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HACKETT FAMILY ACCUSES MONTCLAIR SCHOOL OF BULLYING



MONTCLAIR - A mother and daughter are facing a precarious dilemma as the latter has allegedly been targeted by bullies.

Natalie Hackett, the mother of the child, filed a tort claim against the Montclair School District. The daughter was initially pulled from class, but faced the possibility of being held back if she did not return.

Hackett herself is intimately involved with school matters, as she holds experience as a principal in West Orange and under the employ of Montclair Public Schools.

(Continued on page 3)

NEW COUNTY BUILDING REPLACES CONTROVERSIAL FORMER LOCATION



Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr. (third from left) joined by many key officials. Photo Courtesy Essex County

NEWARK - Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr. officially dedicated the new Essex County Division of Family Assistance and Benefits (formerly the Division of Welfare) at 320 and 321 University Avenue in Newark on Monday, July 27th.

The 150,000 square feet of renovated office space provides employees and clients with modern and more welcoming accommodations. By acquiring

(Continued on page 13)



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Turn to
PAGE 16



Editorial
 Dhiren Shah
 Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

The Presidential Election is little over three months away. It is a very important decision for all of us. The two candidates are not strong like Barack Obama, when we did not have to take long to decide we were voting for him. One has good management skills and a strong personality, but does not know how to talk and has a bad habit of tweeting. The other is a former Vice President but not a strong candidate and has a suspicious memory like he had four years ago. Now it is very important who Joe Biden will select as his running mate. Most of the national news media are under the impression that he will select California Senator Kamala Harris.

There are some problems with Kamala Harris as VP. Can she be loyal to Biden? She was a strong and outspoken candidate. Would she overpower the president after becoming vice president? Is she capable of being vice president? I think yes. She knows how to administrate affairs, as she did as California attorney general. She knows how to be strong and how to handle politicians. She is one of the top finalists for the VP pick of Democratic presidential nominee Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

The new stimulus package has been partially announced by the Republican controlled Senate. The few sticking points are:

1. \$600 a week extended unemployment benefit will be reduced to \$200 per week or 70% of the replacement salary with a maximum of \$500 per week.
2. \$1,200 stimulus check for a single or \$2,400 for a married couple. For the dependent children it will be \$500

- per dependent with a maximum of 3 dependents.
3. \$190 billion additional Paycheck Protection Plan for small businesses up to 300 employees and which lost more than 50% revenue.
4. 100% deductibility for business meals. (That is ridiculous! Small businesses don't do "business meals")
5. \$105 billion to schools reopen support for the safety of the students in the fall. \$30 billion to colleges.
6. Enhanced employee retention tax credit.
7. Credit for the expenses for workplace upgrades and testing and expense for operate business safely.
8. 1.75 billion for the new FBI headquarters near the White House.

A new FBI building near the Trump Hotel is a benefit to Trump. The benefit is two ways:
 1. The hotels will have more customers to stay near the White House and FBI headquarters. 2.

Competitors cannot build any hotels right next door to the Trump Hotel near the White House. The Trump hotel is charging about two to three times more than other hotels in the same category; an unusually higher price. Trump Hotels are charging the second highest price amongst all the hotels in Washington, D.C.

As I have mentioned before in one of my editorials, the Democratic elected officials look into the suburban towns, which run smoothly without any impact on regular citizens. When it comes to services, the suburban towns do not have politics in my opinion. I do not say that they do not have corruption, but as far as services are concerned, it is very easy to deal in those towns.

Have a wonderful week.

I'll talk to you next week.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS FOR LOCAL TALK WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

Publisher & Editor-in-chief	: Dhiren Shah
Editors	: Kristopher Seals / Anuj Shah
Journalists / Writers	: Kristopher Seals Walter Elliott Bro. Thomas Ellis Dhiren Shah William Hathaway Jr. Dr. Daniel Louis Ahmed Screven, Esq. Anuj Shah Lev Zilbermints Kinjal Shah Asha Shah Akshat Shah, MD Ivy Mahabir Kalindi Bhatt Dr. Robert Kennedy
Photographers	: Dhiren Shah Kristopher Seals Thomas Ellis II D. Adams, Jr.
Distributors	: Larry Wright Walter Elliott Fred Simpson
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WEATHER FOR THE WEEK

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
HI 93 LO 73	HI 87 LO 71	HI 88 LO 72	HI 86 LO 74	HI 88 LO 73	HI 85 LO 68	HI 83 LO 70

HACKETT FAMILY

(Continued from page 1)

When MPS hired Hackett over the summer of 2018, she moved back to Montclair and transferred her daughter from West Orange's Mt. Pleasant Elementary School to Buzz Aldrin.

That happy homecoming, however, began to unravel two weeks into the 2018-19 school year. It began, said the tort claim, when two students slammed a door in the daughter's face mid-September.

It continued with online and in-person and name-calling and insults by other students Oct. 14, 2018 until the chat group disbanded in January 2019. The false wig and weave campaign, where she was called "wig girl" and some tried to tug at her hair for authenticity, started here.

The daughter was invited to another chat group that December, only for other group members called to kick her out by Feb. 4, 2019.

One student found an earlier-recording of the daughter singing at a local Dunkin' Donuts and played it to a group of fellow students at the donut shop around Jan. 1. The video player singled her out and insulted her in retaliation for her reporting on them

Each of the above incidents, in the tort filing, concludes with "the School District was made aware but had failed to perform an investigation and further failed to implement applicable policies and procedures."

"I didn't understand why my daughter kept saying she wanted to go back to West Orange," said Hackett. "Then, after she got a new phone, I discovered the (chat group) texts."

While the District has declined to speak on the matter due to its legal ramifications, MPS Superintendent Dr. Jonathan Ponds sent us the following: "I assure you that Montclair Public Schools investigates all incidents or allegations of harassments, intimidation and bullying. There are age-appropriate consequences for students found to have violated our policies. In addition, safety protocols are individually and carefully developed for students as appropriate. The safety and welfare of our students is of utmost importance."



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NEWARK MAN CHARGED WITH ATTEMPTED CARJACKING IN JERSEY CITY DURING WHICH VICTIM WAS SHOT

NEWARK - A Newark man appeared before a judge on charges stemming from a July 9, 2020, attempted carjacking in Jersey City during which a victim was shot in the abdomen, U.S. Attorney Craig Carpenito announced.

Tevin Browning, 29, is charged by complaint with one count of conspiracy to commit carjacking, one count of attempted carjacking, one count of discharge of a firearm during a crime of violence, and one count of possession of a firearm and ammunition by a convicted felon. He appeared by video conference this afternoon before U.S. Magistrate Judge James B. Clark III and was detained.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court: At approximately 5:00 p.m. on July 9, 2020, a carjacking occurred in the area of Tonnelle and Broadway avenues in Jersey City, which was recorded on several video cameras in the area. Browning and an armed conspirator attempted to forcibly enter an Acura MDX which had pulled over to the side of Tonnelle Avenue to pick up a passenger.

As the passenger entered the Acura, Browning and his conspirator forcibly attempted to enter the vehicle. Browning attempted to enter the rear right passenger side of the Acura, and punched the passenger in the head. At that point, the driver quickly attempted to drive away from the area. As the driver drove away, the gunman attempted to enter the front passenger side of the Acura and held onto the Acura. After a short distance, the gunman shot the driver in the abdomen, and then fell off the Acura as its driver was able to escape.

Moments later, a Dodge Challenger ar-

rived at the scene and picked up the gunman before fleeing the area. Police officers found a spent .45 caliber shell casing stamped "Blazer .45 Auto" in the area where the gunman had fallen to the ground.

At approximately 8:00 p.m., Jersey City Police officers observed the Challenger parked and unoccupied on a residential street in Jersey City. The officers then observed Browning place an unknown item in the trunk of the car before walking into a nearby residence. Moments later, the officers observed Browning re-enter the trunk of Challenger before he was taken into custody.

