

BOKO HARAM KIDNAPS OVER 300 BOYS

A look at some of the damage incurred during fights with Boko Haram



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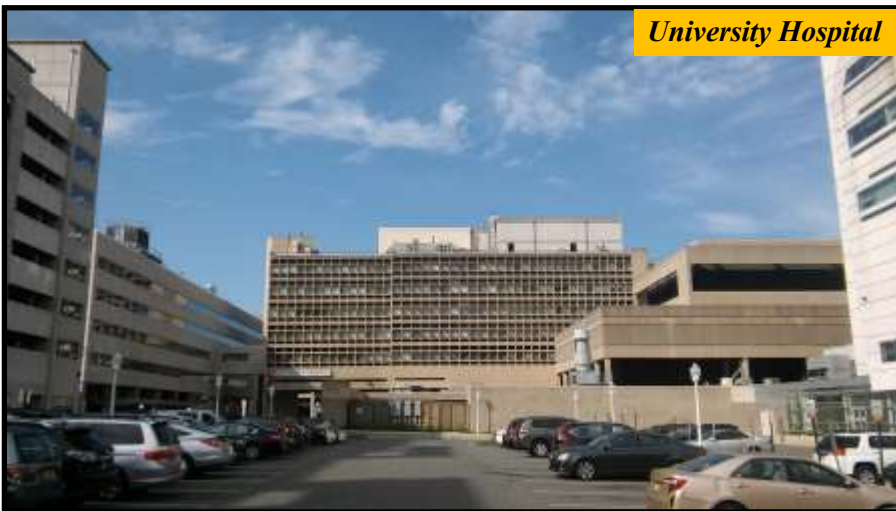
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FIRST COVID-19 VACCINE ARRIVES IN NEWARK



University Hospital

By Walter Elliott

NEWARK - The first of the COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus vaccines here at University Hospital Dec. 15 is being heralded by some officials as the turning of the corner on the pandemic.

That corner - given the vaccination supply chain and the prioritizing of those being vaccinated - may be a long one to turn for the average Joe or Jane.

University Hospital emergency room RN Maritza Beniquez,

on her 56th birthday, received the first of the 76,500 Pfizer/BioNTech SE doses delivered to New Jersey at 8:10 a.m. Tuesday. What the five-year nurse received was the first batch shared here and by four selected hospitals in Atlantic City, Camden, Morristown and New Brunswick.

The first batch was given FDA emergency authorization for use Dec. 11 - a week after Great Britain made a similar authorization for the U.S.-Germany
 (Continued on page 5)

HUGE DISCOVERY FOUND IN NEWARK'S WATER DEPARTMENT

By Lev D. Zilbermints OP/ED

NEWARK - Kareem Adeem, the man in charge of Newark's Water and Sewage Management Department, has no resume on file, sources have told Local Talk. Nor does Mr. Adeem have a college education. He does, however, receive a salary of over \$143,000, all paid by Newark's taxpayers.

Shakima K. Thomas, an activist and Newark resident, told Local Talk that she filed her Open Public Records Act (OPRA) request with Newark's Department of Administration on July 7, 2020. Ms. Thomas wanted to know if there was a resume on file for Kareem K. Adeem, the Director of Water and Sewer Utilities. According to the OPRA request, Ms. Thomas asked for a "copy of job description, including required and preferred qualifications and skills for Director of Department of Water and Sewer; name and salary of current Director for Department of Water and Sewer; copy of licenses, certifications, academic transcripts and degrees awarded to the current Director for the Department of Water and Sewer."

The Baraka administration took five months, from July 7 to December 4, to respond to what should have been an ordinary, simple request. The reason for
 (Continued on page 10)

BIDEN OFFICIALLY WINS ELECTION



PAGE 6



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Turn to
PAGE 16



Editorial
Dhiren Shah
Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

The weather forecasters scared everyone, stating that it might be 18" to 24" of snowfall in North Jersey. Many companies took off for half a day on Wednesday and the full day on Thursday, due to constant warnings from the news media and government administrators. We are lucky that the Nor'easter has not made havoc like in 2018. This time, Newark had about 9" to 11" of snow, Oranges had about 7" and Maplewood and Irvington had about 5.6" of snow. The preparation was good this time, so hopefully the snowplowing and cleaning will be over by

the time you get this.

The biggest news is vaccination. After approval of the Pfizer vaccine on December 10, 2020, they have started vaccinations for doctors, nurses and medical staff, nursing home staff and patients. The seniors will be next in line. So far, only 61% agreed to vaccinate themselves. According to medical predictions, we need at least 70% of people vaccinated to reach herd immunity. That means we can more freely move in and out in our communities, grocery stores and restaurants, theaters, and we all can enjoy life once again.

Officially, Joseph Biden became president-elect with Kamala Harris as his vice president. In 2016, Donald Trump beat Hillary Clinton by 306 electoral votes to 232 votes. After 4 years, the Biden-Harris team won by same numbers over the Trump-Pence team. Now it is our duty to ac-

cept the results and think about the United States of America. We all should think of our country. It will not be easy. In the Democratic Party some of the progressives started talking about their involvement with the administration to keep control. However, so far Biden has not declared any progressive candidate in his cabinet.

Pete Buttigieg is the second opponent (first was Kamala Harris) in Democratic Party primary to be included in his cabinet. Also, Buttigieg is the first openly accepted LGBTQ person to serve in any cabinet. Former New Jersey Governor Jim McGreevey came out as gay when he resigned due to an extramarital affair (Adultery) in 2004. Now, being LGBTQ is more widely accepted and more people openly declare their status.

There is big news in Nigeria,

Africa. About 333 children were kidnapped from a secondary school by Boko Haram. The worst part that their own government initially denied to do something about finding them and getting the children back to their families. So, the government is afraid of Boko Haram, a terrorist group. The United Nations also called to find the children, and get them back to them to their families. I heard from some Local Talk readers that the intent of Boko Haram is to abduct the children and train them to be part of their group. If this is true, then this is really bad, and we all should be united to stop this kind of horrific action.

Have a wonderful week.

I'll talk to you next week.

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WEATHER FOR THE WEEK

<u>THURSDAY</u>	<u>FRIDAY</u>	<u>SATURDAY</u>	<u>SUNDAY</u>	<u>MONDAY</u>	<u>TUESDAY</u>	<u>WEDNESDAY</u>
Snow and Wind	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Flurries possible	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy
HI 32 LO 19	HI 33 LO 20	HI 34 LO 27	HI 39 LO 29	HI 40 LO 32	HI 44 LO 35	HI 43 LO 34

SPORTS WRAP



By William Hathaway

After winning four in a row and moving into first place in the NFC East, the Giants came back down to earth. New York took a brutal loss at home to the Arizona Cardinals 26-7. Quarterback Daniel Jones, who just returned after a hamstring injury, was ineffective, as Cardinals linebacker and NJ native Haasan Reddick was in the Giants backfield almost as much as the QB was. Reddick recorded five sacks and three forced fumbles while completely destroying the Big Blue offense.

Colt McCoy relieved Jones late, but got the same treatment from the Arizona defense. NY is now 5-8, and one game behind the 6-7 Washington Football Team for first place. While the Giants got beat, they were still better looking than the Jets, who got destroyed in Seattle 40-3. Gang Green is now 0-13, and just three losses from a winless season, and the first pick in the 2021 NFL Draft.

The Seton Hall men's bas-

ketball team opened the Big East with a home win over St. John's 77-68. Leading SHU was Sandro Mamukelashvili with a cool 32 points and nine rebounds. The Hall is now 4-3.

While this is going on, the ladies of Seton Hall have also taken the court. The biggest victory so far this season was a 107-60 home rout over St. Peters. The lady Pirates also beat Wagner at home 93-53, but took a tough loss to Albany 71-66. So far, the star players for the team have been sophomore Mya Jackson, Mya Bembry, Lauren Parker Lane, and Alexia Allesch.

In college football, Rutgers went on the road and beat Maryland 27-24 in overtime. RU is now 3-5 on the season and will likely finish against Nebraska at home. The Scarlet Knights may have struggled in football this year, but the men's basketball program has moved up in the Top 25 rankings once again to 19th in the nation after beating Syracuse 79-69.

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LEADER OF NEWARK DRUG TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATION ADMITS PARTICIPATION IN HEROIN CONSPIRACY

NEWARK - An Essex County man admitted Dec. 15 to his role as a member of a heroin trafficking conspiracy in Newark, U.S. Attorney Craig Carpenito announced.

