

OFFICER - INVOLVED SHOOTING IN NEWARK



NEWARK - The Attorney General's Office is conducting an investigation of a fatal officer-involved shooting involving the Newark Police Department that occurred just after midnight on Jan. 1 in the area of South 11th Street and Woodland Avenue in Newark.

One male civilian, identified as Carl Dorsey III, 39, of South Orange, sustained fatal injuries after being shot by Detective Rod Simpkins of the Newark Police Department.

According to the preliminary investigation, the shooting occurred at approximately 12:03 a.m. near Woodland Avenue and South 11th Street in Newark. Officers on patrol responded to the area. During the incident, Simpkins fired his 9mm service weapon, striking Mr. Dorsey. Officers provided medical aid to Mr. Dorsey and he was transported by emergency medical personnel to University

(Continued on page 7)

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INDEX

Editorial & Weather	02
Sports Wrap	03
Town Watch	04
World News	06
The Doctor Is In	10
From The Pastor's Heart	12



Photos via Twitter



CHAOS AT THE CAPITOL

WASHINGTON - As the nation prepares to undergo major changes, objectors to the shift made a violent last stand.

On Jan. 6, lawmakers were already set to face a stressful day, as several Republicans objecting to the results of the November Presidential Election made a mostly ceremonial procedure an arduous task. Not long after Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell

and likely soon-to-be Majority Leader Chuck Schumer made a rare agreement in that there was no fraud, the entire room was cleared around 2 p.m. as pro-Trump protestors stormed the U.S. Capitol.

Most of the legislators sequestered in safe locations, while Vice President Mike Pence was rushed to safety by members of the Secret Service. This came after Trump

held a rally in Washington, D.C. and reacted disapprovingly to Pence not making an effort to influence the certification of the election.

"Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution, giving States a chance to certify a corrected set of facts, not the fraudulent or inaccurate ones

(Continued on page 5)



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PAGE 16



Editorial
 Dhiren Shah
 Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

Chaos in Washington. This problem is not one that just started today. Since I have launched Local Talk in 2000, I have observed things. In a couple of editorials in or about 2005, I predicted that by 2015, there will be street protests, and that the politicians of both parties would be to blame. The majority of the politicians are working for themselves or working for lobbyists behind the scenes.

Trump has ignited this a little more. He addressed people at his rally, and gave his clear indication that the election was stolen. Trump tried this as a final effort to save this election. However, he

should have waited for 2024. Joseph Biden is the clear winner. Trump should accept the results and move on, in my opinion, Trump talked about putting the US first and talked against China. However, our democracy must be kept intact. Trump should come out and calm down the mob. His supporters must stop this craziness. No violence should be tolerated. Trump ... come on, accept the loss and let the country run smoothly for the people of the United States of America.

Now, on to what I really wanted to say. Happy New Year to all, with the hope that everyone is healthy, happy and finds peace within themselves. We have fought with many problems created by the coronavirus. Most of us stayed quarantined or stayed away from each other, except for family members who stayed in your household. We started washing our hands many

times during the day and protecting ourselves with masks, hand gloves and hand sanitizers. There were some benefits by staying home. You became closer to your family members. You got more time to think about yourself, and especially thinking about your purpose in life.

In looking at the purpose of life has many angles to look at. But the best thing, in my opinion, is that we all should have inner peace. The purpose of any religion is to bring inner peace, but many times it may be diverted by rituals. Rituals are necessary to keep people together with a motive, but many times rituals will divert your goal of inner peace, adding more stress as well. I am not a religious person like one can call themselves Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Jain or many other religious connections. Most religions have one goal, to teach someone to be a better human. But when some

religious leaders try to restrict followers into thinking only one way, I have a problem with that. Humans have a very powerful brain (there is a myth we are using 10% of our brain), so we should take in all angles of the situation or belief. But this is my opinion, as everyone has a right to their own opinion.

The COVID-19 lockdown or staying at home situation taught us how to survive without many things in life. Humans have very limited needs to survive, but we have trained our minds in a wrong direction and are forcing ourselves to have certain things a certain way. So, we can live our lives in simple ways and little needs. Happiness with simplicity may help you find inner peace.