A lawful search warrant of the Challenger produced a .45 caliber Hi-Point Model JHP semiautomatic handgun, bearing serial number 406099, which was loaded with four rounds of ammunition. Two of the rounds were stamped "Blazer .45 Auto" on the shell casing.

The counts of conspiracy to commit carjacking and attempted carjacking carry a maximum potential sentence of 25 years in prison. The count of discharge of a firearm during a crime of violence is punishable by a mandatory minimum of 10 years in prison and a maximum sentence of life in prison, which must run consecutively to any term of imprisonment imposed on any other charges. On the count of possession of a firearm and ammunition by a convicted felon, Browning faces a maximum of 10 years in prison.

U.S. Attorney Carpenito credited the Jersey City Police Department, under the direction of Public Safety Director James Shea; the Hudson County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Esther Suarez; and special agents of the FBI, under the di-

TOWN WATCH

DISCLAIMER: *The following items are primarily drawn from first responders. Responders' accounts may not be their full activity range. Grand juries hand down indictments when evidence presented them warrant a trial. Named suspects/defendants are innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.*

NEWARK / IRVINGTON - Detectives from both police departments and the Essex County Prosecutor's Office Homicide Task Force have been investigating the second border homicide in 20 days here since July 20.

Responding city and township officers, said Acting County Prosecutor Theodore "Ted" Stephens III and Irvington Police Director Tracy Bowers, found Alex Jean by 6 Melrose Ave., shot and unresponsive late that Monday.

Jean, 24, was declared dead at the scene at 11:38 p.m. Witnesses said "a gunman chased Jean west from Newark and shot him;" He died within inches of a "Welcome to Irvington" street sign.

Jean's hometown remains unknown as of 9 a.m. July 29. Neither Jean nor Anthony E. Young's funeral announcements have not been announced.

Young, 37, of Newark, who was killed by the Newark/Irvington border July 2, also remains actively investigated. Young was found shot at 18th Avenue and 21st Street 10:15 p.m. that Thursday.

Bradley Court Shooting

Acting Essex County Prosecutor Theodore N. Stephens, II, and Newark Public Safety Director Anthony F. Ambrose announced that Rashidah Y. Sutton-Bryant, 21, of Newark was fatally shot at Bradley Court Complex on North Munn Avenue.

The shooting occurred July 26 at approximately 10:22 p.m. Sutton-Bryant was rushed to University Hospital where she was pronounced dead at 10:58 p.m.

The investigation is active and ongoing. Anyone with information is asked to contact the Essex County Prosecutor's Office Homicide/Major Crimes Task Force tips line at 1-877-TIPS-4EC or 1-877-847-7432.

EAST ORANGE - People in and around the McIver Homes may well be walking around with their fingers crossed during the next heat wave.

Those among the 87 residents of the low income senior citizen apartment tower are hoping that what HVAC repairs vendors for Winn Residential and Carthage Advisors have authorized will weather the wave.

Several residents here at 111 S. Munn Ave. reached out to City Hall July 20-22, complaining that the 1976-built HVAC system had failed and were unable to reach Winn, the property manager, and Carthage, the owners. They first told Fourth Ward Councilman Casim Gomez and Mayor Theodore "Ted" Green Tuesday and that they recorded indoor temperatures of 105-degrees that Monday, 102-degrees Tuesday and 87 degrees Wednesday.

Casim, followed by city Code Enforcement inspectors, arrived to assess the situation July 21 and in reaching Winn/Carthage officials. Authorized contractors came in to make repairs on or after July 22.

"We've been responsive and steadfast in ensuring that this issue is resolved," said Gomez July 22. "The owners (Carthage) are being held responsible and have been instructed by our Department of Code Enforcement to immediately implement a temporary solution, followed by a viable long term solution, to relieve residents during this heat-wave and during this summer."

By "being held responsible," it is not clear at press time whether the East Orange Housing Authority is withholding or about to withhold USHUD rent subsidies from Carthage until 111 S. Munn's repairs are made. EOHA had resorted to holding up HUD funds while Carthage and Winn remediated mold found on some of the tower's 10 floors Oct. 15 - Feb. 15.

McIver renters and leaseholders pay 30 percent to Carthage with HUD the rest. Car-

thage, who bought McIver in 2013, brought Winn aboard for daily management Oct. 1.

ORANGE - The latest transit-oriented housing development around Orange Station, by Ruso Developments for 51 Lincoln Ave., was presented for the Orange Planning Board's consideration here July 22.

Russo, of Carlstadt, is proposing a five-story luxury apartment building on six lots that are now 33-53 Lincoln Ave. and 60 Scotland Rd. 51 Lincoln Ave., which would qualify for state incentives for being in the Transit Development Zone, would hold 201 units, a pool, a clubhouse, a garden terrace and 350 indoor parking spaces.

The building, as drawn by Livingston architect Lance Blake, would replace the mostly automotive -oriented business around "Politi Plaza." Landowner Daniel Politi had rented out space to the likes of Al's Auto Parts and Tuneway Automotive since 1985.

Al's Auto, who took over a Shell station in 1975, closed June 1.

Russo had recently presented "The Vermillion at 377 Crane St." to the OPB. That 209-unit development would replace five office and factory buildings ranging from early 20th to mid-19th centuries.

WEST ORANGE / MONTCLAIR - The Montclair Board of Education has brought back West Orange resident Terry Trigg-Scales as, this time, interim Montclair High School Principal.

Trigg-Scales - a Newark native and a West Orange homeowner since 1984 - had recently retired from MPS as its assistant superintendent of instruction. She had also doubled as interim Mt. Hebron - now Buzz Aldrin - Middle School last summer.

Trigg-Scales has spent most of her 39-year educational career with Montclair. She rose from teacher to assistant principal, principal and administrator among MPS' elementary and middle schools plus MHS.

A majority of participating West Orange voters elected Trigg-Scales to their board of education in November 2018. She is on WOBOE's policy com-

mittee.

SOUTH ORANGE / NUTLEY - Seton Hall University, as of July 16, has handed Hackensack Meridian Health administrative power over the Nutley-Clifton medical school that they had co-founded in 2016.

SHU, said President Dr. Joseph Nyre, will still send its medical students from South Orange to study in-person and/or online to the former Hoffman LaRouche pharmaceutical headquarters that straddle Route 3.

The university's profile at the Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine will continue to shrink, starting with the removal of "at Seton Hall" from its titles.

SHU's diminishing role at HMSM may be likened to a parent, gaining confidence in a child's bicycle riding, removing the training wheels.

The Nutley-Clifton campus had just opened in 2018 when the university gave financial responsibility to HMN, followed more recently for its academic accreditation.

"There was a significant change of leadership at Seton Hall and they had a different idea of financial stability," said school dean Bonita Stanton. She was referring to the Aug. 1, 2019 appointment of Nyre as SHU's 21st president.

"We thank Seton Hall for their assistance in getting our start," said Stanton. "We'll find ways to work together moving forward."

BLOOMFIELD - Township police officers are still looking for the accomplice of an Irvington man who robbed a driver at a gas station at gunpoint here July 13.

A man came to Bloomfield Police headquarters that Monday to say he was just stuck up at the Exxon at 491 Bloomfield Ave. The man said that he was in his car when "two African American males entered, struck him with a .22 cal handgun and stole his Apple AirPods."

An investigation led the Bloomfield Detective Bureau to apprehend a man identified as Aaron Larathe. Larathe, 19, was charged with robbery and weapons possession counts.

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SELECTS VENDOR TO BOOST CONTACT TRACING CORPS

TRENTON - The New Jersey Department of Health has announced that Public Consulting Group (PCG) has been chosen to develop a supplemental contract tracing workforce that will support local health departments across the state.