Keith Herd, 32, of Newark, pleaded guilty by videoconference before U.S. District Judge Susan D. Wigenton to a third superseding indictment charging him with one count of conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute one kilogram or more of heroin and distribution of and possession with intent to distribute heroin.

Between March and August 2018, Herd and 27 other individuals were charged by complaint with conspiracy to distribute heroin and cocaine base; one individual also was charged with firearms offenses relating to his drug trafficking.

On Aug. 20, 2019, a grand jury returned a 22-count third

superseding indictment charging Herd and four other defendants with conspiracy to distribute one kilogram or more of heroin and various other drug and firearms offenses; Herd was charged with continuing criminal enterprise for his leadership role in the long-term drug conspiracy. The charges in the third superseding indictment remain pending against two defendants. They are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court: Herd was the leader of a drug trafficking organization that dealt heroin and crack cocaine in and around Newark, specifically around Hayes Street and 14th Avenue in the area of the New Community Corporation community development (NCC). The organization was comprised of members of the Brick City Brim set of the

Bloods street gang.

The investigation revealed that in addition to selling drugs, members of the organization alerted each other to police presence and the presence of rival gang members or drug dealers within NCC. The members also shared narcotics supply, narcotics proceeds, and customers, and raised bail money for each other following their numerous arrests. Members of the organization have also engaged in violence and been the subjects of violent crime in connection with their narcotics trafficking activities.

The heroin trafficking conspiracy count carries a mandatory minimum penalty of 10 years in prison, a maximum potential penalty of life in prison, and a \$10 million fine. The drug distribution and possession with intent to distribute count carries a maximum potential penalty of 20 years in prison, and a \$1 mil-

lion fine. Herd's sentencing is scheduled for April 26, 2021.

U.S. Attorney Carpenito credited special agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge George M. Crouch Jr. in Newark, and members of the Newark Department of Public Safety, under the direction of Director Anthony F. Ambrose, with the investigation leading to the guilty plea.

He also thanked the Essex County Prosecutor's Office, the Essex County Sheriff's Office, the New Jersey Department of Corrections, the New Jersey State Parole Commission, and the U.S. Marshals Service for their assistance.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Elaine K. Lou and Christopher D. Amore of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Newark.

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 - Although the New Jersey MVC Newark Regional Licensing Center was scheduled to reopen Dec. 16, one should call ahead here and to any of the other 38 statewide offices for the time being.

228 Frelinghuysen Ave. is among three RLCs to fully reopen for services Dec. 16 or 19. The Newark, Trenton and Paterson RLCs are among 10 licensing centers and four vehicle offices that the Motor Vehicle Commission has set for a phased reopening Dec. 16-26. This rolling reopening was announced by the state commission Dec. 12.

These 14 offices had been closed the last two weeks for disinfection and cleaning for the Coronavirus. The closures were triggered when an employee had tested positive for the COVID-19 virus although MVC had declined to say whether the contraction was made on or off their premises.

The MVC, in the same Friday announcement, said that its East Orange office at 183 So. 18th St and its 15 other vehicle centers have gone by-appointment-only as of 8 a.m. Dec. 15.

Handling motor vehicle registrations, certificates and transfers by appointment is seen as MVC's attempt to get ahead of COVID-19's "second wave" of rising infection. The state arm and its customers, between the virus pandemic and an early summer computer system breakdown, have also faced extended expiration dates and changing office hours.

MVC urges customers to confirm office openings and make appointments on

njmvc.gov. The Newark RLC's inspection station and road test facility have been open throughout.

IRVINGTON - A contracted excavator leveled both 761 and 763 Springfield Ave., Dec. 4 while an Irvington DPW crew began boarding up nearby 744-48 Springfield Ave.

A combination of recent fires and Hurricane Isaias brought the former mostly mixed-use commercial businesses west of the Newark border onto the township's demolition list.

Isaias' wind gusts, for example, pulled Easy Electronics' awning - and the rollgate mechanism behind it - off its front wall moorings and sent it crashing onto the sidewalk Aug. 4. No one was injured on the sidewalk nor inside the vacant three-story structure.

Although Irvington Police set up sawhorses around 763 Springfield, no other visible action was taken until the barriers were replaced after Nov. 26. Its storefront windows remained open for dumped trash and squatters.

A previous fire, which had scorched the three story wood frame building's east side, had left the 1913-built structure with a visible lean. Real estate websites had listed "NJ Land Development LLC," of Brooklyn as its owner but in "preforeclosure."

761 Springfield Ave., owned by the township since 2008, was also levelled. What was once home to Cooper's Barber Shop or Ross Tax Service had also suffered a structural-damaging fire.

DPW workers, by Dec. 11, had meanwhile re-boarded up 744-748 Springfield and placed a large demolition "X" sign above its corner entrance. At least two fires, on Nov. 17 and June 19, brought Irvington and mutual aid firefighters to the vacant two-story building at 22nd Street

EAST ORANGE - City police officers assisted their Jersey City Police and Hudson County Prosecutor's Office detectives by arresting an Evergreen area resident here Dec. 5.

Thaddeus Williams, 37, was picked up by EOPD's Plainclothes Unit along Carnegie Avenue 7:10 p.m. that Saturday. He

remains held in South Kearny's Hudson County Correctional Facility on second-degree charges of unlawful possession of a weapon and possession thereof for an unlawful purpose plus criminal sexual contact.

Williams, said Hudson County Prosecutor Esther Suarez, was wanted in connection with the Dec. 4 fatal shooting of Aieshia McFadden in Jersey City.

JCPD officers told Suarez that they were responding to gunfire from 217-19 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. when they found "an unresponsive woman with an apparent gunshot wound to her torso" there at 8:30 p.m. that Friday. EMS technicians rushed the woman, later identified as McFadden, 36, to the Jersey City Medical Center, where she died at 9:10 p.m.

McFadden's funeral announcements have not been announced as of Dec. 15. Suarez added that the HCPO Homicide Unit is still investigating the case.

ORANGE - The City Council gave D&R Orange Urban Renewal II/Russo Development a \$250,000 loan for their pending 51 Lincoln Ave. market rate housing project Dec. 14 but had set its decision on a 30-year Payment in Lieu of Taxes plan for Jan. 5.

The council unanimously passed Ordinance 59-2020 Tuesday night, to issue \$250,000 in municipal bonds so that the city can "provide aid to a redevelopment project located at 33-51 Lincoln Ave and 60 Scotland Rd."

33, 43, 51 and 53 Lincoln Ave. and 60 Scotland Rd. are where D&R wants to build 51 Lincoln. 51 Lincoln, as approved by the Orange Planning Board last summer, would consist of 201 luxury apartment units and 350 indoor parking spaces within a five-story structure.

51 Lincoln, to go up on Lincoln Avenue's west side and across from NJTransit's Orange Station, qualifies for state tax incentives since it is being built within the Orange Transit Development Zone. One of the two parking levels, by agreement between D&R and the City of Orange, will be leased to the city for 30 years for public use.

The quarter-million loan to D&R would go towards "infrastructure."

Although the council approved 59 and 60-2020 on their Dec. 1 introduction, Orange elders have tentatively set the latter's public hearing and final vote for their Jan. 5 meeting.

60-2020 calls for a "30-year tax exemption and a financial agreement between the City and D&R." The agreement is for a 30-year PILOT where D&R pays the city between 2.25 percent on the first year to seven percent on the last year. Orange would be getting a 3.83 percent average during the PILOT's life.

WEST ORANGE - A Newark woman, who was arrested here after a car chase, is anticipated to return to West Orange Municipal Court either in person or via Zoom before Dec. 31.

Aaliyah Richardson, 18, had been charged with eluding and theft before being remanded to Irvington's township court Dec. 1.

The WOPD blotter states that officers were looking for a 2013 Dodge Dart that had been reported as stolen from 83 Main St at 5:30 a.m. when a patrol cruiser "almost immediately" spotted a car matching its description while on Pleasant Valley Way.

When the patrol unit turned on its lights and sirens to pull the Dart over, its driver did not do so for it and other WOPD cars along the Way.

The pursuit continued into Greentree Road - a dead end street. The driver, later identified as Richardson, exited the car and raised both her hands.

Richardson, who was arrested without incident, was found to have a warrant out from Irvington.

SOUTH ORANGE - SOPAC is looking for a new movie theater operator since Bow-Tie Cinemas had let its lease here expire Nov. 30.

Bow-Tie, following governors' executive orders, closed all of their theatres in mid-March - including SOPAC, Clairidge in Montclair and Millburn.