The most important issue of the stimulus package is to help the needy. But it is exceedingly difficult for the lawmakers to

(Continued on page 7)

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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>
Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy / Rain
HI 45	HI 44	HI 40	HI 41	HI 40	HI 41	HI 41
LO 28	LO 27	LO 26	LO 27	LO 28	LO 30	LO 32

SPORTS WRAP



By William Hathaway

Despite a strange season finale that still had them in the NFC East title hunt, the New York Giants fell short of the playoffs. Earlier in the day, Big Blue did its part to make the tournament, thanks to a 23-19 over the Dallas Cowboys. All NY needed was for the Philadelphia Eagles to beat the Washington Football Team. Philly was already eliminated, and a loss would make for a three-way tie, with Washington, Dallas, and New York all at 6-10. That scenario would have given the Giants the NFC East title.

However, while the game was still competitive, Eagles head coach Doug Peterson pulled starting QB Jalen Hurts in favor of backup Nate Sudfield. Washington ended up winning the game 20-14, and

winning the NFC East at 7-9. They will host Tampa Bay in the first round of the postseason.

The New York Jets woeful season ended with a 28-14 loss at New England. In what could be his last game, Patriots QB Cam Newton went 21-30 for 247 yards and three TDs. While Newton's future is unclear, the same can't be said for Jets head coach Adam Gase, who was promptly fired after the game.

In college basketball the Seton Hall men's basketball team is currently in 2nd place in the Big East conference, thanks to a 68-60 win over Butler.

Finally, the first games of the College Football Playoff are in the books. #1 Alabama beat up Notre Dame 31-14 while Ohio State trounced Clemson 49-28. The National Championship game will pit #1 Alabama against #3 Ohio State.

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CITIES REORGANIZE FOR 2021

By Walter Elliott

NEWARK - Those here and in eight other "Local Talk" area communities are experiencing what Essex County Clerk Christopher Durkin calls "The peaceful transition of power here and across the country" - and may not be as aware of it as in previous years.

This edition is being published and posted in the midst of a week of 12 county, municipal and boards of education reorganizations that began on Jan. 1 and is to end Jan. 7. Those who have been elected by a majority of participating registered voters Nov. 3 are, by state law, to formally take their offices on Jan. 1 or at least during Jan. 1 - 7.

Durkin (D-Roseland), who himself was sworn-in again here Jan. 6, has frequently added that

reorganization meeting days "are the most political days of the year." The newly-sworn-in panel determines who will be their president or chairperson, who will sit in which committees, who will represent the panel to other entities and on down to passing temporary budgets and who will be their official publications.

This calendar year reorganizations, as in the past seven, include those of eight public boards of education among seven towns. These supposedly apolitical entities carry out similar tasks except for their mid-year set budgets.

The reorganizations, in the year of the COVID pandemic, are being mutedly performed.

Inaugurations, whenever not done remotely on Zoom, are being held before restricted audi-

ences instead of packed houses. Durkin and other dignitaries, observing social distancing, are making fewer events.

"First times" and other milestones still mark Reorganization 2021 as they have with previous editions.

Wayne Richardson, of Newark, and Carlos Pomares, of Bloomfield, for example, will have been named the ESSEX COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS president and vice president when you read this.

Richardson, who was this panel's vice president the last three years, is to succeed Brendan Gill, of Montclair. The commissioners have been rotating their president by mutual agreement. Pomares is to follow as vice president.

Although the Richardson-

Pomares selections and the swearing-in of all nine commissioners were to start here in the Hall of Records 5 p.m. Jan. 6, Richardson himself made the sneak preview. His face covers an on-line invitation posted Jan. 4.

"Commissioners," as of Jan. 1, replaces "Board of Chosen Freeholders" here and in New Jersey's 20 other counties.

There was enough support on the counties and state levels to change the name with a mid-2020 law. "Chosen Freeholders," since 1800, originally referred to land-owning Caucasian men.

The MAPLEWOOD TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE, once again, holds their reorganization noon Jan. 1. Victor De Luca and Dean Dafis, who ran

(Continued on page 11)

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 - Newark has had a new, at least acting, chief of police in Lee Douglas since Jan. 1.

Mayor Ras Baraka had announced Dec. 30 that he had promoted Capt. Douglas from his NPD Fifth Precinct command. Douglas, who joined "Newark's finest" in July 1996, brings his 24 years' experience to the uniform helm.

Douglas at least temporarily succeeds Darnell Henry, who retired Sept. 30. It is not clear as of press time whether Douglas is a candidate for "permanent" chief or will be returned to command the Fifth Precinct.