In this role, PCG will recruit, employ and manage contact tracers who can be deployed to carry out this work in areas with increasing COVID-19 cases.

“A robust contact tracing program to quickly identify those who may have been exposed is a vital tool to containing the spread of COVID-19,” said Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli. “PCG will assist local health departments as they need to scale up contact tracing efforts in their communities.”

The work to increase the Community Contact Tracing Corps began with the assistance of the Rutgers School of Public Health, which began recruiting and training workers drawn from graduate programs and alumni of graduate programs throughout New Jersey. Recognizing that the demand for contact tracer capacity could reach into the thousands, the Department solicited vendor proposals to help us scale the Corps across the state.

“Public Consulting Group is pleased to lend its capabilities to New Jersey’s COVID-19 response,” said William Mosakowski, Founder, President, and Chief Executive Officer. “Our national approach mirrors New Jersey’s - we work with both local health departments and local community members to make contact tracing effective. And this is also personal for PCG - we have over 200 of our own employees who already live and work in New Jersey

who we are trying to keep safe and healthy as well.”

The request of quotes yielded 64 quotes total which were received, reviewed, and technically scored by a 7-person committee representing the Departments of Health, Treasury and Labor and Workforce Development.

PCG will work to ensure that as many of these new contact tracers as possible come from and reflect the diversity of the communities they will be working in. They will be able to effectively communicate and engage with individuals who speak languages other than English and have diverse cultures. All individuals on-boarded for contact tracing will be required to complete Contact Tracing training developed with Rutgers School of Public Health.

“PCG’s approach is to build partnerships with the existing, robust network of stakeholders and community groups, especially in communities of color, to ensure the hiring pipeline reflects geographic and cultural diversity and that hiring decisions do as well. To implement this initiative, we are working Staffing Etc., a minority, woman-owned agency to meet these goals,” added Mosakowski.

PCG is partnering with states to manage and support COVID-19 solutions, including deploying robust contact tracing programs alongside local health departments to stop the spread of the virus PCG has programs underway in New York State, Arkansas, and Wisconsin. PCG has offices in Princeton and Newark and has worked with New Jersey state and local government for 15 years on a variety of health, human services, and K-12 education initiatives.



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PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY AGREES TO PAY \$3.5 MILLION TO RESOLVE ALLEGATIONS OF VIOLATING FALSE CLAIMS ACT

NEWARK - Pacira Pharmaceuticals Inc. will pay \$3.5 million to resolve allegations that it paid kickbacks to doctors in the form of bogus research grants to induce them to prescribe its analgesic EXPAREL, Attorney for the United States Rachael A. Honig announced July 28. The allegations arose from a whistleblower suit filed under the False Claims Act.

“Pacira tried to accelerate sales of its EXPAREL product through an illegal kickback scheme,” Attorney for the United States Honig said. “Pharmaceutical companies may not entice doctors to use their products by offering research grants in return for sales. Illegal inducements can distort medical decision-making, lead to the use of overpriced drugs, and drive up health care costs for everyone.”

“The payment of kickbacks or bribes in exchange for phony research and other grants, robs the government and every American,” FBI-Newark Acting Special Agent in Charge Joe Denahan said. “Today’s agreement by Pacira Pharmaceuticals Inc., to pay \$3.5 million, should send a strong message to anyone thinking about participating in this type of illegal activity. The FBI

remains committed to combating these types of schemes and bringing these perpetrators to justice.”

“Offering phony research grants in order to increase sales and fatten the bottom line is illegal and can be detrimental to the medical decision-making process,” Scott J. Lampert, Special Agent in Charge of the Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, said. “We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to safeguard our government health care programs and the taxpayers picking up the bill.”

According to documents filed in this case and the contentions of the United States contained in the settlement agreement:

From Dec. 1, 2012, through April 30, 2015, Pacira paid disguised kickbacks in the form of research and other grants to healthcare providers and institutions. Pacira intended these payments to induce sales of its newly-launched local analgesic, EXPAREL, to the targeted physicians and their respective hospitals. The research grants in

(Continued on page 15)



UNITED STATES

Use of Force on Protesters Decried

People taking part in peaceful demonstrations across the United States, and journalists covering these protests, should not be subjected to disproportionate use of force or other violations, the UN human rights office said on July 24.

Spokesperson Elizabeth Throssell was answering a reporter's question about the US authorities deploying federal security officers to various cities to quell demonstrations against racial injustice, sparked by the death of George Floyd, an unarmed African American man, while in police custody in Minneapolis on May 25.

"Peaceful demonstrations that have been taking place in cities in the US, such as Portland, really must be able to continue without those participating in them - and also, the people reporting on them, the journalists - risking arbitrary arrest or detention, being subject to unnecessary, disproportionate or discriminatory use of force, or suffering other violations of their rights," said Ms. Throssell.

Regarding reports about unidentified police officers detaining protestors, she said "that is a worry because it may place those detained outside the protection of the law, and may give rise to arbitrary detention and other human rights violations."

Ms. Throssell said federal and local security forces must be properly and clearly identified. They also should use force only when necessary and in accordance with international standards.

"Also, it is important that any victims of unnecessary or excessive use of force do have the right to remedy, and there should be, as we often say, prompt, independent, impartial and transparent investigations into any allegations of human

rights violations, and that should ensure that those responsible are held accountable," she added.

In light of demonstrations across the world, the UN Human Rights Committee, which monitors implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, has been analyzing the right to peaceful assembly.

EUROPE

Huge Budget Mulled by EU

In the debate with Council and Commission Presidents Charles Michel and Ursula von der Leyen, a deal reached at the recent European Council meeting on the recovery fund was qualified as "historic" by many MEPs as for the first time, member states have agreed to issue €750 billion of joint debt. With cuts made to the long-term budget (multiannual financial framework, MFF) however, most were "not happy."

"We are not ready to swallow the MFF pill," said Manfred Weber (EPP). Also, S&D leader Iratxe García would not accept the cuts, "not at a time when we need to strengthen our strategic autonomy and reduce disparities between Member states."

Many highlighted that the question of reimbursing the debt was not resolved. MEPs insisted that the burden must not fall on the citizens, and that a robust system of new own resources including a digital tax or levies on carbon for the repayment must be guaranteed, with a binding calendar.

Furthermore, many underlined that "the EU is not a cash machine for national budgets", deploring that "frugal" countries do not want to pay the price for benefiting from the single market, and insisting that no funds should go to "pseudo-democratic" governments which do not respect the rule of law and EU values.

Others were more skeptical about new own resources generating enough to repay all the debt and warned that the crisis should not be used as a pretext for further EU integration. Most however stressed that Parliament is ready for swift negotiations to make the necessary improve-

ments to the Council's common position.

The main budget in question is set at approximately \$1 trillion euros, or about \$1,172,355,000.00 in US dollars, in addition to the relief funds.

MIDDLE EAST

Syrian Detention Draws Concern

Families of the more than 130,000 people believed to be detained and forcibly disappeared in Syria, are deeply frustrated by the Security Council's failure to unite and make progress on the issue, the 15-member organ was told on July 23.

Wafa Ali Mustafa, a Syrian journalist, activist and member of Families for Freedom, which campaigns for the release of Syrian detainees, said their numbers are still growing as the Syrian government and armed groups continue to use detention "as a weapon to terrorize civilians" in violation of international law.

Among those detainees is her father, Ali Mustafa, a human rights defender who has not been seen or heard from, since he disappeared in July 2013. "We have never been told why he was taken from us or where he's being held," she said.

"To have a loved one who's detained or disappeared, and not to know their fate, is like waking up one day and realizing that you have lost a limb," said Ms. Mustafa, briefing a video-conference Council on political aspects of the war in Syria that erupted in 2011.

"I can tell you, it is a growing pain, a pain unlike any other," she said.