"Cinemas 5 at SOPAC" reopened June 16 but did not last the summer. Its Facebook page had offered \$99 "private screen-

(Continued on page 11)

COVID-19 (Cont. from page 1)

developed vaccines. New York City began inoculating its emergency medical staff Monday.

Beniquez and the next four inoculations of a scheduled 80 Tuesday were observed by Gov. Phil Murphy before he left University Vaccine Clinic to hold a press conference next door.

"This' a day we've been waiting for almost a year," said Murphy (D-Rumson). "It's an incredible thrill to witness these first vaccinations. We know this is not the end but we're witnessing at least the beginning of the end."

The vaccine's arrival is part of what observers have billed as the largest inoculation campaign conducted in U.S. history. Developing the vaccine has been under the wing of "Operation Warp Speed," a federal program authorized by President Donald J. Trump May 15.

"Warp Speed" is a public-private partnership where pharmaceutical companies develop their vaccines and the FDA supervises clinical trials simultaneously. It's "all at once" model also covered vaccines' mass production and transportation.

University Hospital was selected among the first five Garden State hospitals to get 54,000 doses since Newark and Essex County were - and are- on the pandemic's front line. Essex County has had the highest rate of infections and deaths in New Jersey - and Newark the highest rates among Essex's 22 municipalities.

"When COVID came, it was our worst nightmare," said Beniquez. "It was just wave after wave of critically ill patients coming in with no end in sight. It was like a tornado or a hurricane causing that sort of devastation in the field - but instead of building, it was our own people, or Black and Latino communities."

The other initial 20,000 doses are going to some of the long-term health care institutions. Doctors, nurses, technicians in hospitals and nursing homes plus nursing home residents have been given top inoculation priority.

The first and subsequent vaccine doses are to be distributed from University and the other first four hospitals to another 47 on or by Dec. 18 - or as soon as a second wave of 86,000 doses arrive.

(There may be delays in distribution and inoculation due to the impending Dec. 16-17 Nor'easter that may dump between six and 24 inches of snow across most of New Jersey.)

A vaccine developed by Moderna is pending FDA authorization as of presstime. Some of that first 154,000 doses, once it gets the likely approval, will be going to Essex County's five vaccination sites.

Essex County Maya Lordo announced the five sites Dec. 15. One site, in the old Kmart in West Orange, was seen being prepared as early as Dec. 12.

Newark residents, due to its 270,000 population, can make appointments at any of the five sites. Residents of the other 21 municipalities will have to go otherwise designated sites:

- Essex County College, Physical Education Building, 202 University Ave., Newark for: Newark, East Orange, Irvington residents. (Enter gym on West Market St.)
- West Orange/Kmart Plaza, 235 Prospect Ave., West Orange: Newark, West Orange, Montclair, Nutley, Cedar Grove, Essex Fells, Verona.
- Livingston Mall, former Sears, 110 Eisenhower Pkwy., Livingston: Newark, Livingston, Belleville,

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Orange Board of Education Public School District

The Orange Board of Education has scheduled its next virtual regularly scheduled Reorganization Meeting on Tuesday, January 5, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.

- Maplewood, Orange, South Orange, Millburn.
- Essex County West Caldwell Tech HS, 620 Passaic Ave., W. Caldwell: W. Caldwell, Newark, Bloomfield, Glen Ridge, Caldwell, Fairfield, North Caldwell, Verona.
- (On standby) Essex County Donald M. Payne, Sr. HS, 498-566 W. Market St., Newark: Newark, East Orange, Irvington.

Lordo and Essex County Executive Joseph DiVincenzo at the ECC gym Tuesday, said that appointees will be accepted regardless of insurance status - but they will be asked who their carrier is.

Those who are insured will have their carriers billed \$16.94 for the first dose and \$28.39 for the second when they return two weeks later. The inoculation does require two shots spaced a fortnight apart.

Those who are uninsured are to have their shots covered by the "Health Association and Services Administration's Relief Fund." There will be no out-of-pocket expenses or charges at the five sites.

State health officials are aiming for 70 percent of New Jersey's nine million residents being vaccinated over the winter.

Keep in mind that there are other pharmaceutical companies awaiting to pass FDA muster. AstraZeneca and Sanofi, for example, are undergoing clinical trials.

The vaccines' arrival comes while New Jersey and the world are experiencing the highest infection and death rates since the Spring. This second wave has increased hospital patient ICU admissions in some medical centers nationwide to near capacity.



UNITED STATES

Biden Officially Wins Presidential Election

Despite constant legal challenges and allegations of voter fraud, the results of the 2020 Presidential Election will hold true.

On Dec. 14, electors from all 50 states held an official confirmation of the election results. As expected, President-elect Joe Biden amassed 306 electoral votes, while outgoing President Donald Trump took just 232. The 306-232 margin mirrored Trump's win over Hillary Clinton in 2016.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell acknowledged Biden's win, and also welcomed the nation's first female vice president in Kamala Harris. Russian President Vladimir Putin also congratulated Biden.

All that is left to do with the election results is for Congress to certify them in January, but that is only a formality. However, despite these developments and more than 80 court losses, Trump is still putting up resistance to the election results.

"Tremendous problems being found with voting machines," Trump posted on Twitter. "They are so far off it is ridiculous. Able to take a landslide victory and reduce it to a tight loss. This is not what the USA is all about. Law enforcement shielding machines. DO NOT TAMPER, a crime. Much more to come!"

"68% error rate in Michigan Voting Machines. Should be, by law, a tiny percentage of one percent. Did Michigan Secretary of State break the law? Stay tuned!" Trump tweeted. (Twitter marked each tweet with the disclaimer: "This claim about elec-

tion fraud is disputed.")

In other news, Biden nominated one-time Democratic Primary opponent Pete Buttigieg to serve as Transportation Secretary. If confirmation, Buttigieg will become the first openly gay Cabinet member in U.S. History.

AFRICA

Boko Haram Kidnaps Over 300 Boys

The United Nations Secretary-General has called for the "immediate and unconditional" release of hundreds of boys, believed abducted by suspected bandits, after an attack on their school in northwest Nigeria.

More than three hundred children are reported to be still missing, with many feared abducted, after armed gunmen stormed the all-boys Government Science Secondary School in Kankara, Katsina state, late Friday evening (local time, Dec. 11).

In a statement issued by his spokesperson, Secretary-General António Guterres strongly condemned the attack and called for the children's safe return to their families.

"He reiterates that attacks on schools and other educational facilities constitute a grave violation of human rights. He urges the Nigerian authorities to bring those responsible for this act to justice," the statement added.

Meanwhile, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) also denounced the attack and called for the children's release.

In a separate statement, Marie-Pierre Poirier, UNICEF Regional Director for West and Central Africa, said that the violence "is a grim reminder" that abductions of children and widespread grave violations of children's rights continue to take place in northern Nigeria.

"Children should feel safe at home, in schools and in their playgrounds at all times. We stand with the families of the missing children and the com-

munity affected by this horrifying event."

In February 2018, Boko Haram insurgents kidnapped over 100 schoolgirls from a secondary school in the town of Dapchi, in northeast Nigeria. Six years ago, in 2014, the militant group abducted 276 girls from their school dormitory in Chibok. Many of them remain missing.

EUROPE

Agreement Made on Health Program

On Dec. 14, Parliament negotiators agreed on a deal with member states to significantly step up the EU's action in the health sector through a dedicated 5.1 billion EUR "EU4Health Program" as part of the EU's recently agreed long-term budget.

The new program will support actions in areas where the EU's contribution will clearly be valuable, invest in health promotion and disease prevention measures and prepare European health systems to face future health threats.

Supporting member states in developing quality healthcare standards at national level will be one of the program's specific objectives. By making health systems more resilient, EU4Health will prepare the EU more thoroughly for major cross-border health threats. This should enable the EU to face not only future epidemics, but also long-term challenges such as an ageing population and health inequalities.

The new European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority will be created to support a better EU-level response to cross-border health threats. It will also be eligible for funding through EU4Health.

As a well-informed public is vital in preventing and responding to diseases, the program also supports communication activities to promote disease prevention and a healthy lifestyle and

to counter misinformation.

The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted many weaknesses in national health systems including their dependence on non-EU countries to supply medicines, medical devices as well as personal protective equipment. The program will therefore support actions, which foster the production, procurement and management of such crisis-relevant products in the EU in order to make them more available and affordable. Actions to develop medicinal products and medical devices that are less harmful for the environment are also eligible.

