



ELECTED...Sheri Brand of Westfield will serve as an advocate on the national level in Washington, D.C. representing home care and hospice interests. Ms. Brand poses with President Bill Clinton.

**Sheri Brand Elected Chair of the National Association For Home Care & Hospice Forum of State Associations**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (January 15, 2010) - Val J. Halamandaris, President of the National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC), announced today that Sheri Brand, RN, has been elected the new Chair of the NAHC Forum of State Associations. Brand was elected to a two-year term and will represent home care and hospice state associations on the NAHC Board of Directors. Brand's professional health care career includes wide-ranging experience in nursing, case management and home care. She currently serves as President and CEO of the Home Care Association of New Jersey, Inc. She also serves as the co-chair of the State of New Jersey's Medicaid Long Term Care Advisory Council, which focuses on the state's long term care rebalancing effort.

"Sheri's passion and proven service on behalf of nurses, therapists, aides and other health care providers, coupled with her astute understanding of legislative advocacy, cement my great pride in announcing her as the new Chair of the Forum of State Associations," said NAHC President Val J. Halamandaris. "I look forward to working closely with Sheri to give voice to the 12 million Americans who depend on home care services and the 78 million baby boomers who are nearing retirement age."

Throughout her career, Brand has been appointed to multiple industry and government committees and advisory groups as well as community organization boards. In 2000, she was named Member of the Year by the Home Care Association of New Jersey due to her strong leadership and advocacy in support of legislative changes needed for home care providers and the people they serve. This experience makes Brand an invaluable asset to state associations as they develop and grow into strong advocates. It also makes her uniquely qualified to serve as an advocate on the national level in Washington, D.C. representing home care and hospice interests before Congress and federal agencies.

**NJEA**

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don't know what lies ahead." When reporters asked Mr. Christie at a press conference what does appointing Mr. Schundler as education commissioner signal to the NJEA, Mr. Christie responded, "I don't think the appointment of Bret Schundler sends any signal to the NJEA. The election of Chris Christie sends a message to the NJEA."

NJEA President Barbara Keshishian released a prepared statement on the NJEA website.

"Much of Mr. Schundler's experience is in other fields, and we are hopeful that, in this new position, he will listen to experienced, professional educators and work collaboratively with them as he makes decisions about the future of New Jersey's public schools," Ms. Keshishian said.

The Senate Judiciary Committee is expected to soon begin hearings on cabinet nominations, including Mr. Schundler. Senator Nicholas Scutari (LD-22, Linden) chairs the committee.

**POLICE BLOTTER**

**Westfield**  
Monday, January 11, Ahmed Mostafa, 22, of Greensboro, N.C. was arrested after an early morning, high-speed chase through Westfield that ended when Mostafa crashed the motor vehicle he was driving into a pole.

Police had spotted Mostafa speeding and pursued him from the corner of North Avenue and East Broad Street to South Avenue and Crossway Place. After striking the pole, Mostafa and a passenger exited the vehicle, which police say was stolen, and fled on foot. Mostafa was apprehended and charged with three counts of receiving stolen property, resisting arrest and possession of less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana. He was transported to the Union County jail, with bail set at \$25,000. Authorities said the other suspect remains at large.

Wednesday, January 13, Oscar Naranjo, 30, of Cranford was arrested in the area of the 200 block of West South Avenue on an outstanding no-bail Union County Sheriff's warrant. Police stopped Naranjo based on knowledge of the warrant, which was confirmed. He also was wanted on three criminal warrants from Elizabeth, with \$450 total bail. Naranjo was transported to Westfield police headquarters for processing. He was released on his own recognizance on the Elizabeth warrants and turned over to the Union County Sheriff's Office.

Thursday, January 14, Francisco Vega, 60, of Plainfield was arrested during a motor vehicle stop at West South Avenue and Tuttle Parkway on a Totowa warrant. He was released after posting bail in the amount of \$113.

Thursday, January 14, Isaiah Gaines, 27, of Elizabeth was arrested in the area of the 600 block of West South Avenue on an outstanding Plainfield criminal warrant in the amount of \$200. He was transported to Westfield police headquarters, processed and released after posting bail.

Thursday, January 14, Michael DeFazio, 24, of Westfield was arrested and charged with shoplifting from a business on the 600 block of West North Avenue. He was transported to Westfield police headquarters, processed and released with a summons.

Thursday, January 14, Nathaniel Obedos, 42, of Cranford was arrested at East Broad Street and Harrison Avenue on warrants from Clifton and Bayonne, each in the amount of \$89. He was transported to Westfield police headquarters, processed and released after posting bail.

Thursday, January 14, an anonymous resident turned in a motor vehicle key with personal information attached. Attempts made to contact the owner were unsuccessful. The item was held for safekeeping.