She said that families of detainees are "deeply frustrated" by the Council's collective inaction and abdication of responsibility to address a crime against humanity.

"My colleagues have shared our stories and demands with you, but to this date no progress has been made," she said, emphasizing that the COVID-19 pandemic - and the risk of the virus spreading fast in detention facilities - is cause for added urgency.

"We hear excuses about the need to prioritize other humani-

tarian or political issues in Syria, that now is not the time to focus on detainees. But all these issues are connected - and this Council can and must address them all at once."

She urged the Council to put pressure on the Syrian authorities and others to immediately release the names of all people in detention, along with their locations and situations.

"Torture and mistreatment must immediately cease, and detainees must be allowed routine contact with their families," she said, adding that the families of any detainees who have deceased must be informed of the circumstances of their passing and given access to burial sites.

Geir O. Pedersen, the United Nations' Special Envoy for Syria, also briefing the Council, said the issue of detainees, abductees and the missing requires sustained and meaningful action, in line with international law.

Such action - on a topic that touches all Syrian families - can help build confidence in society, as well as between the parties and international stakeholders, he said, speaking ahead of a planned reconvening of the UN-facilitated Syrian Constitutional Committee in Geneva in August.

AFRICA

Stopping Terrorists

Nearly 20 million illicit pharmaceutical items were taken off the market in a regional operation coordinated by INTERPOL across the Middle East and North Africa.

Biometric data from terrorist suspects arrested in joint operations involving Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso is being shared via INTERPOL to identify potential links with other terrorist attacks and suspects across the region and beyond.

On May 24, Operation Comoé took place northeast of Ferkessédougou, Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), and at the Ali-dougou terrorist base south of Banfora, Burkina Faso resulting in the arrest of 24 suspects in Burkina and 16 individuals in Côte d'Ivoire, who were then handed over to the intelligence services.

(Continued on page 15)

A CORONA MESSAGE from WhatsApp

Never have I seen such a mess in life.

The air is pure but wearing a mask is mandatory.

Roads are empty but it is impossible to go on long drive.

People have clean hands but there is a ban on shaking hands.

Friends have time to sit together but they cannot get together.

The cook inside you is crazy, but you cannot call anyone to lunch or dinner.

Every Monday the heart wants to go out, but the weekend does not seem to end.

Those who have money have no way to spend it.

Those who don't have money have no way to earn it.

There is enough time on hand, but you can't fulfill your dreams.

The culprit is all around but cannot be seen.

A world full of irony!

Be positive, but test negative.

NEW JERSEY PUBLIC UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEE ADMITS ROLE IN \$5.3 MILLION COMPOUNDED PRESCRIPTION DRUG SCHEME

NEWARK - An employee of a public university in New Jersey admitted his role in a scheme to defraud public and private health benefits programs of at least \$5.3 million for the billing of medically unnecessary compounded prescriptions, U.S. Attorney Craig Carpenito announced July 29.

John Cuffari, 58, of Cedar Grove, pleaded guilty by videoconference before U.S. District Judge John Michael Vazquez to an information charging him with conspiracy to commit health care fraud.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court: Compounded medications are specialty medications mixed by a pharmacist to meet the specific medical needs of an individual patient. Although compounded drugs are not approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), they are properly prescribed when a physician determines that an FDA-approved medication does not meet the health needs of a particular patient, such as if a patient is allergic to a dye or other ingredients in the prescription.

Between November 2014 and July 2016, Cuffari partici-

pated in a conspiracy that involved the submission of fraudulent prescriptions for compounded medications to public and private insurance plans. The scheme centered on the discovery that certain insurance plans paid for prescription compounded medications - including scar creams, wound creams, and metabolic supplements/vitamins - at exorbitant reimbursement rates.

Cuffari exploited this opportunity through working as a sales representative for several compounding pharmacies. In order to profit as a sales representative, Cuffari targeted individuals who had insurance plans that covered compounded medications and then convinced those individuals to obtain prescriptions for compounded medications, regardless of medical necessity, often by providing them with cash payments. In order to obtain prescriptions for compounded medications for some of the recruited individuals, Cuffari caused payments to be made to a New Jersey-based physician.

Once the prescriptions were written, they were filled by the compounding pharmacies with which Cuffari worked. The

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David Witherspoon, Attorney-at-Law, is a Debt Relief Agency.
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compounding pharmacies would then receive reimbursement from the insurance plans, and would pay Cuffari a percentage of the reimbursement amount.

As part of his plea agreement, Cuffari must forfeit \$539,580 in criminal proceeds he received for his role in the scheme and pay restitution of at least \$5,392,214. He faces a statutory maximum of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, or twice the gross gain or loss from the offense. Sentencing is sched-

uled for Dec. 9, 2020.

U.S. Attorney Carpenito credited special agents of the FBI, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Joe Denahan in Newark, with the ongoing investigation leading to the guilty plea.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Sean M. Sherman of the United States Attorney's Office, Opioid Abuse Prevention and Enforcement Unit in Newark.

BILL TO PROVIDE RESENTENCING STRUCTURE FOR QUALIFYING JUVENILE OFFENDERS CLEARS PANEL



psychological and neuroscience research, have dramatically reshaped the juvenile justice system by concluding that “children are constitutionally different from adults for purposes of sentencing.” These decisions reflect a consensus that, as a group, juvenile offenders are less culpable and more amenable to rehabilitation than adults, and therefore, should be thought of for special consideration by the courts.

Under the provisions of this bill (A-4372), the Commissioner of Corrections would be required to issue a Certificate of Eligibility for Resentencing to any inmate who:

1. committed a crime as a juvenile and was tried as an adult;
2. received an aggregate sentence of incarceration of 30 years or more;
3. has served at least 20 years of that sentence; and
4. has not been resentenced or previously sought relief un-

der the bill.

The sponsors Timberlake (D-Essex, Passaic), Quijano (D-Union), Reynolds-Jackson (D-Mercer, Hunterdon) issued the following statement on the bill:

“The judicial system is moving in the direction that requires a more compassionate approach to the sentencing of our youth. A defendant’s immaturity, impetuosity, and failure to appreciate risks and consequences; family and home environment; peer pressures; inability to deal with police officers or prosecutors or his own attorney; and the possibility of rehabilitation are now used as guidelines for juvenile sentencing.

“We must ensure New Jersey courts are reviewing the sentencing of those who are serving and as we move forward, children entering our court system. For any one infraction, a child can spend, what is to them, an entire lifetime or, their childhood in a prison without the opportunity for real rehabilitation or chance

for release.

“Knowing that people of color disproportionately make up the population of the U.S. prison system, we can say that mostly Black and Latino children are being excluded from real justice, real reform and the second chance to do what is right. This legislation is a beginning to give children who make mistakes a chance at correcting them and changing their future.”

Under the bill, an inmate who received a Certificate of Eligibility for Resentencing and received an aggregate sentence of incarceration with a period of parole ineligibility of 20 years or more may petition the court for resentencing. The bill would provide that the court, upon consideration of a petition filed by an inmate, may, in its discretion, modify, reduce, or suspend the sentence, including any minimum or mandatory sentence or a portion of the sentence imposed upon the inmate.

TRENTON - Legislation providing for the resentencing of certain juvenile inmates, sponsored by Assemblywomen Britnee Timberlake, Annette Quijano, and Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, was approved by the Assembly Appropriations Committee on July 27.

Four U.S. Supreme Court cases decided over the past decade, relying on developmental

NEWARK FIREFIGHTERS EXTINGUISH FATAL VEHICLE FIRE



NEWARK - Public Safety Director Anthony F. Ambrose reports that members of the Newark Fire Division extinguished a vehicle fire at Bergen Street and Madison Avenue that resulted in a fatality July 28.

