – we would all be appalled.

But here at home, we've looked past what is right in front of us.

We have many who have seen villains as heroes and their sinful actions as culture. As our President stated:

“Sad to see the history and culture of our great country being ripped apart with the removal of our beautiful statues and monuments.” Trump continued, “Also the beauty that is being taken out of our cities, towns and parks will be greatly missed and never able to be comparably replaced!”

For me, it is sad that we haven’t clearly seen the moral true north on this issue. There is no ambiguity, there is no ‘both sides’ on this; there is simply right and wrong.

I personally will not miss any commemoration of the slavery of our past, nor do I hope any of it is replaced. There is no beauty in what the Confederacy stood for. Hopefully, as a nation we will follow the moral arc towards justice and get there sooner than later.

SEAN SPILLER

Montclair

The author is Montclair’s Third Ward Township Councilman.

War on cops must stop

We live in a sick and crazy world; you can’t pick up a newspaper or turn on the television without a report of a cop being shot somewhere across the country. When are we going to wake up and stand up for our police officers who put their lives on the line every day so that you and your family and your loved ones can be safe? Just over this past weekend, six cops shot, two died. This is a sad commentary for the greatest country in the world. How and when will this war on cops stop? I really don’t have the answer, except to say that it is obvious that the moral fiber of our country has gone and is being taken away from us by the many hate groups across our country, who have no respect for law enforcement and what it stands for.

The calculated and vicious attacks upon police officers by hate groups calling for the death of police officers is declaring war on the police. In cases involving the killing of a police officer in the line of duty it is my opinion that the death penalty would be appropriate, and should be reinstated across the country. If I was still in command of a police force, with what is occurring across the country, I would issue a general order to be read at all lineups that police officers shall meet force with superior force if necessary to protect their lives, including the use of deadly force with their weapon. If the government on the federal level can’t protect us, then we as police officers must protect ourselves in an attempt to put an end to this epidemic.

I know the bleeding hearts out there will label me as a racist for my extreme views on the killing of police officers; however, in society today, police cannot turn the other cheek but instead, as I mentioned, meet force with superior force to protect themselves. Ask the widows, mothers, fathers, children of slain police officers how their lives have changed because of this insanity of killing an individual because he/she is wearing blue with a badge pinned to their chest. I have 42 years’ experience, plus 10 years as a police consultant dealing

with police policies and procedures. My credentials speak for themselves and my tenure as chief of police and then director of public safety for the Township of Montclair was without blemish.

Wake up, America; the appeasement of violent criminals will cause this country to revert to the days of the Old West, where problems were solved in the street with the use of a gun. TRUST and SUPPORT the police and let them solve your problems. If I have offended anyone with my views, I apologize. However, someone has to stand up and speak on behalf of our dedicated, hard-working police officers.

Thomas J. Russo

Montclair

The author is Montclair's former chief of police and director of public safety.

Let us be gardeners together

I was delighted to read about "Gardening event at Crane Park Sunday" in the last issue of Montclair Local. The video on Facebook puts the words into action.

Take a walk and take a look! Setting up this demonstration garden may inspire residents to consider adding to (or replacing!) lawns with floral and/or edible plants. Much less work, less water used to keep things alive and flowers/food to feed you physically and spiritually. What could be better?

With our environment under attack in Washington, it's up to us to take action where we can. This is one straightforward step I think many of us can get behind.

Great work, Northeast Earth Coalition!

Joanne Kornoelje

Montclair



Letters to the editor, Aug. 10



History Center trustees urge preservation of Lackawanna

The Montclair History Center considers the Lackawanna Terminal site one of the most historic in our town, not only for the notable design and construction of the station but for the transformative role trains played in Montclair's development into the town we recognize today.

Additionally, the structure, constructed in 1913, represents one of the most significant time periods in Montclair's history. We urge that a structure this integral to our history be appropriately incorporated, yet not overshadowed — either figuratively or literally — by the current redevelopment plans.

We would like to thank Kathleen Bennett, chairperson of Montclair Township's Historic Preservation Commission, for making a July 6 presentation about the Lackawanna Terminal to the public at the MHC. Education is a central tenet of our mission statement, and Ms. Bennett's informative presentation was eagerly received by the standing-room-only group of attendees. Her presentation is available on Channel 34.

We appreciate the work of Ms. Bennett and the Historic Preservation Commission and agree with their position that the town and the developers take a most thoughtful approach to the Lackawanna Plaza redevelopment, preserving not just one significant building on the site, but the essence of the site and its role in our town's history.

Elizabeth Hynes, president

Helen Fallon, vice president

Board of Trustees, Montclair History Center

Maintaining a lawn

I've been maintaining my lawn at 56 Gordonhurst Ave. for 42 years and feel called to share three pieces of advice.

First, I have never watered it. There are far more important uses for water in metropolitan New York. It's essential for human life, but not for lawns. After water bans, my lawn greens up much faster than surrounding lawns; its roots go down deep and it doesn't miss the rain as much as lawns spoiled by watering.

Even more lamentable to me are sprinklers that put water into the air where it evaporates without nourishing the lawn, a person, or any other animal.

Secondly, I believe there is no justification for leaf blowers. When they first arrived, I timed myself using alternative tools for comparable jobs and found no difference. Since then more careful studies have verified that leaf blowers do not save time. One famously publicized a grandmother with a rake who cleared a lawn faster than a young man with a leaf blower.

Leaf blowers generate climate change needlessly, and distract or torture the neighbors with noise. I feel especially sorry for those who work at home (as I once did) against such an obstacle. It's bad for the economy.

Thirdly, I greatly recommend Great States non-powered lawn mower, easily available online for about \$100. A friend tells me that if you buy it from South End Hardware, they will put it together for you. I've never touched a power mower, but someone who borrowed mine reported she could mow faster with mine than a power mower because it's much easier to maneuver.