City Tax Collector Resigns

It is not clear who or whom in the city's Department of Finance has or have taken up Ernest Turner's revenue collection duties since his Dec. 22 resignation.

One news source has said that Turner had left his \$141,416 annual salary (as of 2019) while "auditors found a substantial amount of money" from his Tax Collector's office. Those auditors have forwarded findings to the Essex County Prosecutor's Office that "some checks had been written to Turner."

How many of the supposed checks for how much money have not been disclosed. Turner, as Tax Collector in the seven-person Finance Department, handled the collection and receipt of property and utility taxes, municipal fees and tax liens. No tax collector vacancy job announcement has been posted on the city's website as of Jan. 5.

IRVINGTON - The Dec. 27 passing of Dr. Suresh R. Thani, 67, is being felt beyond his private practice office here and the "Local Talk" news area out to his native Barbados.

Thani, who also had offices in Livingston and West Orange near RWJBarnabas Health St. Barnabas Medical Center, had centered his work here and at RWJBH Newark Beth Israel Hospital for 38 years - or 42 if one includes his Beth Israel internship.

The OBY/GYN specialist rose through the Beth Israel ranks to become chief resident in charge of teaching. The robotics surgery pioneer helped earn him a place in "U.S. News & World Report's" 2010 list of "Top 100 Doctors of the U.S."

Suresh R. Thani was born July 11, 1953 in Bridgetown, Barbados. The son of Radhakishen and Janki Thani came here with a medical degree from the University of West Indies (formerly University of London), Mona, Jamaica.

The award-winning doctor particularly catered to patients who would not normally have access to OBY/GYN services. That concentration led to making trips with colleagues to Guyana and Niger.

Dr. Suresh and wife Anita passed on the virtues of putting family first, learning, hard work, meditation and positivity to son Neel and daughter Reshma (or "Reshu"). He was known to say, "Be like Nike - Just do it!" to grandchildren Paras and Celina.

The longtime Roseland resident was also survived by brothers Prakash and Hiro and sister Duru. Private arrangements were made by Caldwell's Codey & Jones Funeral Home. Condolences may be left at www.codeyjonesfh.com.

EAST ORANGE - The East Orange Hall of Fame Committee has a Class of 2020 inductees to present - but is waiting for the COVID-19 pandemic to sufficiently subside before holding their next public induction ceremony.

That is the gist of a status letter the committee posted to

the community Dec. 29. The EOHoFC held annual inductions in the Cicely Tyson School of Performing and Fine Arts Auditorium in the late autumn in 2017-19.

"The HoFC regrets the inability to present a 2020 class of inductees," said the open letter. "We are encouraged by the vaccines and other therapeutics which have been recently approved. Please be assured that, as soon as circumstances will allow, the HoF will return better than ever."

Details and updates may be found at eohalloffame.org.

ORANGE - Police officers here are looking for the two men who robbed a shopper of his groceries at gunpoint in the Valley Dec. 18.

The victim told police that Friday that he was heading home from a local Scotland Road supermarket when a "dark colored four-door vehicle" pulled up alongside him under the Forest Street railroad underpass at 7:15 p.m.

A man with a pistol and "an object resembling a bat" exited the vehicle, said the victim, and demanded his bags. The suspect took the groceries and "a backpack with the victim's work clothes" before getting back in the car.

The getaway vehicle was last seen fleeing west on Forest Street.

WEST ORANGE - Those who want to commune with the Essex County Turtle Back Zoo's creatures in the new year will have to wait until Feb. 1.

The zoo, citing a potential wave of post-holidays COVID-19 cases, has decided to close to the public Jan. 1-31.

"With the (county) Division of Health anticipating cases to increase in January, we're once again acting in the best interest of the safety of our animals, staff and visitors," stated the zoo's Dec. 28 announcement. "Zoo memberships will be extended for a length of time reflective of zoo closure."

The zoo had been closed before, March 13 - June 1, due to the pandemic's spread. The

county had preempted its Holiday Lights display here and elsewhere. County residents, however, may drop off their used Christmas trees for the Zoo through Jan. 11.

Residents, commuters and visitors have varying access to other parts of the South Mountain Recreation Complex. The Richard J. Codey Arena is open for hockey and skating sessions and lessons by reservation. The Arena, the Orange Reservoir Waterfront and Park and Ride parking garage are following social distancing protocol.