Just before 11:50 a.m., firefighters responded to the vehicle fire resulting from a collision of two passenger vehicles and a small tanker truck. One of the passenger vehicles and the tanker were both on fire as a result of this incident. The fire was considered under control at 12:11 p.m.

Mayor Ras Baraka and Director Ambrose were both at the scene. “Our deepest condolences are extended to the decedent’s family and to the other victims involved,” Director Ambrose said. “Some 40 Newark Firefighters responded and worked tirelessly to contain the fire. It’s a sad day when something like this happens.”

On July 29, the deceased was identified as Durhon Fuller, 34, of Newark.

This incident under investigation by the Newark Fire Division’s Arson Unit, Newark Police Division and the Essex County Prosecutor’s Office.



Photos Courtesy Newark Public Safety Office



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From The Pastor's Heart

OP-ED BY DR. ROBERT KENNEDY

Managing Our Present Fear

If you ask my wife and I about the most common theme that runs through the lives of several couples we have given premarital counseling, she will say as I do, "FEAR."

Yes, fear has been allowing couples to break up many times before they get to counseling. They are fearful of breaking up just like their parents. They are fearful of not being able to resolve the conflicts they might face. And they are afraid that their relationships will just go south like their friends.

Fear is crippling many couples as they seek to keep the relationship going, and so they are scared to make the final commitment to getting married. Some we know, not those we have counseled, but many have decided that they prefer to shack up instead of pledging their lives together "until death do us part."

There is a greater fear than what is driving the nation and the world, than that which is impacting couples, namely the fear of the coronavirus. The news that more than 17,000,000 have already contracted the disease, and more about 700,000 have died worldwide is more than alarming. The United States is leading the way with more than a quarter of all cases and deaths.

Yes, some of the doctors who are treating patients with the disease are also dying. Nurses are dying. Nursing homes are overwhelmed with the disease, and a high percentage of their residents are dying. Young people are now getting the disease,

and some are dying. Even children are getting sick and dying. The disease is spiking in many parts of the United States and many parts of the world.

In some parts of the United States, ICU beds in hospitals are still being overwhelmed. With the most considerable efforts to secure PPE, there is still shortages. "Everybody" is searching the internet or sending some push notifications on what to take to avoid the disease. Listening to the news outlets for the latest updates seems to be more needful now than ever before.

Much of what is being forwarded to be shared with friends on WhatsApp, YouTube, or other social media platforms have no verifiability, but they are being forwarded anyway. The stock markets are volatile as the wait for the next news about COVID-19 vaccines. One day, the stock markets are up 100, 200, 300, or 400, another day they are down by the same numbers.

As people were told that the world was about to face a pandemic such as it has never seen, they went into a panic buying mode. They were stocking up on nonperishable foods, and paper products that they are now saying were too much for them. Of course, many have lost their jobs and can hardly find enough to eat, except what they can get from the food banks and other places.

People are so afraid of one another that it is profoundly amazing the reactions expressed for any who will not wear masks. I am not seeking to trivialize mask-wearing, but I notice even my reactions when passing anyone without a mask. I mask up, and I even veer off the walk-path to keep the social distance on the other side. Many people are getting rich as they have found a new way to push the consumerist button on masks.

In addition to masks, additional measures such as schools

being closed, and teachers and children must learn to work together from home using different learning platforms, as are now in place to deal with the present fears. What has never been tried before now being done. And now that it is time to open school again, one group, led by the president of the United States, is calling for the physical opening of schools. Another group is saying, let us stay on the internet learning platforms until we feel safer to open."

Sports teams that had stopped playing are trying to find ways of returning to play, but are finding themselves in the most challenging situations that they have ever faced. Many teams are finding that some of their teammates have contracted the coronavirus.

Churches have remained closed because some have experienced outbreaks. Family gatherings are being rescheduled. Some of my friends have opted and opting to celebrate their anniversaries on Zoom, and my wife and I are gladly celebrating with them.

I could go on to describe the fears of people everywhere, but the point that I wish to make is simply that our fears will not cure this disease or settle our social problems.

The fears we face, at this time, are driving us crazy. Such fears might help:

1. To fill the coffers of the rich.
2. To build the consumerist culture, as many people engage in panic buying.
3. To raise pharmaceutical stocks.
4. To force other products to become very expensive.
5. To make us more vulnerable to accepting recommendations of "bad medicine."
6. Many to accept some of the weirdest conspiracy theories.
7. To get us a vaccine much earlier than what was ever done in any generation, as

the president boasts.

8. To increase the sending of more notes of encouragement than any other time.

However, we need something more than what this world is offering to calm our fears. Let me offer what can truly drive away our fears. I have taken only two suggestions from the Bible:

1. That we need the presence of God in our midst.

Here is one text on the presence of God in the midst of us: "Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:10 NKJV)

What is it about God's presence that drives away human fears? Where God is present, there is life, health, healing, protection, peace, hope, and the building of genuine relationships.

2. That where love is, it drives away fear.

We also read in a Bible text from 1 John 4:18 (NKJV) that says, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love."

It is being discovered that our lack of love, care, compassion, concern for each other is even driving up the disease, and making our fears more severe. Therefore, I suggest that we think more about how we can allow the love of God to grow in our hearts so that we can be less fearful than we have ever been.

In effect, let us allow God's presence and ask him to let our love be perfected so that we will lessen the fears we are facing at this time.

The Doctor Is In



Dr. Adil Manzoor OP/ED

Health Insurance Companies: The Hidden Virus

consistently and innovatively. Two years later, in 2019, the doctor received a bonus of \$130,000 from the UHC, again recognizing his exceptional work to patients. This seems all good, right? But, trust me, things are about to get really ugly.

The UHC is currently seeking to drop hundreds of doctors from its Medicaid network in New Jersey. Amongst the hundreds of doctors that will be affected by this is Dr. Alex Salerno. Yes, the same doctor the UHC praised and gave a \$130,000 bonus just last year. What could possibly have gone wrong? Well, there's a plot twist.

In 2018, Riverside Medical made an offer to Dr. Salerno to buy his group practice. He turned down the offer. This doesn't sound dodgy at all, right? You just wait for it.



Where should I even start?

Should I start with the stories of Dr. Salerno, Dr. Wassef, or the hundreds of other doctors that health insurance giants are dropping?

Or should I start by highlighting how these insurance giants are monopolizing healthcare?

Or maybe how these companies are growing in profit while medically underserved regions and low-income patients are suffering for it?

To be honest, it doesn't matter how I start; the fact that health insurance companies are ruining healthcare is not going to change. But I do have to start somewhere, though.

Let me tell you a story. In 2017, UnitedHealthcare recognized the efforts of a doctor in New Jersey. His name is Alexander Salerno. They praised him for delivering healthcare services

Things become a little interesting when you consider that Optum owns Riverside Medical. Optum is a sister company of UHC, both of which are subsidiaries of which healthcare insurance company? You guessed it, UnitedHealth Group!

Get this. The UHC recognized the efforts of a doctor in 2017, they paid him a bonus in 2019, and now they are seeking to drop him in 2020. This doesn't make sense in first viewing, but when you add in the fact that Riverside Medical - a subsidiary of UnitedHealth Group - made a futile effort to buy off Dr. Salerno's group in 2018, things start to make sense. If you still don't get it, I'll spell it out for you: they either buy you off, or they cut you off.

The story of Dr. Salerno is not an isolated incident. The UHC is planning to drop off many other doctors the same

way. This way, the UHC will 'force' patients to transfer to doctors it controls. And this is where problems arise. In medically underserved regions in states like New Jersey, many of the patients have built trust between themselves and their doctors. This trust dates back decades in some cases.