Thursday, January 14, an anonymous resident turned in a brown Fossil wallet found in the street on the 600 block of Boulevard. The wallet contained personal information and United States currency. Attempts to contact the owner were unsuccessful. The wallet was held for safekeeping.

Friday, January 15, Arif Welcher, 31, of Elizabeth was arrested during a motor vehicle stop in the area of East Broad and St. Paul Streets and charged with possessing and presenting a known false document (insurance card). Welcher was transported to Westfield police headquarters, processed, issued a summons for the offense and then released.

Friday, January 15, Georgie A. Kiely, 36, of Summit was arrested at Westfield police headquarters on outstanding warrants from Westfield and Maplewood, in the amounts of \$99 and \$180, respectively. Kiely was released after processing. He posted bail on the Westfield warrant. Maplewood waived bail and set a new court date.

Saturday, January 16, Danny Dacosta, 29, of Elizabeth was arrested pursuant to a motor vehicle stop in the area of the 500 block of West South Avenue on two outstanding warrants. They included a Union Beach warrant for \$533 and a Belmar warrant for \$250. He was processed and posted bail.

Sunday, January 17, Herbert K. Francis, Jr., 64, of Westfield was arrested after voluntarily surrendering himself at Westfield police headquarters to satisfy an outstanding Westfield warrant in the amount of \$175. He was released after posting bail.

Sunday, January 17, Kevin Anderson, 22, of Westfield was arrested pursuant to a motor vehicle stop on Lambert's Mill Road near Rahway Avenue on an outstanding Westfield traffic warrant in the amount of \$99. Bail was posted and a waiver was signed.

Monday, January 18, Darris Martin, 18, of Elizabeth was arrested on an outstanding Mount Laurel traffic warrant in the amount of \$114 as the result of a motor vehicle stop on South Avenue near Summit Avenue. He was released after posting bail.

Monday, January 18, Edward Friedman, 46, of Lincoln Park was arrested after responding to Westfield police headquarters to satisfy an outstanding Westfield warrant in the amount of \$91. He satisfied the warrant, was processed and released.

**Scotch Plains**  
Tuesday, January 12, John Namka, 45, of Irvington was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. He was transported to police headquarters, where he was processed and released.

Tuesday, January 12, Leon Walters, 28, of North Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. He was transported to police headquarters, where he was processed and released.

Tuesday, January 12, a resident of Farley Avenue reported that someone has been calling her and then hanging up without saying anything.

Wednesday, January 13, a resident of Forepaugh Avenue reported that someone smashed the window of her motor vehicle while it was parked in front of her house.

Wednesday, January 13, a resident of Martine Avenue reported that someone stole his phone, which was valued at \$350.

Wednesday, January 13, Christian Berk, 19, of Fanwood and Andrew Ho, 18, of Scotch Plains were arrested and charged with possession of marijuana after a motor vehicle stop, at which time the officer smelled the odor of the controlled dangerous substance. Both were transported to police headquarters, where they were processed and released.

Thursday, January 14, a resident of Brandywine Drive reported that the alarm of his residence was activated. When police responded, they observed a broken window. According to authorities, it appeared that the alarm scared the suspect away, and entry was not gained.

Thursday, January 14, a resident of Birch Street reported that someone scratched the side of his motor vehicle while it was parked in front of his house.

Friday, January 15, a resident of Jacobs Lane reported that someone damaged the fence on the side of his residence.

Friday, January 15, a resident of Westfield Avenue reported that someone entered his residence and removed jewelry.

Friday, January 15, Jennifer Moyd, 24, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. She was transported to police headquarters, where she was processed and released.

Saturday, January 16, Pedro Santamaria, 27, of Elizabeth was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. He was transported to police headquarters, where he was processed and released.

Sunday, January 17, William Malinowsky, 29, of Colonia was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. He was transported to police headquarters, where he was processed and released.

Tuesday, January 12, the owner of a Route 22 business reported that someone illegally dumped construction material behind his shop sometime overnight. According to police, the debris included mostly ceiling tiles and other material that would typically be found in a basement.

Tuesday, January 12, police responded to a school on Bristol Road on a report of a possible overdose. According to police, the victim was taken to Overlook Hospital in Summit for further medical evaluation.

Wednesday, January 13, Andre S. Brown, 32, of North Plainfield was arrested for allegedly driving with a suspended license and on two outstanding warrants. He was transported to police headquarters, where he was processed and released.

Wednesday, January 13, the building and grounds supervisor of the school district recovered a license plate, which he returned to authorities. According to police, the owner of the plate was contacted and advised she could pick up the plate at headquarters.