SOUTH ORANGE - The international arc of former Paterson Eastside High School Principal Joe Clark, 83, which ended Dec. 29, in Newberry, Fla., went through here and several other "Local Talk" towns.

Clark, best known as the controversial "tough love" principal in EHS's halls with a bull-horn in one hand and a baseball bat in the other, was a longtime village resident. He and his late wife Gloria raised Olympian running daughters Hazel Clark and Joetta Clark Diggs and future USOC/Stanford University track and field director son Joe "J.J." Clark, Jr. here. (It is said that Clark never missed his children's local meets.)

Before he became the subject of the 1989 Morgan Freeman movie, "Lean On Me," Clark, before he became Paterson's PS 6 Grammar School and EHS principal, was Essex County Director of Camps and Playgrounds. Clark, post-ESHS, was the county's Youth Detention Center Director 1995-2002.

Clark lost to Leroy Jones, Jr. for a 1988 Essex County Freeholders election. He used to have a nightcap in the 1980s-90s at a bar around 155 Main St., West Orange, since replaced by The Mews at Edison Lofts, on his way home.

Joe Louis Clark was born May 8, 1938 in Rochelle, Ga. before his family moved to Newark in 1944. The Central High School Class of 1956 graduate went on to attain a bachelor's degree at William Paterson College and a master's at Seton Hall

(Continued on page 7)

ATTORNEY GENERAL GREWAL SUES TO STOP PREDATORY LENDERS

TRENTON - On Jan. 5, Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal joined a coalition of eight Attorneys General in suing the federal Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) over a new rule that would undermine efforts by New Jersey to keep predatory lenders from charging exorbitant interest rates on loans by bypassing state-imposed interest rate caps - or usury laws - designed to protect borrowers from exploitation.

At issue is the True Lender Rule, which enables predatory lenders to circumvent state-set interest rate caps through “rent-a-bank” schemes - arrangements which allow heavily-regulated national banks to act as lenders in name only, for the express purpose of enabling payday lenders and other non-bank lenders to evade state usury laws.

Through the lawsuit, filed in federal court in New York, New Jersey and the other participating states seek to block the rule’s implementation.

“New Jersey’s strong laws against predatory lending have never been as important as they are now, when so many families are struggling economically in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Attorney General Grewal. “Unfortunately, over the last four years, we’ve seen the federal government repeatedly side with predatory lenders and take steps to make it harder for states like New Jersey to combat unconscionable lending practices. Until these Trump era policies are reversed, we will continue to fight for New Jersey and its residents in court.”

“Rent-a-bank schemes undermine the civil and criminal usury laws New Jersey has put in place to protect our residents,” said Division of Consumer Affairs Director Paul R. Rodríguez. “Our laws have kept unscrupulous lenders from gaining a foothold in our state, but this new rule undermines those protections and will make it easier for predatory payday and vehicle title lenders to profit at the expense of New Jersey consumers.”

Under the federal National Bank Act, national banks that are licensed and regulated by the OCC are subject to extensive federal oversight and supervision. In exchange, they are permitted to charge interest on loans at the maximum rate permitted by their “home” state (the state where the national bank is located), even in states where that interest rate would violate the states’ usury laws.

As a result, many national banks have located themselves in states that allow high interest rates.

For years, non-bank entities have attempted to partner with national banks to take advantage of these banks’ special privileges, and to offer ultra-high-rate loans in states where such loans are prohibited.

Courts have scrutinized these lending relationships and concluded that state-law usury caps apply unless the national bank, rather than the non-bank, is the “true lender.”

However, under the new OCC rule, courts would be prevented from engaging in any such inquiry so long as the national bank is either named as the lender on loan documents or the bank initially “funds” the loan.

Further, the new rule would allow the bank to instantly sell the loan and never take on any meaningful risk.

This complaint asserts that the True Lender Rule will advantage only banks and predatory lenders, and will do so at the expense of hardworking and unsuspecting consumers. The complaint also alleges that the rule is in conflict with the National Bank Act, exceeds the OCC’s authority, and violates the Administrative Procedure Act. Moreover, the rule represents a stark departure from decades of OCC policy against national banks entering into sham rent-a-bank arrangements.

Deputy Attorney General Tim Sheehan, of the Division of Law’s Special Litigation Section, is handling the matter on behalf of the State.

