



Peyton's Peek at the Week In Politics

By Paul Peyton of The Leader/Times

Christie Fires Edu. Commissioner Bret Schundler Over 'Race' Flap

Education Commissioner Bret Schundler was fired Friday morning by Governor Chris Christie after New Jersey lost out on \$400 million in education aid as part of the Obama Administration's "Race to the Top" program.

According to news reports, the state's 700-page application was missing tax information from 2008 and 2009 while including numbers for Fiscal Year 2011 instead. New Jersey, which fell three points behind Ohio, was docked five points for leaving out the information on the state's application.

At a press conference last Wednesday, Governor Christie was critical of "bureaucrats in Washington" for not awarding the state the \$400 million, saying New Jersey tried to furnish the missing data during the presentation in the nation's capital, but officials refused to accept it.

The next day, the U.S. Department of Education released a video of the presentation, which showed Mr. Schundler and the New Jersey team not making an attempt to provide the data, thus contradicting what Governor Christie had said at his press conference.

New Jersey's application was amended over the Memorial Day weekend after Mr. Schundler negotiated with the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) on key provisions of the application. The Governor ordered that changes made with the backing of the NJEA be removed from the application.

Rochelle Hendricks Named Acting Education Commissioner

Rochelle Hendricks has been named acting commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Education, following the firing of Bret Schundler as commissioner. According to *The Record*, Ms. Hendricks has been with the department since 1987 and recently served as assistant commissioner for the Division of School Effectiveness and Choice.

Bergen Residents Turn In 700 Guns at Buyback Program

The Bergen County Sheriff's Department paid out \$47,550 over two days over the county's gun-buyback

program. According to northjersey.com, 700 firearms were turned in to authorities. The money came out of forfeiture funds.

Democrats Schedule Override On Family-Planning Funding

Although last week's firing of Bret Schundler has pushed the cutting of funding for family-planning services off the front page, New Jersey State Senate Democrats have scheduled a hearing on Monday, September 20, in Trenton, as they attempt to override Governor Chris Christie's veto of the \$7.5-million budget item. Two-thirds of the Legislature is needed to override the veto, meaning Democrats need 27 of the 40 Senators to vote in favor of the legislation. There are 23 Democrats in the Senate.

If successful, the bill would move to the Assembly on September 30, where 54 "yes" votes would be needed out of 80 members. The Democrats hold 47 seats in the lower chamber.

GW Bans Developers From Taking Donations

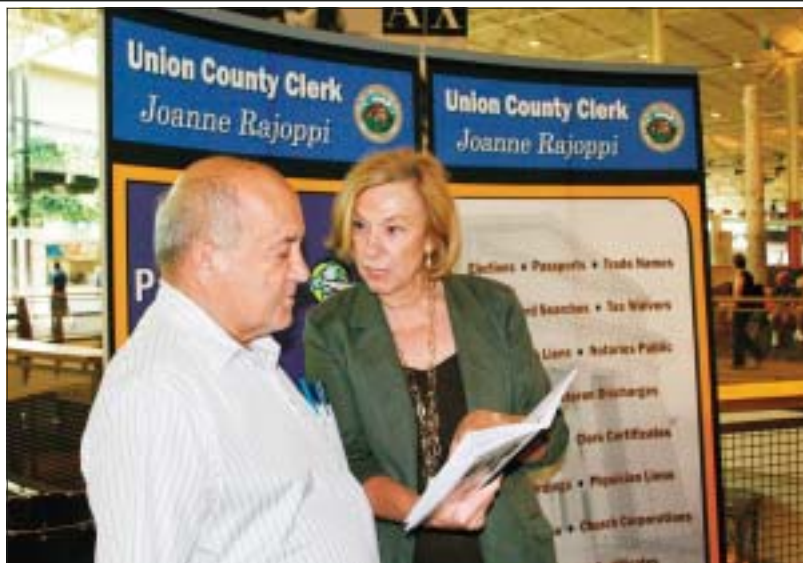
By RENNIE WOLTERS
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

GARWOOD — The Garwood borough council held a regular meeting last Tuesday — the only meeting that took place last month after having its August 10 meeting cancelled.

The council passed an ordinance declaring that any redeveloper who makes a political contribution to elected officials of the borough, or to local or county political committees, will be ineligible to enter into any redevelopment agreement with the borough. This ordinance prevents borough employees from entering into agreements with political contributors, officials said.

The council also passed an ordinance to amend the frequency of criminal background checks for borough employees and volunteers. According to the ordinance, the police captain or his designee will coordinate a criminal history background check every five years after the initial check, an amendment which increases the time between criminal background checks by three years.