I'll admit to being an environmentalist, but I like to have an attractive property. I hope others will join me in abstaining from watering lawns, leaf blowers, and power lawn mowers.

Pat Kenschaft

Montclair

Seymour worries

New housing developments create more traffic. Essex County along the Bloomfield Avenue corridor from Bloomfield to Verona is experiencing a rapid growth in multi-family housing. Most places along Bloomfield Avenue cannot be widened. This situation creates traffic congestion on Bloomfield Avenue as well as traffic using alternate routes along the smaller streets in the suburban communities. With these large developments and traffic, the formerly suburban nature of these communities, especially along Bloomfield Avenue, will become more urban.

Montclair is experiencing these changes as seen in the two six-story apartment buildings at the corner of Bloomfield Avenue and Valley Road. The Montclair Planning Board is in the process of hearings on the Lackawanna Plaza and the Seymour Street Redevelopment Plan. Both of these projects face Bloomfield Avenue.

The Seymour Redevelopment Plan includes a two-hundred-unit apartment building, retail space and parking on the site of the former Social Security Building. The building entrance and exit will be on South Willow Street. The plan closes the northern half of Seymour Street to create an Arts Plaza facing the Wellmont Theater with a seven-story parking garage in the back of the Wellmont Theater.

The Montclair Planning Board has had three public meetings on the issues of traffic and parking involving this project because the project has been given permission to build on two currently well used public parking sites. One of the sites is between South Willow and Seymour streets and the other is between Seymour Street and South Fullerton Avenue. The current issue is to find alternate parking for the cars using these lots while construction is underway.

The closing of Seymour Street and creation of a 200-unit apartment building and the seven-story parking garage which includes two floors of office space will create more traffic on South Willow Street and South Fullerton Avenue. The residents of South Willow, the southern half of Seymour Street, Roosevelt Place, Union Street, South Fullerton and the Crescent are all concerned about the increased traffic and congestion in their residential neighborhood.

The large parking garage on Seymour Street will exit and enter on South Fullerton across the street from the Crescent and a half block south from one of the exits and entrances to the parking garage behind Church Street. The redevelopment planners have suggested widening the exit and entrance into the South Fullerton parking area and creating three lanes of traffic on South Fullerton from the Crescent north to Bloomfield Avenue. Creating three lanes of traffic on South Fullerton will mean fewer parking spaces and the loss of a loading zone, and will create problems for a number of restaurants and the retail stores on the street. The developers have also proposed taking away parking spaces on Bloomfield Avenue to have a smoother flow of traffic.

The reason that the Planning Board has had so many meetings on the Seymour Street Project is that the project has potential for a negative effect on the nearby residential and business streets by creating more traffic and congestion. The proposed new apartment building and parking garage are too large and too close to the neighboring buildings. The proposed arts aspect of the Project has not been developed and funding is uncertain. There are difficulties replacing the many parking spaces that are needed while constructions are underway. This large ambitious project is not appropriate for this site because of its density and its potential for traffic delays and other problems.

More multi-family housing has been constructed on Bloomfield Avenue east of Grove Street. Similar housing has been proposed for North Willow Street. Montclair has not chosen to wait and see how all this additional multi-family housing is impacting the community before approving other large-scale developments which are changing a pleasant suburb community into a more urban area.

Lucy Fitzgerald

Montclair



Letters to the editor, Aug. 3



Boy Scout disappointed by President's speech

As a Boy Scout, I am disappointed with President Donald Trump's remarks at our Jamboree. His decision to talk about politics was not Scoutly. To quote the Scouting oath, a scout is courteous, kind, cheerful, thrifty, clean, and reverent. President Trump's remarks were none of these. He has said rude things about women, gay people, black people and Muslims. The president is self-centered, and this speech was no exception. He used the speech to make fun of former President Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, and threatened to fire his secretary of health.

My troop, Troop 12 of Montclair, has a long history of good deeds and community service. This year members of Troop 12 helped maintain a public park, built furniture for Toni's Kitchen, marched in the town's Fourth of July parade and laid wreaths on veterans' graves in Mount Hebron Cemetery. Mr. Trump's speech did not reflect the record of service that the Boy Scouts of America represent.

Sacha Goldstein

Tenderfoot, Troop 12

Montclair

Keep the grand tradition of MHS football alive

From 1940, when Clarence “Clary” Anderson and Angelo J. “Butch” Fortunato – two All-State Mountie football stars – returned home to coach at MHS until today, Montclair High School can boast a winning football tradition equaled by few.

The Mounties have suffered only eight losing seasons since that year. This doesn’t happen by accident. It’s achieved through hard work, skill, and pride displayed by players and coaches, and enhanced by support from the community.

I’m 73 years old and a 1962 graduate of MHS. Feeling the effects of aging, I am well aware of the many Mountie coaches, players and supporters who have passed away, taking their valuable Mountie football memories with them.

I worry that details of our school’s football history could become lost to future generations. I fear the day the chant “Mont-Clair-Pride” will be reduced to a meaningless phrase.

Today’s players, and the ones coming up following them, should be educated in Montclair’s great football history. I truly believe there is no greater motivational tool than pride in tradition.

There are some communities where many families have lived for generations. Couple that with a football tradition similar to that of MHS, and you could see entire towns coming out in support of their high school gridgers. Just spend a day in Phillipsburg during football season and you’ll see what I mean.

With fewer long-time residents than Montclair once had, it’s not like that here any more. We need to work to keep details of our great football history alive by showing the players what an honor it is to don a Montclair High School football uniform on game day.

To the 2017 Mountie gridgers: it’s your time to carry the torch. To borrow a phrase from Notre Dame, go “play like champions.”

Vincent Tango

Montclair