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EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY



CHAOS AT THE CAPITOL

(Continued from page 1)

which they were asked to previously certify. USA demands the truth!” Trump tweeted.

Trump’s audience also took offense, crossing police barricades, clashing with officers, breaking windows and disrupting legislative procedure, with some even reaching the Senate Chambers. There have been reports of fires, tear gas flash bombs, and shots being fired, with at least one shooting victim confirmed. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser reportedly sought to have the National Guard activated to calm the situation. Additionally, Bowser issued a curfew to lock the city down.

“There will be law and order, and this behavior will not be tolerated,” Bowser said in a press conference.

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy called the President and asked him to intervene to calm down the situation. In response, Trump posted this video message: “I know your pain, I know your hurt. We had an election that was stolen from us, it was a landslide election and everyone knows it, especially the other side, but you have to go home now.

“We have to have peace. We have to have law and order. We

have to respect our great people in law and order. We don’t want anybody hurt. It’s a very tough period of time. There’s never been a period of time like this where such a thing happened, where they could take it away from all of us – from me, from you, from our country. This was a fraudulent election, but we can’t play into the hands of these people. We have to have peace. So go home, we love you, you’re very special. You’ve seen what happens. You see the way others are treated that are so bad and so evil. I know how you feel, but go home, and go home in peace.”

As of deadline, the procedure may still be going on, but it is very unlikely that anything will stop Joe Biden and Kamala Harris from being sworn into their posts on Jan. 20, 2021 as President and Vice President respectively.

All of this comes as the initial count of votes in the Georgia Senate Runoff Election are being counted. As of deadline, one side of the draw saw Democrat Rev. Raphael Warnock defeat incumbent Republican Kelly Loeffler, while the other has Democrat Jon Ossoff leading incumbent Republican David Perdue. If both results hold, then the Democratic Party will effectively control the U.S. Senate, in addition to the U.S. House and U.S. Presidency.



UNITED STATES

Trump Said What?!

In the latest baffling moment post-2020 election, the President of the United States has done something truly bizarre, and perhaps illegal.

Over the past weekend, several media outlets released audio of a phone call between President Trump and Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger. During the conversation, Trump said, "All I want to do is this. I just want to find 11,780 votes, which is one more than we have. Because we won the state." In response, Raffensperger informed Trump that his data was wrong, and that the election results were indeed accurate.

While some members of the Republican party felt nothing in particular of the call, other people, mainly Democrats have felt that it was nothing short of illegal. Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez even called for Articles of Impeachment to be brought against the President. The last times Democrats tried that however, it failed to garner a conviction in the U.S. Senate.

EUROPE

UK Enters Lockdown

On Jan. 4, United Kingdom Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a national lockdown and instructed people to stay at home to control the virus, protect the NHS and save lives.

The decision follows a rapid rise in infections, hospital admissions and case rates across the country, and our hospitals are now under more pressure than they have been at any other point throughout the pandemic.

This drastic jump in cases

has been attributed to the new variant of COVID-19, which our scientists have now confirmed is between 50 and 70 per cent more transmissible.

As of Jan. 4, there were 26,626 COVID patients in hospital in England, an increase of over 30% in one week, and the April 2020 hospital admissions peak has now been surpassed by 40%. Four UK Chief Medical Officers have advised that the COVID threat level should move from level four to level five, indicating that if action is not taken NHS capacity may be overwhelmed within 21 days.

The case rate in England up to Dec. 29 was 478.5 per 100k, three times higher than on Dec. 1 when the case rate was 151.3. On Jan. 3, 454 deaths were reported, with 4,228 over the last 7 days - a 24% increase on the previous 7 days.

The Prime Minister praised everyone's collective efforts to get this virus under control, emphasizing the great national effort to fight COVID. Despite this, the pressure on our NHS, rapidly rising infection rates and hospital admissions due to the new variant mean that another national lockdown is sadly necessary.

From now until sometime in February, people will only be allowed to leave their homes for the following reasons:

- Shop for basic necessities, for themselves or a vulnerable person.
- Go to work, or provide voluntary or charitable services, if one cannot reasonably do so from home.
- Exercise with household members (or support bubble) or one other person, this should be limited to once per day, and people should not travel outside their local area.
- Meet a support bubble or childcare bubble where necessary, but only if are legally permitted to form one.
- Seek medical assistance or avoid injury, illness or risk

of harm (including domestic abuse).

