

## Letters to the Editor

### Westfield Councilman Loughlin Appreciates Guadagno Visit

On August 18, I had the pleasure of meeting with Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno, along with Mayor Skibitsky and several members of our town council, to discuss Governor Chris Christie's plan for our state. Lt. Gov. Guadagno told us that the Governor is reviewing every department in Trenton to make the cuts needed to save our state after years of fiscal mismanagement.

During the last few weeks, I have read Letters to the Editor in this paper misstating Governor Christie's position on the issue of women's healthcare involving the family planning funding bill. Here are the facts. If signed into law, the family planning funding bill would have transferred \$7.5 million out of the state prescription fund. This would have placed the state prescription fund into a \$5.6-million deficit, resulting in a tax increase and risking access to needed medicines for women and children. Further, some of the services contained in the family-planning funding bill are duplicative as we have other federal and state-funded clinics and health centers to assist low-income women, and some can be preserved through private funding at no cost to the Westfield taxpayer.

Additionally, our Governor has provided funding for numerous aspects of women's health care in this year's bud-

get. This includes early cancer detection programs and mammograms for women. Further, over \$20 million is dedicated to serve low-income women and children with chronic diseases, birth defects and special health care needs such as cystic fibrosis; childhood lead poisoning screening and environmental inspections of homes with suspected lead hazards; prenatal care; fetal alcohol syndrome; and hemophilia treatments.

Governor Christie is committed to reducing the size of Trenton and cutting costs in every department, and many of these cuts will be difficult and some unpopular. However, these cuts are required to make New Jersey affordable once again.

When I campaigned door-to-door last year, the number one concern I heard from Westfield residents was the affordability of our state. A recent Boston College study revealed that more than \$70 billion in wealth left New Jersey between 2004 and 2008 as residents moved elsewhere to avoid our tax burden. I commend the Governor for taking the necessary steps to reverse this trend.

I support Governor Christie's efforts to reform state government and reduce the tax burden on Westfield residents.

**Keith Loughlin**  
Westfield Councilman



**HONEYMOON...Maggie Fram (Diggory) of Westfield is on her honeymoon with her husband Daniel at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. A writer for the newspaper, she poses with a recent issue of The Westfield Leader.**

### Councilman Glover Thanks Scotch Plains Businesses for Concerts

Last Thursday's concert in the Alan M. Augustine Park concluded the 2010 Scotch Plains Cultural Arts Summer Concert Series. I want to thank all the musicians and bands that performed including, Doug Clarke and the Rutgers Rebels, conductor David Wroe and members of The Westfield Symphony Orchestra, The John Powers Band, RB Express, and Eric Harrison and the Crash Chorus.

As many of you know, due to municipal budgetary constraints and a lack of funding, the curtain was to come down on this 20-year-old successful program in our community. However, generous contributions from Beckerman and Company, Investors Savings Bank, PNC Bank, The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Patch, Family Investors Company, John's Meat Market (voted the number one market in the state) and The Scotch Plains Management Corporation made it possible for this rich tradition to continue.

If you attended a concert, I know you would agree that the concert series provided many different genres of music and was exceptional. Producing the concerts

required a lot of hard work and coordination that was done behind the scenes, and I want to recognize and thank the Scotch Plains Recreation Department for their outstanding work on the program. Also, it gives me great pleasure to recognize all those from TV34 who produced an exceptional professional broadcast for all of us to enjoy.

It's truly remarkable that in an age when government is simply eliminating programs due to lack of funding, we were able to successfully partner with our business community and volunteers to bring a little joy to our neighborhood. Hopefully, this spirit of cooperation and community service will continue for many years to come.

On a personal note, I want to say that it was a privilege to participate and contribute to "keeping the music playing" and I am looking forward to another great concert series in the summer of 2011.

**Kevin Glover**  
Scotch Plains Councilman  
Candidate for Re-election

### Three Cases of West Nile Virus Confirmed In New Jersey

TRENTON — The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) has reported the season's first three human cases of West Nile Virus (WNV) in a 68-year-old female from Ocean County, a 78-year-old female from Essex County and an 86-year-old male from Passaic County.

Residents should survey their property and remove any items that can collect rain or sprinkler water. Items such as

clogged gutters, flowerpots and old tires are breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

People should also apply insect repellent to their clothing and exposed skin in accordance with labeling directions, wear long-sleeved shirts and pants (weather permitting) outdoors, and limit outdoor activities at dawn, dusk and during evening hours.

For more information, see state.nj.us/health/.