Twenty percent of the total budget shall be reserved for health promotion and disease prevention by addressing health risks such as the harmful use of alcohol and tobacco. Digitalizing healthcare, including by supporting the creation of a European health data space, is also part of the deal.

Supporting actions to promote access to quality healthcare, including access to sexual and reproductive healthcare and the EU's fight against cancer is also a priority. In addition, it will be possible to support global health initiatives, e.g. actions proposed by the WHO.

After the deal, Parliament's rapporteur Cristian-Silviu Buşoi (EPP, RO) said: "The COVID-19 crisis has exposed the need for well-defined and adequately-financed health instruments. We also need to boost innovation and invest more in health in general. It was crucial to increase funding for the EU4Health Program from €1.7 billion to €5.1 billion in order to be able to deal with future pandemics and health threats, and to make our health systems more resilient. I am also happy that this deal will contribute to the establishment of a reserve of health crisis relevant products, such as essential medicines, vaccines and medical devices."

The provisional deal still

(Continued on page 11)

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY CARPENITO ANNOUNCES IMPENDING RESIGNATION

NEWARK - On Dec. 14, the United States Attorney for the District of New Jersey, Craig Carpenito, announced his resignation, effective at 11:59 p.m., Jan. 5, 2021.

Mr. Carpenito made the following statement regarding his departure and tenure in office: "Serving as the United States Attorney has been the greatest professional honor of my lifetime. It's a dream for any line AUSA to eventually lead the office that they love. Over the past three years, we have been through a lot - the longest shutdown in government history, a global pandemic, and two tragic acts of violent extremism that led to the loss of precious lives. Through it all, we protected the great traditions of this office, the Department of Justice and the state that we all love and serve. For that, I am forever grateful.

"I would also like to thank Attorney General Jefferson B. Sessions for appointing me United States Attorney in January 2018 and the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey for voting me into my position in April 2018. Being chosen by this Court to be the United States Attorney has been particularly gratifying.

"Over the past three years, I have been blessed to work alongside a tremendous front office and an incredible group of Assistant U.S. Attorneys. The following are only a few highlights among all that we have accomplished.

Organizational Changes

"We made significant organizational changes to the Criminal and Civil Divisions, beginning upon my arrival in 2018, when I re-established the Violent Crimes Unit and created the Cybercrimes and Opioids Units. Opioids was the first standalone opioids enforcement unit in the United States, and the second unit in our Criminal Division to include both criminal and civil AUSAs. As a member of the Attorney General's Advisory

Subcommittees on both Health Care and Cybercrimes, we were thought leaders in both areas and brought some of the most significant cases in the country over the past three years.

"I created a third such unit at the end of 2019: The Government Fraud Unit. Keeping AUSAs conducting parallel investigations under one roof has improved communication between the two groups and increased the speed with which such cases can be brought.

Staffing

"We increased the number of criminal cases we prosecuted, and civil cases we brought and defended, by aggressively hiring new AUSAs and SAUSAs. Throughout all of our offices - Newark, Camden, and Trenton - staffing is at record levels. When I took office, on Jan. 5, 2018, we had only 130 AUSAs on board even though we had a total of 147 AUSA slots. Today, we have 155 AUSA slots, all of which have been filled, and 10 SAUSAs - a 27 percent increase in our headcount. We hired and filled our 17 vacant AUSA slots by improving the management of our budget, and we increased our headcount by applying to Washington for increased funding to hire eight additional AUSAs for specific slots (immigration, affirmative civil enforcement in health care, violent crime, and unemployment insurance benefit fraud).

"We also asked for, and received, Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys from other federal agencies, including the Securities & Exchange Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Labor, the United States Trustee, and the United States Postal Inspection Service, and from the State of New Jersey and many of our county prosecutors' offices. We have hired a diverse group of 74 AUSAs from different backgrounds and experiences. Our office is as strong as it has ever been.

BANKRUPTCY

CHAPTER 7 BANKRUPTCY

CHAPTER 13 BANKRUPTCY

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Increased Productivity

The federal government's fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30. In fiscal year 2017, the last full year before I rejoined the Office, the Office brought 870 criminal cases. In 2018, that number went up to 1,217, an increase of nearly 40 percent. In 2019, the number increased again by nearly 10 percent, to 1,333 criminal cases. And in fiscal year 2020, a full half of which occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic and all of the challenges that posed and continues to pose to law enforcement, the number increased yet again by over 15 percent, to a total of 1,535 criminal cases. As an Office, we have been working smarter and we have been working harder. These numbers reflect that.

Violent Crime

"One of my earliest priorities was tackling the violent crime problem in New Jersey, particularly in its largest cities. We moved immediately to strengthen

our relationships with our state and local partners and to dedicate additional resources to investigating and prosecuting violent crime. The results were gratifying. For example, between 2017 and 2018, Newark saw a 30 percent reduction in the number of shooting victims city-wide. In 2019, the number of shooting victims and shooting incidents declined another 39 percent when compared to the same time period in 2018. In that same year, the number of murders in Newark reached its lowest level in nearly six decades.

"The overall trends statewide were similar. The number of shooting victims in New Jersey declined from 1,353 in 2017 to 1,050 in 2018 and 1,000 in 2019, a decrease of 26 percent over that period. Of those, the number of murder victims declined from 233 in 2017 to 187 in 2018 to 158 in 2019, an even greater decrease of 32 percent over that period. These significant gains would not have been possible without the robust federal/state/

(Continued on page 13)

NEW JERSEY LEADING CHARGE FOR FEDERAL VERSION OF "DANIEL'S LAW" TO PROTECT JUDGES AND THEIR FAMILIES

TRENTON - On Dec. 14, Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal led a national, bipartisan coalition of 51 Attorneys General in sending a letter to Congress urging passage of legislation aimed at protecting the safety of federal judges and their families.

The letter supports passage of the Daniel Anderl Judicial Security and Privacy Act or similar legislation. Because of the large number of Attorneys General signing the letter, the legislation is receiving the formal endorsement of the National Association of Attorneys General.

The Daniel Anderl Judicial Security Act is named for 20-year-old Daniel Anderl, the late son of Judge Esther Salas of the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey. Daniel was murdered on July 19, 2020, when an attorney who had appeared in a case before Judge Salas - a man described in the letter as "deranged" - appeared at her home and shot both Daniel and Judge Salas' husband. The judge's husband was critically wounded but survived the attack.

Co-led by Attorney General Grewal and Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich, today's letter calls passage of legislation to protect federal judges and their families an "urgent" matter in light of Daniel's tragic death, as well as increasing attacks and threats against members of the federal judiciary. The bipartisan bill would protect the confidentiality of personal identifying information of members of the federal judiciary in public records, and limit the distribution of that information online and by data brokers. In November, Governor Phil Murphy signed into law a similar bill that protects the personal information of judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement officers.

"In this day and age, public officials are receiving more threats than ever before," said Governor Phil Murphy. "Unfortunately, as we saw earlier this year, these threats can turn into real-life tragedies. Judges must be able to do their jobs while knowing that they

and their loved ones are safe. What happened to Judge Salas and her family must never happen again in our country. I am proud to support Attorney General Grewal's coalition to pass a federal version of Daniel's Law."

"Now more than ever, we need to protect public servants from threats and violence targeted at them simply for doing their jobs," said Attorney General Grewal. "Nobody should suffer that kind of abuse, let alone the kind of pain inflicted on Judge Salas and her family. I hope that the federal government will join New Jersey in taking action to ensure that members of the judiciary can perform their constitutional duties without fear."

The congressional sponsors of the legislation backed by the National Association of Attorneys General represent New Jersey - U.S. Senator Bob Menendez and U.S. Representative Mikie Sherrill. Also representing New Jersey, the legislation cosponsors include U.S. Senator Cory Booker and U.S. Representative Andy Kim.

"I can't thank enough Attorney General Grewal and the National Association of Attorneys General for supporting the Daniel Anderl Judicial Security and Privacy Act and their continued efforts to uphold justice, the rule of the law and an independent judiciary," said Senator Menendez. "While we can't erase the hate in people's hearts, our bill makes it more difficult for those who wish harm on our federal judges to act on it. It will protect the privacy of federal judges and their families and help prevent tragedies, like the one that befell Judge Salas and her family, from happening in the future."

"What happened to Judge Salas and her family is a tragedy of unspeakable proportions," said Senator Booker. "Federal judges must be able to carry out their constitutional duties without fear for their personal safety or that of their loved ones. The heartbreak experienced by the Anderl-Salas family should give

us the sense of urgency to continue to move the bill through the legislative process so we can protect the federal judiciary. I am grateful for the leadership of Attorney General Grewal in this effort as we honor the memory of Daniel with a commitment that this should never happen again."