- Attend education or childcare - for those eligible.

All primary schools, secondary schools and colleges will move to remote learning, except for the children of key workers and vulnerable children. While children are still very unlikely to be severely affected by COVID-19, the government recognizes that schools must be included in the restrictions in order to have the best chance of getting the virus under control as schools can act as vectors of transmission, causing the virus to spread between households when rates are high.

Early years settings such as nurseries, alternative provision and special schools will remain open and vulnerable children and children of critical workers can continue to use registered childcare, childminders and other childcare activities.

The government is also advising the clinically extremely vulnerable to begin shielding again, and letters will be sent to individuals with advice on what this means for them.

All non-essential retail, hospitality and personal care services must close, or remain closed. Restaurants can continue delivery, takeaway or click-and-collect of food and non-alcoholic drinks, but venues will no longer be able to serve takeaway or click-and-collect alcohol.

Essential shops and garden centers can remain open. Entertainment venues and animal attractions such as zoos must close, but the outdoor areas of venues such as heritage homes and botanical gardens can remain open, to be used for exercise. Playgrounds may also remain open. Places of worship can also remain open, but people may only visit with those in their household.

Indoor and outdoor sports facilities including sports courts, gyms, golf courses, swimming pools, and riding arenas must also close. Elite sport and disa-

bled sport can continue, as can PE lessons for those children attending school. .

ARGENTINA

Groundbreaking Abortion Law

At the end of 2020, Argentina passes "a groundbreaking law" that legalizes abortions up to 14 weeks of pregnancy, in a move that independent UN rights experts called, "a crucial step in eliminating discrimination against women and girls."

"This law is a historic step in Argentina's fulfilment of its international human rights obligations and becomes a model for the whole region and beyond," said the experts, after Argentina's Upper House, or Senate, adopted yesterday the bill that had already been passed by the lower house, known as the Chamber of Deputies.

Until now, the mostly Catholic country permitted abortions only in cases of rape or when the woman's health was at risk, although, the experts pointed out, in practice they were often not available even on those grounds.

"We welcome this law that should make abortion safer", they said. "Criminalizing abortion had done little to stop termination of pregnancies, but simply drove women to illegal, unsafe abortions, and many women died as a result."

The existing law also discriminated against women and girls living in poverty who could not afford to travel abroad or pay for a safe procedure. Moreover, it contributed to forced continuation of pregnancy, even in cases where the pregnancy resulted from rape.

Women and girls have rights to equality, physical and mental integrity and privacy, which require that they must enjoy the right to make autonomous decisions about their pregnancies, said the experts.

And according to World Health Organization (WHO) sta-

(Continued on page 13)

EDITORIAL

(Continued from page 2)

design it and word it right. Also, when we generalize the business or a group, some may have been affected and some have not. For instance, most of the restaurants are affected, but the pizza stores are not as much. One of the pizza store owners said that they had more business than last year in the pandemic. Pizza is a hot food, so it is safe to eat, and that helped pizza become more popular for people eating outside. Dine-in restaurants got hurt more. I heard on the radio that

one of the restaurants in South Orange used to make about \$25,000 on New Year's Eve. This year, they hope to get \$3,000 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

In Essex County, one school or college has 83 coronavirus cases, and they did not declare the name of the school. I don't understand this. It is not their fault, but by declaring the name, other schools and colleges will take better precautions to protect their students.

*Have a wonderful week.
I'll talk to you next week.*

OFFICER-INVOLVED

SHOOTING (Cont. from page 1)

Hospital in Newark, where he was pronounced deceased at 1:37 a.m.

The investigation is being conducted pursuant to a law enacted in January 2019, P.L.2019, c.1, which requires that the At-

torney General's Office conduct investigations of a person's death that occurs during an encounter with a law enforcement officer acting in the officer's official capacity or while the decedent is in custody.

The investigation is ongoing and no further information is being released at this time.

TOWN WATCH

(Continued from page 4)

University.

Clark enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve and served as a drill instructor while first getting hired by the Paterson Board of Education as an elementary school teacher. The PBOE promoted him as EHS principal in 1982.