Wednesday, January 13, a resident of Wild Hedge Lane reported that her daughter had recently lost her purse in Chicago, which contained a credit card belonging to the victim.

According to police, someone used the credit card to purchase a Gucci handbag online. The credit card company was notified of the fraud and the incident is under investigation, authorities reported.

Thursday, January 14, Richard C. Algoo, 38, of Plainfield was picked up at the Middlesex County jail on an outstanding warrant in the amount of \$750.

Thursday, January 14, George L. Carey, 34, of Plainfield was arrested for allegedly driving with a suspended license after a motor vehicle stop on Route 22. He also was found to have an outstanding warrant for him out of Jersey City in the amount of \$300.

Thursday, January 14, a resident came into police headquarters to report that she lost her purse, described as a small, pink Vera Bradley bag containing her driver's license, a Visa credit card, numerous receipts containing personal information and approximately \$120 in cash. According to police, the purse was lost on Sunday, January 10, in the parking lot of the Westfield Memorial Library on East Broad Street or the Westfield CVS on South Avenue between the hours of 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Thursday, January 14, an officer responded to a location on Central Avenue on a report of illegal dumping. According to police, three clear plastic trash bags containing what appeared to be medical waste, including rubber gloves, gauze and syringes, were observed. The county HAZ-MAT authorities responded and removed the waste, police reported.

Friday, January 15, a patron of a Route 22 theater reported that as he was leaving the theater, he tripped on the curb and injured the pinky finger of his left hand. According to police, the victim was transported to Overlook Hospital for treatment.

Friday, January 15, Ernesto Sani, 32, of Hatfield, Pa. was arrested for allegedly driving with a suspended license after a motor vehicle stop on Route 22.

Friday, January 15, Matthew D. Boettcher, 23, of Springfield was arrested and charged with possession of suspected marijuana following a motor vehicle stop for failure to wear a seatbelt. He was transported to police headquarters, where he was processed and released.



MAKING HISTORY...Kim Guadagno makes history as she is sworn in as New Jersey's first lieutenant governor, by New Jersey Chief Justice Stuart Rabner, as her family surrounds her during Tuesday's inauguration ceremony in Trenton. Her husband, Michael, a Superior Court judge in Monmouth County, holds the Bible. Governor Chris Christie, pictured far left, and his wife, Mary Pat, look on.

**Governor Christie**

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Oliver, both Democrats, to the podium. "Let us shake hands as a symbol for our citizens of all that is possible in a future that demands that who gets the credit finally takes a back seat to doing something worth getting credit for," Governor Christie said. He vowed to represent all New Jerseyans regardless of political affiliation, wealth status or age.

Mr. Christie has appointed former Westfield resident, Bret Schundler, the Republican Party's nominee for governor in 2001, as education commissioner. Mr. Schundler is a 1977 graduate of Westfield High School, where he was All-State in football. Mr. Schundler later was elected to two terms as Jersey City mayor.

Mr. Schundler replaces another ex-Westfield resident, Lucile Davy, as education commissioner. A member of the Westfield Parent-Teacher Council from 1996 to 2000, Ms. Davy had served as education commissioner since 2005.

Governor Christie said the state needs to "make better use of the resources showered on education." He vowed that his administration "will hold schools accountable and give people the choice to pursue alternatives to schools that fail."

In addition to Mr. Christie's administration, Westfield residents Tom

Kean, Jr. and Jon Bramnick both hold leadership posts in the Republican caucus in Trenton. Mr. Kean serves as Senate minority leader, while Mr. Bramnick is in the number two spot as conference leader for the GOP.

Mr. Bramnick said he expects the governor to initiate his idea to conduct unannounced audits of state and local governments. "Where there is state funding and where the state has authority to enter the workplace, we are going to follow people around and ask, 'what are you doing now?'" he said.

Following the inauguration, invited guests headed to a reception at the Prudential Center in Newark, where Bruce Springsteen's "Glory Days" filled the air from The B Street Band, a cover band. The event, which replaced the traditional inaugural ball due to the struggling economy, featured sections of Jersey's favorite foods such as taffy and fudge from Atlantic City, Campbell's soup from Camden County and the traditional pork roll from Trenton. All proceeds went to charity, according to Governor Christie, such as \$100,000 to the Community Food Bank of New Jersey in Hillside.

One attendee, John DeSimone of Clark, said of the new governor, "Do what you say, we are all behind you."



INAUGURATION PAUSE...Westfield High School graduate Bret Schundler, pictured left, Asm. Jon Bramnick, second from left, Rich Bagger and Senator Tom Kean, Jr., right, all of Westfield, pose at Governor Chris Christie's inauguration luncheon Tuesday. Mr. Schundler has been named commissioner of education and Mr. Bagger is the governor's chief of staff.

