

The Sheboygan Press

BE CONNECTED

www.sheboyganpress.com

INSIDE TODAY



Passionate about art

North High teacher Frank Juarez's latest award is Wisconsin Outstanding Art Educator. C1



Ruffin-Brand found not guilty

Jury agrees that she acted in self-defense

BY ERIC LITKE
Sheboygan Press staff

Charlene Ruffin-Brand walked out of the Sheboygan County Courthouse a free woman Saturday after a jury found her not guilty in the New Year's Day stabbing death of her husband.

Ruffin-Brand, 42, of Sheboygan, admitted inflicting the fatal wound — first during a 911 call and later on the witness stand — but her attorney argued throughout the six-day trial that she acted in self-defense after enduring years of physical and sexual abuse at the hands of Marchel Brand.

The jury agreed.

The nine women and three men deliberated for three and a half hours before reaching a



Charlene Ruffin-Brand reacts in court Saturday moments after a jury found her not guilty in the stabbing death of her husband. Photo by Eric Litke/The Sheboygan Press

verdict. Ruffin-Brand, who testified she has nightmares every night about the stabbing, stared stoically ahead during and after the reading of the verdict, but the two dozen friends and family

members packing the courtroom shouted, hugged and cried.

"She's a good girl and she didn't deserve any of this



TJ Brown, a HVAC technician with Professional Heating and Cooling, inspects a furnace for a Sheboygan customer. Photo by Gary C. Klein/The Sheboygan Press

Heating costs may cool off this season

BY JOSH LINTEREUR
Sheboygan Press staff

Like most recession-weary homeowners, Steve Kohls of Sheboygan could use a break on his heating bills this winter.

Last year, he paid \$120 on average to heat his 1,300-square-foot north side home during winter months, which was easily more than the year before, thanks to higher natural gas prices.

"Anything would help this year," said

See Not guilty/A2

See Heating costs/A4