Clark's stressing discipline and academic rigor in his seven years at EHS garnered a job offer from President Ronald Reagan and a "Time" magazine cover, among other accolades. He was brought back from retirement to become the Essex County Youth House Director until he resigned in 2002 over "excessive use of criminal restraints."

Clark's death in Newberry, where he had retired in 2005, was carried by the BBC World Service. The cause of the grandfather of three's death, nor his funeral arrangements, have been released by the family as of Jan. 5.

MAPLEWOOD - Maplewood police and the Essex County Prosecutor's Office Homicide Task Force have arrested and charged a township man for allegedly killing his 70-year-old mother here at The Top Condominium Jan. 4.

MPD Chief Jimmy DeVaul said his officers, who had responded to a call at 616 South Orange Ave. 12:56 p.m. Monday, called ECPO after they found Gwen Avrut's body in her apartment with "injuries consistent with being murdered." Benjamin Avrut, 35, was arrested and charged with Gwen's homicide by 10 a.m. Tuesday.

The 10-story luxury apartment building replaced a seven-decade-old restaurant, best known as Gruning's Ice Cream "At The Top" Parlour 1947-83, in 1991. The current condo and past eatery (which opened as a Howard Johnson's and was later the Crest Drive-in) had most of its parking lot in South Orange.

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MPD is still looking out for the vehicle that triggered a three-car chain reaction collision by the intersection of Prospect Street and Tuscan Road Dec. 22.

Chief DeVaul said a "possible white BMW X3" was running south on Prospect when it rear-ended a car stopped ahead of it at about 7 p.m. The impact sent the second car into the rear end of the third car ahead of it that was also waiting for their red light to change.

The driver of the second car, whose damage had prompted a tow truck call, had initially complained of air-bag deployed head pain but refused medical attention. An MPD officer at a Valley Street and So. Pierson Rd. construction site saw the suspected car run south on Valley and make a pair of quick left-hand turns onto Park Avenue and Hubert Place.

MONTCLAIR - Township firefighters put out two house fires 12 hours apart Dec. 23-24.

MFD units, said Deputy Chief Robert Duncan, were first

called to a house at a corner of Portland Place at 11:43 p.m. that Wednesday. They found heavy fire coming from its third floor dormer- which was promptly extinguished.

Duncan added that damage was limited to the third floor (fire) and first and second floors (smoke and water). Its occupants had "self-evacuated prior to (MFD) arrival."

"Montclair's bravest" were called again, this time by a Mountain Terrace homeowner, 11:09 a.m. that Thursday. The first firefighters found the occupants already evacuated and heavy fire coming through the roof.

Mutual aid units from East Orange, Bloomfield came to the scene while other units from Orange, West Orange and Cedar Grove occupied MFD fire houses. One firefighter, said Duncan without elaboration, suffered a minor injury.

All units left Mountain Terrace at 2:01 p.m., after limiting heavy fire damage to the third

(Continued on page 15)



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LOCAL SCHOOL CONTROL RETURNED TO PATERSON

TRENTON - On Jan. 6, the New Jersey State Board of Education voted to return full local control to the Paterson Public Schools Board of Education after nearly 30 years of state control of district operations. This is the second school district to be withdrawn from state control under the Murphy Administration. The State Board of Education returned full local control to Newark Public Schools in July 2020.

“The resolution adopted today marks a momentous day for Paterson Public Schools,” said Governor Phil Murphy. “This milestone is made possible due to the dedication of the district’s school board, administrators, educators, and students who have conquered the challenges they faced. I am confident that Paterson Public Schools will

continue to provide our students with the high-quality education that they deserve.”

“Today’s resolution returning local control to Paterson School District is a testament to the hard work and dedication of Paterson’s administration, teachers, staff and, most importantly, its students,” said Acting Education Commissioner Angelica Allen-McMillan. “I commend Superintendent Eileen Shafer and the Paterson Board of Education for their leadership and our Highly Skilled Professionals for their assistance leading up to this monumental day.”

On August 7, 1991, the State Board of Education suspended the authority to the Paterson Public Schools Board of Education and took control of the school district, which had struggled for years with academic and

management issues.

In 2018, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) determined that the Paterson Public Schools Board of Education met the qualifications necessary for the return to local control and established a two-year transition plan. The NJDOE called upon an independent entity, the Bloustein Local Government Research Center at Rutgers University, to create a Comprehensive Accountability Office (CAO) to assess the school district’s progress toward meeting benchmarks in the transition plan.