**County to Help United Way Offset Fees for Haiti Effort**

By SONIA OWCHARIW

Specialty Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

ELIZABETH – Haiti is not alone after being struck by a 7.0 earthquake recently claiming thousands of lives, destroying homes and leaving the country in desperate need of water, food, shelter and medical care. The world is responding and Union County is answering the call as well.

Frank Guzzo, director of Human Services in Union County, requested at last Thursday's Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders' meeting to contract a fee not to exceed \$5,000 to the United Way of Greater Union County in Elizabeth to offset administrative fees of processing monetary donations for Haiti. The United Way has been asked to be the lead agency for relief efforts.

Residents can check on county and state efforts for Haiti by visiting

ucnj.org and nj4haiti.org.

In other business, Erick Torain, of Torain Group of Mullica Hill, and Shamida Coney, arts coordinator for Central Jersey Arts Charter School in Plainfield, requested that the Union County Improvement Authority be the "conduit issuer" for the tax-exempt bonds included in the \$7-million budget. The charter school is a 501(c) 3, nonprofit-exempt organization, according to Mr. Torain.

"There's no risk for the county since no county dollars are being budgeted," Freeholder Chairman Dan Sullivan said.

The charter school hired the Torain Group to raise the \$7 million through private investors. The school is looking to purchase and renovate the building at 1225 South Avenue in Plainfield. The existing building at 35 Watchung Avenue opened its doors in September 2006, and offers classes from kindergarten to fifth grade, and currently has 345 students with its first eighth-grade graduating class in June, according to Ms. Coney.

"We are a school that applies math with music and art with science suiting needs for our Plainfield students. For example, our kindergarten students learn the alphabet through physical movement. Mathematical fractions are learned through music patterns. Our teachers are licensed and highly-qualified according to the New Jersey Department of Education and our students take NJASK (New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge)," Ms. Coney said.

A board also considered agreements with the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Inspection Services for managing the Canadian geese population throughout the Union County Parks System in an amount not to exceed \$347,239.

The freeholders also considered a resolution to enter into agreements with Scotch Plains and Westfield for participation in the Sheriff's Labor Assistance Program for labor assistance from non-violent prisoners.

**Who says there is no such thing as a free lunch?**

Join us on **Sunday, January 24<sup>th</sup>** from 11am-1pm for a free lunch and a tour of our state of the art Catholic School, **Saint Agnes School, 342 Madison Hill Road, Clark.** You may have heard that we were scheduled for closure in June 2010, but we have been given an opportunity by the archdiocese to save our state-of-the-art school. All we need is YOU to bring your child to see our school that has:

- Middle states accreditation, 30 brand new computers with internet access for research, seven smart boards, a brand new middle school wing, a very large free open green space for running and playing, playground equipment, hot lunch program, before care, after care, a brand new media center and much more! Come see what we have to offer and find out about one of the best kept secrets in Union County...Saint Agnes School.

Other open houses will be held on **Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>** from 9:30am-10:30am and **Wednesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>** from 7-9pm. Hope to see you there!

**Saint Agnes School 342 Madison Hill Road, Clark 732-381-0850**

**PAYING TOO MUCH IN PROPERTY TAXES?**

Home Values have dropped. Shouldn't your property taxes? Is a property tax appeal right for you? In the last three years, home values in Union County have dropped on average by more than 15 percent. As the real estate market is depreciating, your property taxes, which are based on the market value of your home, are either increasing or remaining stable. As a taxpayer, you have the right to appeal your property tax assessment.

A taxpayer considering an appeal should understand that he/she must prove that his/her assessed value is legally "unreasonable" compared to a market value standard. With a successful tax appeal, your lowered taxes will be locked for the next three years which can amount to a considerable amount of savings.

The best way to succeed in appealing your taxes is to present your successful claim through expert tax and legal advisors with local knowledge. James M. Foerst is the principal of Spector Foerst & Associates and has been assisting families with real estate and tax issues for a decade in our local community. Mr. Foerst brings with him his experience with local government and the municipal budget process. Evan Siegel is the principal at American Realty Appraisals and is a state certified real estate appraiser with a successful history of lowering home owner's taxes. As an appraiser who focuses on tax appeals, Mr. Siegel can determine if your property taxes are legally "unreasonable" and provide the quantifiable data needed to prevail.

Save money in this economy. Make the sale of your home more attractive. Reduce the long term expenses associated with your home. All with lowered taxes. Tax appeals must be filed by April 1.

For more information about tax appeals, visit [spectofoerst.com](http://spectofoerst.com) or get started with a free consultation and review by calling James M. Foerst at (908) 322-4886.

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