Let us consider the case of Dr. Wassef, who the UHC is also seeking to drop. She is a pediatrician. But the focus this time around is not going to be on Dr. Wassef; it's going to be on Rasha Salama. Rasha Salama is a low-income patient living in Bayonne that has been taking her two kids to Dr. Wassef for five years now. Salama and Dr. Wassef have built a rapport because of the convenience in delivering healthcare services to her children. But now that the UHC is seeking to drop Dr. Wassef, Salama has to sever those ties and look for other pediatricians, who can offer the same services and at the same convenience levels, which is an arduous, if not impossible, task given her financial situation. Many other patients like Salama will be affected by this decision.

You may think that insurance companies separate from doctors all the time, so why should this be an issue? It's simple. This time around the cause of the separation is the power thirst of insurance companies, UHC in particular. They want to control both the payers and the providers, see it as operating from both sides of the pendulum. They are creating a monopoly, and that is bad. Very bad.

You need to understand that these insurance companies are not in themselves bad in insuring health, far from it. UHC for one is of the best, if not the best out there. But it seems their focus is starting to shift to profit. You know what, 'starting' is probably not the right term. Let's say, their focus seems to be intensifying solely on profits now. Over the last decade, their status has changed from 'profit-oriented' to 'aggressive profit-mongering.' That's more like it.

Let's sprinkle a little bit of economics into this. There is something known as vertical integration in business. Don't get confused, I'll explain. Vertical integration is said to occur when

a business enlarges by buying another business that operates before or after them in the supply chain. Consider this illustration. In the car industry, a company that deals with the manufacturing of cars may decide to buy a company that produces tires, or one that deals with the assembling of final parts of the car. That way, they are eliminating competition and controlling the market.

The same is what insurance companies are trying to do, but what makes this far worse is that human lives are on the line. They just don't seem to care. While they are lining their pockets, emergency rooms are lining their beds. And I'm not exaggerating it one bit. UHC has seen its stock price and profit rise tenfold over the last ten years. Their revenues this year alone is set to pass the \$260 billion mark. \$260 billion! But at what cost?

The creation of a monopoly will lead to them controlling the healthcare market, throwing the relationships that many doctors and patients have taken years to build down the drain. The implication of this is the start of a vicious cycle. Patients will stop going to doctors, adherence to medications will be significantly reduced, cases that require proactive care like cancer, diabetes, hypertension will increase, leading to severe medical conditions, and this will cause the state to spend more in reactive medicines, apart from the obvious fact that those patients may lose their lives. It's a very slippery slope from the onset of monopoly.

If these insurance companies have their way, it would be utterly devastating, especially to low-income patients and people in medically underserved regions. Dr. Salerno and Dr. Wassef understand this. They are championing lawsuits against UHC in a bid to restore some normalcy and sanity to the healthcare industry. They cannot do it alone, though. We all need to join the fight, one way or the other. Failure to do so may be signing the death of many people, and again, I am not exaggerating this. Don't call me pessimistic; I'm not. I am just proactive, as we all should be.

We are in the middle of one
(Continued on page 12)

SUSPECT ARRESTED IN FATAL STABBING

Homicide Occurred Near Newark Penn Station

NEWARK - Acting Essex County Prosecutor Theodore N. Stephens, II, and Newark Public Safety Director Anthony F. Ambrose announced July 28 that the Essex County Prosecutor's Office Homicide/Major Crimes Task Force, which includes detectives from the Newark Police Department, is investigating a fatal stabbing at McCarter Highway and Market Street, near Penn Station.

On Monday, July 27, Rashon Williams, 43, of Newark was fatally stabbed just before 12 noon. He was pronounced dead at the scene at 12:10 p.m. via telemetry by a doctor at University Hospital.

Based on the preliminary investigation, it is alleged that the victim and the suspect,

Lance Boone, a 55-year-old homeless man, got into an argument and Boone fatally stabbed Williams.

Boone is being held at the Essex County Correctional Facility. He is charged with murder, unlawful possession of a weapon and possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose.

These are accusations. All defendants are presumed innocent unless and until they enter a guilty plea or are found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the Essex County Prosecutor's Office Homicide/Major Crimes Task Force tips line at 1-877 TIPS-4EC or 1-877-847-7432.

ESSEX COUNTY COVID-19 CASE TALLY

Statistics available as of July 29, 2020

Municipality	7-28-2020	7-29-2020	Deaths
Belleville	1,026	1,036	65
Bloomfield	1,107	1,115	67
Caldwell	119	119	11
Cedar Grove	479	473	112
East Orange	2,012	2,020	223
Essex Fells	25	24	2
Fairfield	144	144	17
Glen Ridge	40	41	9
Irvington	1,471	1,472	155
Livingston	511	510	69
Maplewood	337	338	26
Millburn	158	158	6
Montclair	451	455	51
Newark	8,043	8,074	652
North Caldwell	43	45	4
Nutley	516	518	36
Orange	1,036	1,043	88
Roseland	86	86	14
South Orange	111	116	4
Verona	136	137	14
West Caldwell	283	284	46
West Orange	1,280	1,283	184
Total	19,414	19,491	1,855
Negative tests	114,308	115,561	

OTHER COVID-19 TALLIES (As of 7-29-2020)

New Jersey: 180,766 cases / 13,923 deaths (Plus 1,875 probable)
 United States (approx.): 4.4 Million / 150,000 deaths
 Worldwide (approx.): 16.845 Million / 662,500 deaths

NJ State Legislators have proposed a bill where schools would remain closed except for one day of upfront instruction and offer remote learning until further notice.

THE DOCTOR IS IN

(Continued from page 11)

the worst health crises in a century, the Coronavirus, which has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. But there is another virus no one is talking about. It's the fact that health insurance companies are monopolizing healthcare and removing physicians from truly providing quality care to patients. No one foresaw the Coronavirus, and thousands have died. This doesn't have to be the case with health insurance companies. It doesn't have to.

I hope we win this fight. I'm not banking on it, though.

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CARJACKING (Continued from page 3)

rection of Acting Special Agent in Charge Joe Denahan in Newark, with the investigation leading to the charges and arrest.

This investigation was conducted as part of the Jersey City Violent Crime Initiative (VCI). The VCI was formed in 2018 by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey, the Hudson County Prosecutor's Office, and the Jersey City Police Department, for the sole purpose of combatting violent crime in and around Jersey City. As part of this partnership, federal, state, county, and city agencies collaborate to strategize and prioritize the prosecution of violent offenders who endanger the safety of the community.

The VCI is composed of the U.S. Attorney's Office, the FBI, the ATF, the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) New Jersey Division, the U.S. Marshals, the Jersey City Police Department, the Hudson County Prosecutor's Office, the Hudson County Sheriff's Office, New Jersey State Parole, the Hudson County Jail, and the New Jersey State Police Regional Operations and Intelligence Center/Real Time Crime Center.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan W. Romankow of the Violent Crimes Unit in Newark.

The charges and allegations contained in the complaint are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

NEW COUNTY BUILDING

(Continued from page 1)

the two buildings, Essex County will save about \$6 million in annual lease payments.

"We are always looking at initiatives to improve upon our delivery of services to our customers and save taxpayers money. Consolidating our DFAB operations in one location provides a comprehensive and accessible one-stop center for those receiving public assistance and enhances the efficiency of our operations. In addition, with the county purchasing the former bank buildings, we will save about \$6 million a year in rent previously being paid to lease space at 18 Rector Street," DiVincenzo said. "This is a win-win for both our customers and employees who now have modern spaces to conduct their business," he added.

"The constituents who come to these offices are in need of assistance and this is a place where we can serve them with dignity and respect," NJ State Senator and Essex County Deputy Chief of Staff Teresa Ruiz said.

"I want to congratulate our County Executive for completing another project that will better serve our residents. On behalf of the Freeholder Board, it is easy for us to support projects like this because of the positive impact it has on our residents," Freeholder President Brendan Gill said.

"The County Executive has a great vision for Essex County, and this is a great edifice for us to service our constituents with dignity and respect," Freeholder Vice President Wayne Richardson said.