The council will meet again on Tuesday, September 14.



Courtesy of Alan Falcone, County of Union

WHAT DOES THE CLERK DO?... Union County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi, who is seeking re-election to a third term, explains the services offered by the County Clerk's Office to Peter Philippakos of Linden at the Jersey Gardens Mall Expo in Elizabeth. More than 1,600 people visited the expo, where the county clerk assisted many with mail-in ballots and voter registration. For more information about the services the County Clerk's Office provides, call (908) 527-4787.

Paul Jackson Fund to Hold Inaugural 5K Run/Walk

WESTFIELD — The Paul Jackson Fund ("The Fund") will hold its first annual 5K Run/Walk on Saturday, October 9. Money raised at this event will be used to assist families facing a financial crisis due to catastrophic illness or disability.

The 5K Run and Two-Mile Walk will be wholly contained within Oak Ridge Park in Clark, with paved paths, and will feature mile clocks, water stops and scoring by Compuscore. The 5K Run will be a USATF-certified, 500-point NBGP race.

The event also will include a wheelchair-friendly Two-Mile Walk and a Kids Fun Run for those ages 2 to 11, with distances from 25 to 200 yards and finisher ribbons for all.

Participants may register online through The Paul Jackson Fund website, pauljacksonfund.org.

The Paul Jackson Fund was created in 1991 to benefit Paul Jackson, who was paralyzed due to spinal cord surgery. When he no longer depended on finances from The Fund, he decided to do everything in his power to help others. He assumed leadership of The Fund and created a charity of last resort for people in financial crisis due to catastrophic illness or disability.

Mr. Jackson passed away in 2009; his dream and only wish was for the work of The Fund to continue. Proceeds from The Paul Jackson 5K will assist those most in need.

Mindowaskin Park Cleanup On Tap Sept. 18 in Westfield

WESTFIELD — The Friends of Mindowaskin has scheduled a fall cleanup and planting event for Mindowaskin Park on Saturday, September 18, from 9 a.m. to noon. Volunteers and organizations are encouraged to participate and to bring gloves, rakes and tools to trim shrubs and for planting.

All volunteers are asked to meet at the bandstand, located in the center of the park. For more information, call (908) 233-0028 or e-mail info@mindowaskinpark.org.

The Friends of Mindowaskin is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization, founded in the early 1990s to revitalize and preserve the park. The mission of The Friends of Mindowaskin is to ensure the long-term enjoyment of this public park by the Westfield community.

Currently underway is a fund-raising campaign for the "Memory Walk" at the bandstand. Granite pavers with an inscription are available for purchase from The Friends.

For further information, access mindowaskinpark.org or call (908) 233-0028.

Board members for the Friends include Deborah Burslem, Robert Burslem, Jane Curtis, David Foltz, Fontaine Gatti, Elizabeth List, B. Carol Molnar, Paul Nazzaro, Marlynn Shields, Gail Smith, Craig Stock, Barbara Vincentsen and David Williams.

County to Hold Annual POW/MIA Ceremony

ELIZABETH — Union County will hold its annual POW/MIA ceremony on Friday, September 17, at 11:15 a.m. on the steps of the Union County Courthouse in Elizabeth on Broad Street.

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Kean: Controller's Report Proves Need for Reforms

TRENTON — Senate Republican Leader Tom Kean, Jr. (R-Union) cited a recent Comptroller report highly critical of the secrecy and abuses surrounding tax exemptions and abatements as further reasons why reform bills he has sponsored should be given consideration. The State Comptroller has indicated that property tax exemptions and abatements awarded in certain areas of the state have been cloaked in secrecy and have skewed school-funding policies.

Certain municipalities over the years have increasingly exempted major developers from paying property taxes, which support municipalities, schools and counties. The municipalities have permitted the developers to make alternative payments to only the municipalities, and they were not shared with counties and schools.

The current arrangement has the impact of starving urban school systems of local funding and leaving state taxpayers to pick up the tab through an unfair school-funding formula that shortchanges many com-

munities, Senator Kean said.

Senator Kean is the sponsor of legislation (S-1021) that requires local governments to share alternative payments with schools and counties to the same extent that property taxes are shared with schools and counties, so that state taxpayers are not left holding the bill.

He said the state has not collected accurate or relevant data on billions of dollars of tax exemptions and abatements for decades. In response to the lack of disclosure about the extent and impacts of exemptions and abatements, the senator introduced legislation (S-1465) with Senator Ron Rice in the last session that requires greater disclosure, and will be reintroducing the legislation for current session on Monday.