### \$821 Million in Loans Approved for NJ Water and Wastewater Projects

TRENTON — Governor Chris Christie has signed legislation to appropriate \$821 million in no-cost and low-cost loans for water and sewer infrastructure projects across the state. The financing, administered through the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Financing Program, will make available approximately \$549 million for clean water project loans and \$272 million for drinking water project loans, with the federal government picking up at least half of the cost.

"It is imperative that we maintain the integrity of the state's water supply and sewer systems, to protect the public health and ensure our continued commitment to the environment," said Governor Christie.

The infrastructure projects are expected to create hundreds of jobs throughout the state.

More than 75 applications from cities, towns, counties, authorities, utilities and private associations are being considered this year for money for clean water and drinking water infrastructure projects. The program dates back to the 1980s and has previously financed 749 projects totaling almost \$5 billion.

The money for all of the projects comes from a revolving loan program administered in part by the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust (EIT), an independent state financing authority. It provides loans to local governments for construction of wastewater treatment fa-

cilities, sludge management systems, plus sewer overflow, stormwater projects and non-point source pollution management projects.

It also offers loans to publicly and privately-owned drinking water systems for the construction or upgrade of drinking water facilities, transmission and distribution systems, storage facilities, and source development.

Funds are made available under the federal Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water Acts and various state bond acts. The program provides zero percent interest rate loans to local government units from the state DEP for up to half the allowable project costs, and a market rate loan from the Trust for the remaining allowable costs.

For information about EIT financing programs, visit [www.njeit.org](http://www.njeit.org).

### Bayonne Bridge to Be Raised for \$1 Billion

TRENTON — The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey is to provide \$1 billion to raise or rebuild the Bayonne Bridge to address its low clearance. When revised, Port Newark and Port Elizabeth will remain competitive shipping destinations, reported Assemblywoman Annette Quijano (L.D.-20, Union).

The issue of the Bayonne Bridge's low clearance was brought to light last year when the new draft limits were announced for Panamax ships — the largest ships able to traverse the Panama Canal following its deepening. It would exceed the height of the fixed span Bayonne Bridge, effectively preventing these ships from reaching Ports Newark and Elizabeth.

Asw. Quijano, said, "The Port Authority's agreement to secure funding to address the issue of the Bayonne Bridge's clearance is welcome news to New Jersey's shipping industry and our overall economy."

"It also should help allay fears from shipping companies that New Jersey's ports would be left inaccessible to New Panamax ships in 2015, which, in turn, should keep them from abandoning Ports Newark and Elizabeth for other locales."

### Union Chides Gov. — 'His irrational, Ideological Hatred of NJEA'

Last June, Gov. [Chris] Christie rejected a "Race to the Top" application prepared by his Commissioner of Education, Bret Schundler, and replaced it with his own. The original application was developed over several weeks in consultation with educational stakeholder groups including New Jersey Education Association (NJEA), and it had the support of hundreds of NJEA local education associations, as encouraged by the Race to the Top application guidelines. Gov. Christie's substitute application, which was hastily prepared without input from professional educators, lacked any such support.

New Jersey's failure to win Race to the Top funding is a direct result of Gov. Christie's misguided decision to hijack the grant application process for his own political purposes. His decision to reject the collaboration required by the U.S. Department of Education cost New Jersey a chance at \$400 million.

He made it clear in June that he was not interested in the input of professional educators in the application process, and he insisted that he knew best what it takes to win this grant. He now owes the people of New Jersey an explanation for why his application failed. And he owes students and taxpayers an apology for undermining a process that could have brought much-needed resources and genuine reform to our state's public schools.

The original application, which Gov. Christie rejected, was the result of weeks of study, research and collaboration among NJEA, other education groups, Commissioner Schundler and other top N.J. Department of Education officials. It

contained innovative, research-based reforms, including a novel approach to compensating successful school communities. That application had pledges of support from close to 400 of our local education associations, as well as from NJEA.

Yet Gov. Christie chose political gamesmanship over the best interests of New Jersey's students and taxpayers. He broke with his own commissioner and submitted his own application, and when it made the list of finalists, he openly boasted that he didn't need the support of NJEA and its members, despite our helping to craft an application designed to bring real reform to New Jersey's schools.

His irrational, ideological hatred of NJEA — which led him to throw his own education commissioner under the school bus for cooperating, rather than conflicting, with NJEA — has led to utter failure, and the loss of desperately needed funds for our public schools. Maybe this costly lesson will convince Gov. Christie to realize that collaboration is preferable to confrontation when it comes to building consensus around sound public policy.

**Barbara Keshishian**  
NJEA president  
Trenton

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