"I am thrilled to see the final project. This is a first-class place. I am looking forward to all the great work we will do for

our Essex County constituents," Essex County Administrator Robert Jackson said.

"To see this transformation and transition happen within a year and during the pandemic is outstanding. Our clients will have state-of-the-art facilities when they come to receive services and our staff who work here will have new offices they deserve," Essex County Citizen Services Director Anibal Ramos said.

"I want to thank Joe DiVincenzo and the Board of Freeholders for all their support on this project so that we can help constituents in Essex County," Essex County Division of Family Assistance and Benefits Director Kecia Burnett said.

"This is a magnificent building and I can assure you that all the employees and clients who come here will be safe," Sheriff Armando Fontoura said.

Staff began moving into the new buildings in May and operations switched to 320-321 University Avenue on Tuesday, May 26th. DFAB offices at 18 Rector Street, the Essex County Hall of Records at 465 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. in Newark and the Essex County One-Stop Center at 50 South Clinton Street in East Orange were consolidated to 320-321 University Avenue. The DFAB call center remains at 50 South Clinton Street.

The complex at 320-321 University Avenue also includes an underground parking garage, an above ground parking garage and surface parking lot that can accommodate a total of 446 vehicles. Acquiring these parking spaces will save Essex County from having to lease parking spaces for employees in private parking lots.

Essex County purchased the two buildings that are connected by a walkway bridge over Uni-

PUBLIC NOTICE

Orange Board of Education Public School District

The Orange Board of Education, in accordance with the N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 and 10:4-13, has scheduled a **Special Closed Meeting for Tuesday, July 28, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. and Wednesday, July 29, 2020, at 5:30 p.m.** at the Administration Building, 451 Lincoln Avenue, Orange, NJ to discuss the following:

- **Superintendent's Evaluation**

versity Avenue for \$26 million in August 2019. Located in Newark's downtown, 320-321 University Avenue is just across the street from the Historic Essex County Courthouse and there is a magnificent view of the courthouse from the third-floor cafeteria. The building is accessible by NJ Transit.

Essex County previously leased office space at 18 Rector Street in Newark for its DFAB offices. Through the years, the county expanded to additional floors in the building as more space was needed to conduct operations. The County is saving about \$6 million in annual lease payments. Essex also is saving money because it no longer has to lease parking spaces for its employees.

At 19 years old, 320-321 University Avenue is a relatively new building. However, the layout of the floors was retrofitted to accommodate the offices and work flow of DFAB. Flooring, HVAC and electrical systems also were modernized. Work began in August 2019 and was completed in 10 months, which was two months ahead of schedule.

Aecom from Clifton received a professional services contract for \$650,000 to design the improvements to the building. John O'Hara Company from East Orange was awarded a pub-

licly bid contract for \$15,002,802 to perform the construction work. The Department of Public Works monitored the project to ensure delays were avoided.

The now defunct MBNA opened the office buildings in 2001, which at the time was the first new office space created in the City of Newark in a decade. MBNA later merged with Bank of America, which continued operations at the site until 2013.

While the move is being celebrated by many local officials, employees at DFAB are more elated. "Local Talk" ran several pieces on the Rector St. location, in which staff and the people they served had to deal with generator failures that made delivering and obtaining services difficult.

A generator fire was just one of the issues plaguing the former Division of Welfare headquarters in Newark. Photo via Facebook



Legally Speaking



Cassandra Savoy, Esq.
OP/ED

DO I NEED A LAWYER TO BUY A HOUSE? PART 2

*For Part 1, please see the
July 23-29 2020 edition of
"Local Talk"*

Your lender will require a termite inspection. The bank will not lend money secured by a house riddled with termites. The reason a termite inspection is so important is that termites eat the wood foundation of the house. You could be walking across the floor and received a serious injury when the floor collapses because everything supporting the floor has been eaten by a million fat termites!

So, you have completed all of the required inspections. What next? You will receive a multipage "Home Inspection Report." You must read the report carefully. Then, pass a copy of the report along to your attorney. Remember, the attorney has not seen the house and your job is to point out your concerns. Only those deficiencies affecting health and safety issues will likely be address. In other words, Seller is not going to repaint the family room because you don't like the shade of green. Color is not a health or safety issue.

Assuming that you are not buying a "handyman special," municipal code violations are per se health and safety issues. Usually Sellers will need to make these repairs in order to obtain the "Certificate of Occupancy" or "Certificate of Habitability" required by the municipality.

Other health and safety issues might include things like leaks, or an obsolete electrical panel, or rarely used toilets that do not flush. The average life of a roof is twenty-five years, if the roof on the house that you are purchasing is close to its useful life, you will want to think about whether you can afford to replace the roof shortly after the purchase, but an aged roof does not require seller to replace. Regardless of the age of the roof, if it is not leaking, Seller is not required to replace the roof.

Buyer Beware! Remember even when the washer and dryer are being sold with the house, you want to make sure they are operable. If the washer or dryer is broken when you move in, you will have the hassle of A) having them removed and B) having them properly disposed of, and that could cost you a couple hundred dollars at a time when money is tight. Built-ins are another story. If the property has a built-in dishwasher, it ought to be operable.

There are several ways Seller can address the cost of repairs. The best method will depend on what the issue is. With your assistance, your attorney will negotiate this for you. For example, sometimes Buyer or Seller gets estimates. Then, they agree on the cost of the repairs and who will make them. Sometimes, Seller reduces the price of the house by the agreed to amount of the repairs. Sometimes, Seller identifies a repair person and gets them done.

Buyer Beware! Seller is trying to maximize his profit and wants to spend as little as possible to make repairs when he won't have to live with the result. If, for example, there is an electrical issue, you want to make sure that Seller uses a licensed electrician and not an uncle who worked for an electrician before he retired ten years ago, or the jack-of-all trades guy who lives across the street who "knows" how to make repairs of all kinds. Make sure that if permits by the municipality are required, that Seller obtains the permits.

This presents another Buyer

beware moment. Don't be so anxious to cut corners at this stage that you don't get everything done right. Buying your first house will likely take you longer than buying your second. Slow, steady, work with a competent professional.

Finally, at last . . . the bank sends you an unconditional commitment. Yippee!! The bank is really going to lend you the money to purchase your first house. You are ready to pack up the apartment and move into the house at last!!

At this point, your attorney will order title work. The bank will require that a title company trace the ownership of the property back at least sixty years. The bank wants to make sure that no one can lay claim to the property, other than the bank, for any reason. It wants to make sure that Seller and prior owners have no liens, mortgages, judgments attached to the property you are about own. The bank wants to ensure that when you assume ownership, the property will be all yours . . . (and theirs!)

Let me tell you what I mean. I can't tell you how many times a homeowner needs a new roof or a new kitchen. They get a contractor who provides financing secured by the property by way of a second mortgage. The contractor/lender records the second mortgage at the Hall of Records. After the homeowner makes every payment, the contractor neglects to discharge the mortgage at the Hall of Records. Ten years later, the homeowner attempts to sell his house only to discover a "cloud" on his title. That loan of so long ago is back to haunt him. When the homeowner tries to reach the contractor/lender, he learns that the business no longer exists, and he has to hire a lawyer to look for a responsible person who can release the lien. If no responsible person can be found, the homeowner must ask the court to release the mortgage. We are talking big bucks to clear a title!

If this were to happen to your Seller, it would be Seller's job to clear the "cloud" which hovers over your dream house. Your lawyer will make sure that you

have no clouds or encumbrances on your title, and you will also get title insurance. You will get title insurance which says to the world, if the title company missed a lien, judgement, or mortgage that clouds your property, the title company will do what it takes to clear title.