"My legislation is sorely needed; it brings transparency to exemptions and abatements, and ends the unfair school-funding impacts of those special deals," Mr. Kean said. "The Comptroller's report should serve as a wake-up call for those who have opposed these reforms in the past."

Scutari Urges Christie to Back Fed. Med. Marijuana Bill

TRENTON — State Senator Nick Scutari (LD-22, Linden) has introduced a measure urging Governor Chris Christie to support and advocate for federal legislation that would provide legal protection to patients who use medical marijuana in compliance with state laws.

The senator's bill would express the legislature's support and urge the Governor to support and advocate for H.R. 2835, known as the "Medical Marijuana Patient Protection Act."

In states with legalized medical marijuana, H.R. 2835 would protect patients, prescribing doctors, distributors and anyone authorized to obtain, possess or distribute marijuana on behalf of a patient against arrest and prosecution by federal authorities.

"With this measure, we will send a unified message to the federal government that we support the rights of states with medical marijuana laws to carry them out and that we believe patients deserve protections. We will also respectfully urge the Governor to join our effort to protect patients in New Jersey who are suffering with debilitating illnesses and seeking a small measure of relief through the medicinal use of marijuana," said Mr. Scutari, the prime sponsor of the "New Jersey Compassionate Use Medical Marijuana Act."

New Jersey is one of 14 states with laws allowing patients with debilitating illnesses to use marijuana for medicinal purposes. Under federal law, however, it remains illegal to use, possess or cultivate marijuana, and no physician can legally prescribe it. H.R. 2835 also would transfer marijuana from a Schedule I controlled substance to Schedule II, under the federal Controlled Substances Act, statutorily recognizing its medical value and allowing doctors to prescribe it.

The senator's measure follows reports that U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) raids continue to take place in states with legalized medical marijuana, despite an October 2009 directive from the office of United States

Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr. asserting that law enforcement should not focus federal resources "on individuals whose actions are in clear and unambiguous compliance with existing state laws providing for the medical use of marijuana."

According to published reports, DEA officials raided the home of a Denver marijuana grower earlier this year after he spoke to a television news station about the profitability of his business.

Two Colorado laboratories testing marijuana for pesticides and potency also were raided after they applied for licenses from the DEA. As a result, federal legislators in Colorado sent a letter to Mr. Holder calling for the raids to stop.

The "New Jersey Compassionate Use Medical Marijuana Act" was signed into law January. The state is approaching an October 1 deadline to begin implementation of the program, after a 90-day delay requested by the Christie Administration was agreed upon by the legislature.

Cornerstone Ceremony To Mark Rededication Of Trinity Church

CRANFORD — A Masonic cornerstone ceremony and rededication of Trinity Episcopal Church will be held on Sunday, September 19.

Masonic cornerstone ceremonies, a rare occurrence today, date back to the days of President George Washington, who laid the cornerstone at the United States Capitol on September 18, 1793.

Azure Masonic Lodge No. 22 Grand Master, M.W. Joseph H. Rival, Jr., and the Grand Staff will participate in the ceremony, which will begin with the opening of the lodge by the Grand Master at 1 p.m. He will then lead the procession to the church, which is approximately four blocks away.

Light refreshments will be served at the church after the ceremony.

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Dental Update

by Kenneth W. Arida, D.D.S.
Family & Cosmetic Dentistry

SHARED CONCERNS

Parents may want to take note of the fact that they can pass along cavity-causing bacteria to their babies. This information is provided in the interest of raising awareness, not causing alarm. What many people do not know is that Streptococcus mutans is a bacterium that can be transferred by saliva when utensils are shared and even when parents kiss their babies. It's important to note that only parents and caregivers with active tooth decay can spread Streptococcus mutans bacteria when saliva is transferred. Beyond that, tooth decay develops as a result of a combination of factors, including genetics, oral hygiene, and exposure to sugary liquids. Good oral health on the part of parents helps minimize the bacteria-transfer factor.

Cavity-causing bacteria and its resultant damage can be controlled if we deal with bacterial plaque activity on a daily basis. A toothbrush alone, however, no matter how often used, cannot do the whole job. It takes the combined effort of smart eating, conscientious daily brushing and flossing, and professional visits to promote total oral health as well as complete body health. If it's been too long since you treated your teeth and gums to professional care, now would be a good time to call 908-654-6262 for an appointment. We're centrally located in Westfield at 131 South Euclid Avenue, with off-street parking available. P.S. Babies are particularly vulnerable to tooth decay during the time of tooth eruption, when their tooth enamel is relatively soft. www.drarida.com

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