"In light of increasing threats against public servants, we cannot delay the passage of this important legislation," said Representative Sherrill. "No family should experience the pain that Judge Salas and her husband have endured. Our bipartisan legislation led by Senator Menendez provides the United States Marshals Service, the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, and state and local governments with tools to help members of law enforcement do their job and keep our federal judges safe."

"Our loyal public servants deserve our support, and they and their families deserve to be safe each day," said New Jersey Representative Donald Norcross. "The heinous crimes committed against Judge Salas' family should never be allowed to be repeated. It's time for the federal government to step up and join New Jersey in protecting the safety of federal judges and their families."

"Judge Salas endured every parent's worst nightmare. Daniel Anderl's tragic death last summer is a reminder that those who help keep the public safe face unique threats," said New Jersey Representative Frank Pallone. "This law honors Daniel's memory by ensuring that judges and their families are rightfully protected from anyone who seeks to harm them. The Rule of Law is a fundamental piece of our democracy and New Jersey is taking an important step to protect those who serve justice in our communities."

"What happened to Daniel Anderl is a national tragedy that should never happen again," said New Jersey Representative Donald M. Payne, Jr. "We need a law to secure the safety and per-

sonal information of our judges and their families. Judges are public servants who are vital to an effective democracy and we need to protect them."

"Our society cannot function without our institutions operating effectively," said New Jersey Representative Jeff Van Drew. "I join my colleagues around the country in admonishing the reprehensible behavior that has permanently impacted Judge Salas and her family. We will advocate on behalf of this legislation to protect our public officials from the hate and threats that inhibit judges from upholding their oaths and keeping our communities safe."

"I'm grateful to my colleagues in the New Jersey delegation for introducing this bill as well as AG Grewal for championing it," said New Jersey Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman. "A judiciary that can do its work free of intimidation or threat of reprisal is essential to our democracy. The rising number of threats against federal judges is a disturbing trend and I'm glad New Jersey is leading the way in addressing it."

The letter to Congress recalls that four federal judges have been murdered since 1979, including District Judge John Wood, District Judge Richard Daronco, Circuit Judge Robert Vance and District Judge John Roll. In addition, two family members of District Judge Joan Lefkow were killed in a targeted attack on her home in 2005.

The letter notes that incidents, inappropriate communications and threats against federal judges and others protected by the U.S. Marshals Service have been steadily climbing in recent years, as evidenced by a spike in such incidents from 2,357 in 2016 to 4,449 in 2019.

"Increasingly, public servants are being threatened with physical violence and death simply for carrying out their duties in accordance with the Oath they swore to uphold the Constitution," the letter states.

Introduced in the Senate on
(Continued on page 12)

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The Doctor Is In



Dr. Adil Manzoor OP/ED

COVID-19 Response: Conversational Technologies

I remember during the onset of the pandemic many broadcast messages were flying all over the Internet on how to beat coronavirus, especially on messaging apps. Some were funny, like drinking lots of orange juice. Some were absurd, like totally avoiding milk. And some were straight-up crazy, like drinking bleach. I swear, I'm not making these up. Well, here we are nine months later, with over 300,000 deaths and people drinking whatever they like. The initial stir seems to have fizzled out. I mean, many have taken the 'if I get it, I get it' mentality.

However, it is far too soon and far too dangerous to start thinking that way. We need to know that we are not at the end of the journey. Not even close. I know vaccines are coming up and all, but lots of work still needs to be done. Forgive me; I'm digressing a little from the topic subject. Actually, not a lit-

tle, but still forgive me!

Back on track, then. One of the most important aspects of fighting any infectious disease is the response to the disease. I'm not talking about medical response now, but the perception of the public of the disease. The same applies to the coronavirus. Remember the story of the various broadcast messages I saw? Yes, that's the kind of response I mean. Those messages were obviously baseless and false, but it'd still be nice to have a kind of platform where people can get the right information about the pandemic. And I mean only the right information.

In light of this, many organizations have employed different conversational technologies to develop interactive platforms where people can get in touch with conversational agents. 101 organizations employed IBM Watson Assistant. They created a system where members of the public could interact with professionals and health officials about the pandemic, using their chatbots. As you'd expect, it turned out to be massively successful in the early stages of the pandemic when people knew very little about the virus.

Between March and August, people usually asked very simple questions, like 'what is the coronavirus,' 'symptoms of coronavirus,' 'hospitals to go for coronavirus.' The conversations were also very short ones. However, with time, people started having lengthier conversations with the chatbots. They also wanted information on a wider variety of topics.

I must credit the organizations that took the initiative to develop these platforms. The physical toll of the coronavirus has made many of us neglect its impact on people's mental

health. Many entered into depression and anxiety and needed a calming presence. Having an agent you can converse with to reassure you during a pandemic will do far more than you think. This makes even more sense when you consider that many health workers are usually occupied during these periods. It may not be easy to get in touch with a doctor or other health workers in hospitals. Having a conversational agent solves this problem to a certain degree.

As I said earlier, we are not at the end of this pandemic. As a matter of fact, cases are starting to pile up again. I remember when 500 people were dying daily. I was livid. Now, around 3,000 people die every day from the virus. Sorry for the digression, again. I can't help myself!

With vaccines set to roll out in the US soon, it makes sense that these chatbots be ready for business. More organizations need to be involved in scaling up these chatbots to increase public access.

One thing we have confirmed is that these conversational agents work. They work very well, in fact. And it only makes sense to invest more in them for the rest of the pandemic. People are also going to need reassurances about the vaccines before taking them. Proper education of the general public will spell good news for the medical response. Think of it, what good are the vaccines if people don't want to take them?

The benefits of these technologies even supersede the scope of the pandemic. Having a health assistant at one's fingertips will do a lot of good to the country's general health and reduce the load on hospitals and doctors. Research is also going on how these technologies can

target other races, particularly the African American population.

Aside from Watson, ITS from U-M also have their own conversational agents. I hope many more companies will come up with such platforms to help combat the virus.

This seems like a good point to end this article. But, please, don't neglect coronavirus guidelines, especially now that we are entering the festive periods. Wear a mask. Practice social distancing. Stay safe.

This article was written by Dr. Adil Manzoor DO, a Board Certified Internist & Board Eligible Pediatrician, who works as a Hospitalist, and Emergency Room Physician. He is also the current President of Garden State Street Medicine, a non-profit organization whose sole purpose is to provide free preventive and acute urgent care services for the homeless. He is also the co-founder of his own unique medical practice Mobile Medicine NJ.

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NEWARK'S WATER

DEPARTMENT

(Continued from page 1)

the delay became clear when the response came.

According to a Memorandum from Aondrette Williams, the Director of the Division of Personnel, Kareem K. Adeem, Director of Water and Sewer Utilities earned a salary of

\$143,893.13 per year.

Regarding the job description, transcripts and degrees, the city's response was, "The Division of Personnel has no other information available responsive to the above request," stated the Memorandum. In other words, there is no resume on file for Kareem K. Adeem with City Hall.

Reason

Kareem Adeem started working for the City of Newark 20 years ago, filling pot holes. Since then, he worked his way up the ranks to become Director of Water and Sewer Utilities about 10 months ago. While this is quite an achievement, according to sources, the department has not improved since then.

A September 24 internal

email from Thomas Chisholm, a New Jersey Civil Service Commission Human Resources Consultant 5 to Thomas Moriarty, a Newark lawyer, explains that the job description is based on statute. The statute in question is New Jersey Statutes Annotated 40:69A-43.

The statute says, "Each department shall be headed by a director, who shall be appointed

(Continued on page 13)

WORLD NEWS FLASH

(Continued from page 6)

needs to be approved by Parliament as a whole as well as Council.

MIDDLE EAST

Another Disputed Iran Execution

The Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier repatriated 12 migrants from an interdicted illegal voyage and transferred two men, who were rescued in a separate case, to a Dominican Republic Navy vessel Dec. 7 near Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

Iran's decision to hang media activist Ruhollah Zam on Dec. 12 was an appalling violation of human rights that followed a deeply flawed trial process, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said in a statement on Dec. 14.

"I am appalled at the execution in Iran on 12 December of Ruhollah Zam, activist and founder of the AmadNews Telegram channel," Bachelet said in a statement.

"His death sentence and execution by hanging are emblematic of a pattern of forced confessions extracted under torture and broadcast on state media being used as a basis to convict people. There were, in addition, serious concerns that the apprehension of Zam outside the territory of Iran could amount to an abduction and that his subsequent transfer to Iran for trial may not have respected due process guarantees."