Another Buyer Beware moment! Whatever you do, keep up with the title policy. Title companies store policies by number. If you discover a title problem twenty years after the purchase when you are about to sell your house, you can't call the title agency who sold you the title insurance and say: "My name is First Time Homebuyer. I live at 232 Main Street, Newark, NJ. I am about to sell, and there is a lien that pre-dates my purchase. Can you fix it?" The answer is, "No!" You need to know who wrote the policy and what the policy number is. **DO NOT MISPLACE THE TITLE POLICY AFTER THE CLOSING.**

On or shortly before the closing date, you will make sure that you get credits where credits are due. For example, property taxes are apportioned between Buyer and Seller. Seller pays from the day the quarter started until the day of the closing. Buyer pays from the next day until the end of the quarter. If Seller has agreed to give you a credit for repairs, your attorney will ensure that you get it. Your attorney will make sure that the numbers are correct and tell you how much to bring to the table in the form of a certified check or a bank check. You will get your keys and be off to your new adventure.

After the closing, your attorney will send you the recorded Deed and a copy of your title policy. Make multiple copies of both documents. Make a digital copy.

Remember, purchasing a house is probably the most important purchase of your life. Not only is the house where you will live, but this is your investment in your future. Purchasing a house is too important to go about it alone and willy-nilly!

SPORTS WRAP



By William Hathaway

The Miami Marlins have turned Major League Baseball on its head, after at least 17 people with the team tested positive for COVID-19. As a result, the Yankees saw their series with the Phillies postponed because the Phillies played Miami, so they want to play it safe just in case. Also, the Washington Nationals have declined traveling to Miami for their series with the Marlins.

In NFL news, the New York Jets traded Pro-Bowl safety Jamal Adams to the Seattle Seahawks for a pair of first-round picks. NY was unable to reach a contract agreement with Adams, and they really could have used him, as the AFC East is up for grabs with Tom Brady in Tampa Bay and several New England Patriots opting out of playing the upcoming season.

Meanwhile, in the NBA, the New York Knicks have a new head coach in Tom Thibodeau, replacing Mike Miller who served in the interim. He'll have to wait until the next NBA season, as the Knicks did not qualify to play out the end of this one.

One team that did was the Los Angeles Clippers, who will be without guard Lou Williams for a while. He was placed under mandatory quarantine after going to a strip club after a memorial service.

In college football, Rutgers football has halted workouts due to a COVID-19 outbreak, where six members of the program tested positive. Also, Monmouth University has cancelled its Fall football season.

Finally, Orange Firefighter Shantal Athill competed in Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson's TV competition show "The Titan Games" taking on Courtney Roselle in head to head challenges. Both women vied for the chance to compete with reigning titans on Mount Olympus.

This was the East Region segment of The Titan Games. The 29-year-old Athill competed in the Nuts and Bolts segment, as well as the Lunar Impact. The show was filmed in January of this year, before the pandemic. Athill is a Former Montclair High School all-state track star. Her fellow Orange firefighters attended the games to support Shantal along with her father and a personal friend.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

William Hathaway

From Your Family & Friends

PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY AGREES TO PAY \$3.5 MILLION TO RESOLVE ALLEGATIONS OF VIOLATING FALSE CLAIMS ACT

(Continued from page 5)

question were typically initiated by Pacira sales representatives or marketing executives, who discussed internally their sales goals in connection with the grant. Pacira also required that EXPAREL be placed on formulary at the physician's institution before awarding any research grant.

After awarding the grant money, Pacira expressed little interest in the proposed research. Pacira did not contractually require that the grant recipient adhere to the proposed research topic or achieve certain milestones before payment. In many cases, Pacira did not follow up with the grant recipient to ensure that the work was being performed, and in some cases, the grant recipient did no

work at all. Pacira did not document why it needed the research or the fair market value of the proposal. Finally, Pacira executives coached grant recipients and other employees on how to avoid internal scrutiny of the grant payments.

Medicare and Medicaid do not pay for claims that include products tainted by illegal kickbacks. Pacira caused the submission of false claims by using these research grants to induce sales of EXPAREL, which it knew would be used in procedures reimbursed by Medicare and Medicaid.

The allegations were raised in a lawsuit filed under the qui tam, or whistleblower, provisions of the False Claims Act, which allows private citizens with knowledge of fraud to bring civil actions on behalf of the Government and to share in any recovery. As part of the resolution, the whistleblower - a pharmacist who brought the misconduct to the government's attention - will

receive approximately \$520,000 of the recovery from the federal share of the settlement, plus approximately \$118,000 from the state share of the settlement.

Attorney for the United States Honig credited special agents of the FBI, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Denahan in Newark; special agents of the HHS-OIG, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Lampert, as well as special agents with the U.S. Attorney's Office in Newark, with the investigation.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew A. Caffrey, III, of the U.S. Attorney's Office's Health Care Fraud Unit in Newark.

The case is captioned United States ex rel. Schneider v. Pacira Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (D.N.J.). The claims settled by this agreement are allegations only, and there have been no admissions of liability.

WORLD NEWS FLASH

(Continued from page 6)

Following a terrorist attack in Kafolo, Côte d'Ivoire on June 11, in which several soldiers were killed, a second counter-terrorism (CT) operation was conducted. Nearly 30 suspected terrorists were arrested, including Ali Sidibe Ali aka 'Sofiane' who lead the attack, in addition to the seizure of weapons, ammunition, USB keys and mobile phones.

Further to a request for assistance from Côte d'Ivoire, between June 12 and 17, specialized officers from INTERPOL's Regional Counter Terrorism Node for Western and Central Africa (RCTN WCAF) in Abidjan trained officers from the INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB), the forensic and penitentiary services on using biometric data collection equipment.

Digital forensic support was also provided in order to analyze data collected from the seized USBs and telephones.

To date, biometric data on 37 of the suspects arrested in the counter-terrorism operations has been entered into INTERPOL's databases and circulated to all 194 member countries to identify potential links with other attacks and individuals.



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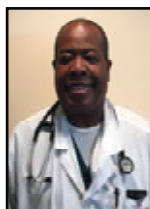
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Gitendra Rajiyah, MD



Paul Cahiwat, MD



Eddy Simon, MD



Ruth Lynne Clark-Brown, MD



Jeffrey Miller, DO



Kordai DeCoteau, DPM



Aleksander Lekan, MD



Sanjay Shah, APN



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Radhika Bawa, MD



Abbas Shehadeh, MD



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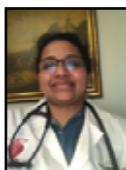


Indu Vira, MD



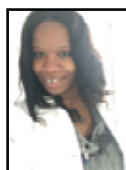
Nirmala Kania, MD

Gbemisola J. Alli - APN



◀ Beena Mathew - DNP

Mary Elias - NP ▶



◀ Daniela Annitto - NP



Shandel Douglas - NP
 Marie Tunis - NP
 Jamila Jones - DNP
 Nmandu Utuk - NP
 Janice Howell - NP

OTHER LOCATIONS



77 Main Street
 West Orange, NJ 07052
 Tel. 973-324-2090
 Fax: 973-324-2089

Sleep Lab 77 Main St.
 West Orange, NJ 07052
 Tel.: 973-243-0379
 Fax: 973-324-2269

60 Vose Ave.
 South Orange, NJ 07079
 Tel.: 973-763-5200
 Fax: 973-763-1978

2091 Millburn Ave.
 Maplewood, NJ 07040
 Tel.: 973-378-2266
 Fax: 973-378-8751

92 Old Northfield Rd.
 West Orange, NJ 07052
 Tel.: 973-736-5552
 Fax: 973-736-5582

95 Main Street
 West Orange, NJ 07052
 Tel.: 973-672-3829
 Fax: 973-736-0400

202 Stuyvesant Ave.
 Newark, NJ 07106
 Tel.: 973-374-8807
 Fax: 973-374-9580