Bachelet called on Iran's government to immediately free all those detained for exercising their human rights, and to immediately halt the use of the death penalty and "vague national security charges" to suppress independent voices and dissent.

She said she condemned the use of the death penalty in all circumstances, saying that it was irreconcilable with human dignity, often arbitrarily used, and wrongful executions could be

never be rectified.

"Under international human rights law, if applied at all, the death penalty must be limited only to the most serious crimes, involving intentional killing, and after proceedings that fully respect the guarantees of fair trial, appeal and the right to seek clemency - cumulative conditions clearly not met in Ruhollah Zam's case," Bachelet said.

In a separate statement, two UN Special Rapporteurs - independent rights experts mandated by the UN Human Rights Council - called Mr. Zam's conviction and subsequent hanging, "unconscionable."

The statement from Javaid Rehman, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Agnes Callamard, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, said Mr. Zam had been convicted for allegedly "spreading corruption on earth."

They said Mr. Zam was accused of helping to inspire nationwide anti-government protests in 2017 and revealing damaging accusations about State officials.

"It is clear that Ruhollah Zam was executed for expressing opinions and providing information on AmadNews that dissented from the official views of the Iranian Government," they said.

In January this year, Mr. Rehman, submitted a report to the UN Human Rights Council that raised concerns about Zam's case, saying that Iranian television had aired a statement by Zam in which he expressed his "regret" over trusting the Governments of France and other countries.

"It has been reported that Mr. Zam was persuaded, under false pretenses, to go to Iraq from France, where he had refugee status. In Iraq, he was captured and returned to the Islamic Republic of Iran by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps," the report said.

ESSEX COUNTY COVID-19 CASE TALLY

Weekly Statistics from Dec. 9 - Dec. 16, 2020

Municipality	12-9-2020	Deaths	12-16-2020	Deaths
Belleville	2504	78	2744	78
Bloomfield	2390	84	2612	87
Caldwell	228	11	261	11
Cedar Grove	734	117	811	118
East Orange	3222	242	3467	244
Essex Fells	70	2	85	2
Fairfield	403	22	435	23
Glen Ridge	127	9	144	9
Irvington	2316	170	2427	171
Livingston	914	74	969	75
Maplewood	568	28	606	29
Millburn	360	6	381	7
Montclair	968	52	1053	53
Newark	17906	727	19207	740
North Caldwell	154	6	183	6
Nutley	1157	40	1277	42
Orange	1679	97	1776	100
Roseland	209	14	230	15
South Orange	299	5	323	6
Verona	348	15	398	15
West Caldwell	460	50	485	50
West Orange	2290	197	2416	197
Total	39306	2046	42296	2078

OTHER COVID-19 TALLIES

NJ: 419,330 cases / 16,172 deaths (Plus 1,908 probable)

United States (approx.): 17.01 Million / 308,200 deaths

Worldwide (approx.): 74.54 Million / 1.66 Million deaths

TOWN WATCH

(Continued from page 4)

ings" for up to 20 patrons among its five screens and 558 seats. It last held a remote screening of "Zappa," a documentary of musician Frank Zappa, Nov. 27.

"Attendance remained too low based on state guidelines and the corresponding drop in concessions dropped revenue way too much," said Village Trustee Steve Schnall Dec. 4. The Village and Seton Hall University own SOPAC.

Bow-Tie came to SOPAC when it bought the 42-theatre Clearview Cinemas chain in June 2013. It also picked up Clearview's leases for the Millburn Theater and Montclair's Clairidge and Bellevue movie houses. (It closed the Bellevue in 2017)

Schnall said that SOPAC had spent this dormant period exploring how to alternatively use its

spaces - "and even whether operating a movie franchise would be viable."

"Cinemas 5" loyalty reward holders may either go to the only known open Bow-Tie theater in Norwalk, Conn. SOPAC is meanwhile willing to rent out its theater, gallery and meeting spaces.

MAPLEWOOD - Patrons and neighbors of the Maplewood Theater here are wondering if the COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus pandemic-related restrictions have claimed the 93-year-old motion picture house.

Current operators CJM Cinemas, of Hawthorne, had informed its landlord, Lost Picture Show, LLC, of Green Brook, that it was letting its lease here at 155 Maplewood Ave. lapse on Nov. 30. CJM, after a 20-year run here, had removed its property by then.

(Continued on page 15)



From
The
Pastor's
Heart

OP-ED BY DR. ROBERT KENNEDY

The Great Deception

I have heard many people wondering how the president of the United States, who lost his bid for a second term more than six weeks ago, can be still claiming that he won.

Even though he has lost his challenges to the recounts, court filings, and the Electoral College, he is still proclaiming that he won. Millions of individuals have followed the president down "the rabbit hole" and have accepted the proclamations that he won. The president has raised nearly \$300M for his SuperPAC under the contradictory pretext that he will make a comeback in 2024.

If you are wondering how people can be so easily duped, let me remind you, if you have forgotten, that our world is getting ready for the greatest deception it has ever known. The world was just about at the same point before the first Christmas. Jesus was about to be born, and here is what the Bible said that would happen before he came, "For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." (Isaiah 60:2 KJV)

In relating the passage to Christ's first advent, some commentators talked about the delusions, moral degradation, social dislocation, and rebellion at their height. One commentator says the very priests and ministers appointed to carry forward spir-

itual education in the Jewish nation had lost their way. The deception of sin had reached its height. All the agencies for depraving the souls of human beings had been put in operation.

People were living miserable lives. Many had become victims of satanic cruelty. Many were bewildered and deceived, moving along as if they were in a gloomy procession to death without hope of life. The commentator referenced quoted directly says:

Satanic agencies were incorporated with men. The bodies of human beings, made for the dwelling place of God, had become the habitation of demons. The senses, the nerves, the passions, the organs of men, were worked by supernatural agencies in the indulgence of the vilest lust. The very stamp of demons was impressed upon the countenances of men. Human faces reflected the expression of the legions of evil with which they were possessed. Such was the prospect upon which the world's Redeemer looked. What a spectacle for Infinite Purity to behold!
- (DA 36.3)

I do not think that I need to say more about the historical darkness connected with Christ's first coming. Instead, I invite you to give careful attention to what is happening around us at the moment. Look at the level of deception as we find it now. Are you still wondering about how the president and the millions are still believing that he won? Are you still asking why so many millions still do not believe that the COVID-19 is for real? Yes, if you are wondering, let me remind you that **The Great De-**

ception is coming.

Many agents are doing a lot to create "fables," "fake news," "tricks," and "hoax" of all kinds. Those who are keeping score on the president of the United States suggest that he is inundating us with a "Tsunami" of falsehoods and misinformation. The claim that the president has been telling a flurry of lies, on an average of 50 per day.

One day during the first wave of the COVID-19, the president told a reported 62 falsehoods. After stating that the president passed 20,000 falsehoods and misinformation in tweets and public assertions, the counters have concluded that millions of people have accepted the "cult" of lies. In effect, the minds of millions have been turned away from truth, righteousness and justice.

If you are asking why deception has become so normalized, I offer three reasons.

Self-deception - This is the worst form of deception **because it is the effort to** see the world the way we wish it to be rather than the way it is. Psychologists say, "When people have a **self-deception**, they use their hopes, needs, desires, theory, ideology, prejudices, expectations, memories, and other **psychological** elements to construct the way they see the world."

Ignorance - Even though more knowledge and information are available to us, it is a fact of interest that so many have subjected themselves to ignorance. They listen to, look at, or likely read or take sides with a little information that might suit them, but stay away from anything that might enlighten and challenge them. "Where ignorance is bliss," they say, "it's folly to re-

sist."

Secularism: To explain this concept of secularism, I use a quote from one of my favorite author named quoted above who states in a different context:

When Satan's bewitching power controls a person, God is forgotten, and the man who is filled with corrupt purposes is extolled. Secret licentiousness is practiced by these deceived souls as a virtue. This is a species of witchcraft...There is always a bewitching power in heresies and in licentiousness. The mind is so deluded that it cannot reason intelligently, and an illusion is continually leading it from purity. The spiritual eyesight becomes blurred, and persons of hitherto untainted morals become confused under the delusive sophistry of those agents of Satan who profess to be messengers of light. It is this delusion which gives these agents power. Should they come out boldly and make their advances openly, they would be repulsed without a moment's hesitation; but they work first to gain sympathy and secure confidence in themselves as holy, self-sacrificing men of God. As his special messengers they then begin their artful work of drawing away souls from the path of rectitude by attempting to make void the law of God. (AH 330.1)

Let me conclude this brief reflection on the coming of **the Great Deception** by offering a caution in the words of the apostle Paul that says, "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows." (Galatians 6:7).

"DANIEL'S LAW"

(Continued from page 8)

September 24, 2020, and in the House on October 13, 2020, the Daniel Anderl Judicial Security and Privacy Act would, among other initiatives:

- Protect judges and their families by requiring federal agencies to maintain the confidentiality of judges' per-

sonally identifiable information upon request

- Authorize funding for state and local governments to adopt similar measures
- Prohibit data brokers from selling, licensing, trading, purchasing, or otherwise providing or making available for consideration judges' personally identifiable information
- Create an enforceable mech-

anism for judges and their immediate family members to secure removal of their personally identifiable information from the Internet.

In light of the escalating danger to federal judges and their families everywhere, today's letter expresses full support for the proposed legislation named in Daniel Anderl's memory, and notes that the Judicial Confer-

ence of the United States and the American Bar Association, among others, support such legislation.

The letter concludes by noting that, while New Jersey and other states have enacted similar judicial protection laws on a state level, only federal legislation can "protect federal judges and their families wherever they reside and ensure uniform enforcement nationwide."

RESIGNATION

(Continued from page 7)

local partnership led by this Office.

“During my tenure, we expanded our Violent Crime Initiatives from Newark to Jersey City, Paterson, Trenton, and Camden. We dedicated more AUSAs to each of the VCIs, and we developed long-term relationships with our law enforcement partners to ensure that the VCIs would be successful. The Attorney General recognized our VCI work with AG Awards in two consecutive years, first in 2019 to the Newark VCI for cooperative law enforcement, and next in 2020 to Deputy Chief of the Criminal Division Mary Toscano, our Newark VCI coordinator, for excellence in management.

“The violent crime numbers were continuing to decrease in 2020 when the pandemic hit. Since that occurred in mid-March, violent crime numbers have risen in many of our major cities. Thankfully, our numbers in New Jersey have remained better than other major cities in the United States. It is my sincere hope that by maintaining our focus on investigating and prosecuting violent crime at the federal level, we can start pushing those numbers in the right direction again in 2021.

Task Forces

“In 2020, the Attorney General appointed me to lead two nationwide task forces. On March 24, 2020, the Attorney General created the COVID-19 Hoarding and Price Gouging Task Force. Our office, under the leadership of Deputy Chief of the Criminal Division Nicholas Grippo, AUSA David Simunovich, and Chief of the Appeals Division Mark Coyne, led the charge to investigate and prosecute the illicit hoarding and price gouging of critical COVID-19 personal protective equipment. With the help of our partners in the Antitrust Division, and with resources from U.S. Attorney’s Offices around the country, we created a mechanism by which to quickly intake hundreds upon hundreds of price-gouging complaints, assign those investigations to AUSAs around the country, and quickly and efficiently bring, when appropriate, criminal charges.

“On June 26, 2020, the Attorney General appointed me, along with the U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Texas, to lead the Task Force on Violent Anti-Government Extremists. Our office, under the leadership of AUSA Dean Sovolos, stood up this task force. We appointed task force coordinators in specific regions of the country to launch and coordinate investigations, with the FBI and local U.S. Attorney’s Offices, into violent extremists such as the Boogaloo and other white supremacist groups.

Civil Rights Enforcement

We increased our prosecution of criminal and civil cases involving civil rights, dedicated more resources to this important work, and were recognized by EOUSA for our excellence in this field. On the civil side, we increased the size of our civil unit by 50 percent. And, we were awarded in 2019 with a Director’s Award, to Michael Campion, Chief of the Civil Rights Unit in the Civil Division, and AUSA Kelly Horan Florio, for Superior Performance by Civil AUSAs, based upon their record of excellence in civil rights work. On the criminal side, I appointed Joseph Gribko as our first Senior Civil Rights Counsel. Throughout our offices, we charged a number of important criminal civil rights against law enforcement officers across the state. And, in 2020, we were recognized for this work as well, with a Director’s Award, to Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney Rahul Agarwal, for the successful civil rights prosecutions of several Paterson police officers.

eLitigation

Another of my earliest priorities was the advancement of our eLitigation capabilities. I recognized during my time in private practice that the government had fallen far behind the pace of the private sector when it came to efficiently receiving, processing,

and using electronic evidence. At my request, our Office became one of the first USAOs to participate in an EOUSA pilot program designed to revolutionize and modernize our eLitigation program. This program was such a success that members of our office and EOUSA won a Director’s Award for it in 2020, and led to Daniel Shapiro, Deputy Chief of the Criminal Division, being named as one of the co-chairs of the nationwide eLitigation initiative that followed and seeks to replicate our success.

Medicare Strike Force

“When I rejoined the Office in 2018, the District of New Jersey was the only federal judicial district that appeared on the top 10 list of healthcare fraud hotspots maintained by the Fraud Section of the Department of Justice, but lacked a DOJ Medicare Strike Force. I acted quickly to change that, and in August 2018, then-head of the Criminal Division Brian Benczkowski and I announced the formation of a Medicare Strike Force in New Jersey. Since that time, the Strike Force has doubled in size, and now comprises four DOJ Trial Attorneys and a Chief. The Strike Force attorneys have worked cases both separately and in tandem with our Healthcare Fraud and Opioids AUSAs on healthcare fraud enforcement matters across the state..”

NEWARK’S WATER

DEPARTMENT

(Continued from page 10)

by the mayor with the advice and consent of the council. Each department head shall serve during the term of the mayor appointing him and until the appointment and qualification of his successor.”

The statute goes on to say that the mayor can remove any officer or department head for cause. These causes can include but are not limited to, bribery, criminal record, incompetence, abuse of power and other reasons. However, nowhere in the statute does it say that a depart-

ment head should have a resume. It mentions “qualification” but does not explicitly state what these qualifications are.

City Council Silent, Activists Respond

Attempts to contact members of the City Council went nowhere. Local Talk was able to send an email to Councilwoman LaMonica McIver, the Central Ward representative. However, attempts to contact other council members were met with the same response: “Something is wrong with your message. Please try again.” The response was the same, regardless whether the council member was at-

large or represented a ward.

As of press time, no answer was forthcoming from Councilwoman LaMonica McIver.

When contacted for comment on the matter, Anthony Diaz, an activist with the Newark Water Coalition, said he had no comment.

Sabre Bee, a co-founder of the group, had plenty to say. Ms. Bee was very surprised to hear that Kareem K. Adeem had no resume on file.

Speaking via text messages, Ms. Bee said, “Wow. Just wow. There are some hands-on jobs where on the go skills learning is appropriate. This isn’t that kind of work. The admin(istration) needs experts and leaders. In the

worst case, even if you were hired underqualified, then get the qualifications! Finance your education with your salary so that when you are called on to problem solve you can show up professionally and with solutions. This water crisis is urgent and endangering lives still. It is embarrassing.”

Regarding the mayor appointing employees, Ms. Bee said, “If you appoint your crew, then support them well and prepare them. Don’t leave them hanging out to dry with a title and nothing else. The folks affected by this Newark Water Crisis need to be able to give a report card for the progress that has been made.”

Legally Speaking



Cassandra Savoy, Esq.
OP/ED

Good News & Bad News From The Courts And The Legislature

Most people never even visited the Superior Court of New Jersey. Most people's only contact to the court system is in the municipal court level. Therefore, what happens in the municipal court is really important to most of us. In 2020, the court and the Legislature presented a mixed bag rendering some good news, and some bad news for us, the residents of New Jersey. Let's take a look at some of 2020's legal events.

Bad News . . . Sleeping drunk behind the wheel equals drunk driving

In *State v. Thompson* the police were called to the parking lot of a convenience store where Thompson was found sleeping behind the wheel of his car. Because it was February, the engine was running. When awakened, Thompson admitted that he had had a couple of drinks, and when asked to take the field sobriety test, he failed. He was convicted of operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated in the municipal court and appealed the decision.

Thompson said that the state had failed to prove that he was "operating a motor vehicle" or that he had the intent to operate a vehicle. The Appellate Division held that "when one enters a car and puts one's self in the driver's seat, that person is in control of the car and an intention to drive the vehicle combined with physical movements to put the car in motion constitutes operation."

The conviction was affirmed the conviction with the court going on to say that operating a motor vehicle could include sleeping behind the wheel with the engine running even if the vehicle is not observed in motion.

And so, the moral of the story is that drunk driving is that drunk driving is a very, very serious offense in New Jersey. Don't drink and drive. This means also don't drink and get behind the wheel of a car even if you need to sleep it off. And, by the way, in case you are looking for the loophole. The loophole is not sleeping it off in the back seat of the car either as that, too will likely bring you a conviction. The courts will bend over backwards to implement the legislative policy that drunk driving in New Jersey is absolutely forbidden.

Good News . . . No more phony stops

You know how police always seem to find the darndest reasons to stop your car? Well one of those reasons has just been ruled out by the court!

The officer who stopped Roman-Rosado was on "proactive" detail (whatever that is). He stopped Roman-Rosado because he claimed that his license plate was partially covered in violation of N.J.S.A. 39:3-33. In point of fact, while the officer

claimed that parts of the license plate were concealed in, all of the numbers and letters on the license plate were visible and only "Garden State" was concealed under the license plate cover. As a result of the stop, the police found a handgun. Roman-Rosado moved to suppress the gun, and loss. He ultimately pled guilty to second-degree possession of a weapon. He appealed.

Police can only stop you when there is a reasonable suspicion that you are committing crime. There were two questions before the court on appeal. The first question was whether violation of N.J.S.A. 39:3-33 created a reasonable suspicion of a crime to permit a warrantless search; and second, whether the subsequent search and seizure of the handgun was legally permissible. The court ruled a resounding "NO" to both questions. The court held that based on the common understanding of the words "conceal" and "obscure", there was no reasonable suspicion to stop defendant's car for violating N.J.S.A. 39:3-33 where there was minimal covering of "Garden State" did not make the words indecipherable. Therefore, the seized gun was inadmissible to prove a second-degree offense for certain persons. Hooray for the Fourth Amendment!

Good News . . .

The new expungement law makes expungement more available and will increase the number of records of arrests and convictions that can be expunged.

S4154 provides that a person having been convicted of a crime and no more than three disorderly persons or petty disorderly persons offenses and does not otherwise have any

subsequent conviction of a crime or a disorderly offense or petty disorderly offense for at least ten years shall be eligible for expungement of his criminal records. The caveat is that you the deal is off if, for example, you are convicted of a petty disorderly offense. In other words, there must be ten years since the last offense in any jurisdiction. The value to those who are having difficulty finding employment because an old criminal conviction cannot be measured.

The best part of the law is that it creates a petition process for "clean slate" expungement for resident who have not committed an offense in ten years and who have not been convicted of the most serious crimes, like sexual assault, murder, aggravated assault, and armed robbery. The bill also requires the State to implement an automated clean slate expungement system, which will be developed by a task force charge with studying the technological, fiscal and practical issues and challenges associated with such a system. Additionally, the bill requires that low-level marijuana convictions be sealed upon the disposition of a case, preventing those convictions from being used against those individuals in the future. It also makes numerous other changes to existing expungement procedures, including the creation of an e-filing system that would eliminate filing fees to petition for expungement. Stay tuned!

The law became effective June 15, 2020, but the automated system will not be fully implemented for a while. If you are eligible for an expungement, you will have to do it the old fashioned way. You will have to get a lawyer and filing for the expungement.

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 11)

The theater, which was playing "Fatima" and "Tenet" on two of its six screens when it closed by Gov. Phil Murphy's executive order March 13, has remained closed. CJM tried to re-open its sister Hawthorne 5 Aug. 30, only to close that Passaic County movie house again Sept. 21.

What was once one of New Jersey's largest movie theaters opened March 15, 1927 with "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" silent, starring the late Rudolph Valentino.

The theatre - after adapting to talkies, live performances and Sunday screenings - was closed 1988-90 while the then-owner and the township had squabbled over how many screens it should hold. CJM, after signing its first lease in 2000, found that the 1,412-seat theater was subdivided into a six-plex in the 1990s.

"The Four Horsemen," based on a 1916 novel, is traced to the Apostle John's vision of "Conquest, War, Famine and Death" in the Book of Revelation.

MONTCLAIR - Some restaurateurs have taken down their temporary outdoor structures in advance - but not necessarily in anticipation - of the forecasted Dec. 16-17 snowstorm.

Some eatery owners have struck their tents or removed their igloos on or ahead of a Dec. 8 deadline set by Montclair Construction Code Official Samuel L. Souza.

Souza, on Nov. 23, issued a notice whereby pre-existing temporary outdoor dining structures need to receive building permits and certificates of occupancy permits and pass construction code and fire inspections on or by Dec. 8.

Those who do not get the said permits from the building code office and inspections by the fire department and code enforcement by then will have been directed to dismantle their said outdoor dining structures or risk fines and possible shut-down. No new temporary outdoor structures have been allowed since Nov. 30.

Souza said that he and other township officials were concerned about such structures, built to help restaurants meet pandemic-related dining executive orders, will be used into the winter months. Some owners may add heaters and electrical outlets; some may be using non-fire retardant materials.

Montclair code enforcers, said Souza, had waived permits and inspections of structures standing for longer than 180 days during this spring and summer. Those permits and inspections, however, were needed all along.

Some structure owners may have removed their tents and igloos in the face of a Nor'easter that may produce around six

inches of snow. Some may have removed their structures so that municipal and county snow plows can navigate streets and county roads.

BLOOMFIELD - Mayor Michael Venezia and the Township Council will take public comment on two measures that they had approved on their Dec. 14 introduction, prior to a decisive Dec. 29 special meeting vote.

The first bill, introduced by Township Administrator Matthew Watkins, would establish a "Special Emergency Funding for Terminal Severance Liability" for township employees.

The fund would create a \$1.212 million three-to-five-year low interest loan so the township can pay severance benefits of retiring employees in 2021 in case that year's municipal budget revenues fall short.

"It's going to be a tricky year for 2021 - we had 28 retirements alone in 2020," said Watkins. "In agreement with our auditor and finance staff, we need to save and hang on to our cash for use in 2021."

The other bill would have more Bloomfield firefighters in Belleville and Nutley beyond mutual aid. Watkins said that the proposed "Emergency Shared Service Agreement" with Nutley and Belleville will not cost Bloomfield.

"We were approached by Nutley to enter into an interlocal agreement between (them) and Nutley," said Watkins. "It's to provide our neighboring towns with some help in case of an emergency or something catastrophic. If we incur any costs, we'd be reimbursed through COVID or FEMA funding."

GLEN RIDGE - The Glen Ridge Public Schools community are hoping that Superintendent of Schools Dirk Phillips' next report will not announce any new positive COVID cases.

There have been 19 positive cases reported among the 2,000 student body, five school district since Nov 27. Phillips, in three reports Nov. 30-Dec. 7 said that the cases are from people among Glen Ridge High School, Ridgewood Avenue Upper Elementary and Central School.

While RAUES and Central have one case each and a third "is not linked to the schools," the remaining 16 were from GRHS.

Phillips, in successive emails, said that 14 of the GRHS positives were members of one of its athletic teams. The other two "had contact with the team."

It is not clear whether the said Ridgers team had to cancel or forfeit games as a result of the testing and isolation.

GRPS have been on an all-remote learning model since Nov. 30. Those in that community are to report their test findings to their schools' nurses.

BELLEVILLE - Mayor Michael Melham had been honoring Florence Pentol's memory by having flags here at Belleville Town Hall and other municipal buildings lowered to half-staff Nov. 17-Dec. 17.

Melham said he wanted to recognize Pentol's five decades' contribution to the township. The salute may be the closest tribute some will pay without having to go to her Nov. 23 prayer service, funeral and burial in Linden.


The former Florence Zamorski was born in Elizabeth in 1931, was raised in Linden and had lived in Jersey City before moving here in 1962. She and first husband John "Jack" O'Neill came to Belleville so she could work as a banking industry secretary.

Pentol, off bankers hours, had been a longstanding Belleville Public Library Board of Trustees and Rent Levelling Board member. She had served as treasurer for the Concerned Citizens of Belleville and the Senior Citizens Friday Club. She had also served as a poll worker for the Essex County Board of Elections.

Pentol died Nov. 17 here at RWJBarnabas Health Clara Maas Medical Center. Brother Tadeusz "Teddy" Zamorski and twin sister Helen Banko are among her survivors. She had outlived O'Neill and second husband Chester Pentol and eight brothers and sisters.

Pentol's visitation was held Nov. 23 at Linden's Kowalski Funeral Home, followed by her Funeral Mass at St. Teresa of the Child Jesus R.C. Church and burial at Mt. Calvary Cemetery.

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