The CAO measured the school district’s quantitative progress in meeting metrics in fundamental considerations, governance, instruction and programming, fiscal management, and personnel. The NJDOE

hired three Highly Skilled Professionals (Mr. Theodore Best, Jr., Dr. Stephen Cowan, and Dr. Alexis Colander) to assist the district in implementing the transition plan and to provide qualitative observations regarding the district’s progress.

On Jan. 6, the State Board of Education received the final reports from the CAO and the Highly Skilled Professionals, which confirmed that the district successfully fulfilled the requirements of the transition plan. Upon receiving Acting Commissioner Allen-McMillan’s recommendation to return full local control to the district, the State Board of Education adopted a resolution that withdraws the district from state intervention.

“As a former educator, I

(Continued on page 11)

LOCAL WEEKLY



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The Doctor Is In



Dr. Adil Manzoor OP/ED

Moderna's COVID-19 Vaccine: Approved And Ready To Ship Out

It is no longer news that there is a COVID-19 vaccine. Hooray. I must say it is truly remarkable that a vaccine could be available in such a short time. Vaccines normally take several years to make; this has taken barely nine months. If someone had told me some months ago that there will be an approved vaccine before the end of 2020, I'd have laughed in the person's face, with my mask on, of course. And now, we have two vaccines. Simply remarkable.

However, as some experts have suggested, making the vaccine is not the most difficult part. Consider it like climbing a mountain. Getting to the base of the mountain is one thing, but it doesn't end there. In fact, it starts there. We have the vaccine. Now, we need to distribute it.

But before we even get to the distribution stage, the vaccines have to be approved. And some weeks back, Pfizer got their vaccine approved. Moderna's vaccine was the next to get approved by the FDA. In case you are wondering just how important this is, it's pretty im-

portant.

Remember I said vaccines take years to make? It's for a good reason. Before you make a vaccine that the public can use, you need to make sure it is very safe. Like, the margin for error has to be very minimal. If you make a poor vaccine and someone uses it, the virus may get resistant to it. And, trust me, the last thing we need now is a vaccine-resistant coronavirus. This is why the FDA cannot approve just any vaccine, despite our urgent need for it. It needs to go through lots of testing and review. See, having an approved vaccine this soon is remarkable.

There's more good news. While Pfizer and Moderna's vaccines have been approved, the two other frontrunners are making progress on their vaccines too. After this horrible year, this seems like the least we deserve.

After a vaccine is approved, it has to be distributed. This is where things get a little tricky. Calling it a little tricky is just me being modest; it gets very tricky. Many factors come into play. One is the public's perception of the vaccine. This is perhaps the most difficult to solve because there is little the government or health workers can do. I mean, you can't force people to take the vaccines.

It is definitely easier for doctors, nurses, and other health workers to get vaccinated than regular people. This is because many have a hard time trusting the safety of the vaccines. After all we've been through this year, I can't say I blame them. However, we need to understand that a vaccine is still our best shot of getting out of this hell.

Another major issue with the distribution is how to go about it. The vaccines are ready, yes, but who gets them first? How do

they ensure that the right people get them? How do they get them around the country? All these are questions that need answers.

Distribution of the Pfizer vaccine has already started. There are close to six million Moderna vaccine doses waiting to be distributed. While the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines are both approved, there are differences in how they will be distributed. To start with, the federal government will oversee and manage the distribution of the Moderna vaccine, through Operation Warp Speed, unlike the Pfizer vaccine.

The Moderna vaccine will target more remote and rural areas, which was not easy with the Pfizer vaccine. This is largely due to the mode of storage of the two vaccines. Moderna's vaccine can last for up to 30 days in standard refrigerator temperatures. This is a significant upgrade over Pfizer's vaccine, which only lasts five days under the same conditions.

The Moderna vaccine also comes in smaller doses, as little as 100. The implication of this is that smaller doses can be moved directly to where they are needed. This contrasts with the Pfizer vaccine, where the vaccines are available in larger quantities and first transported to large hubs before they are redistributed in smaller quantities. In light of this, the Moderna vaccine will be available to more rural areas and smaller hospitals that don't have the facilities to store the Pfizer vaccine. Some of these areas are Palau and Micronesia.

The Moderna vaccine, just like the Pfizer vaccine, requires two shots to be effective. So, 5.9 million doses will vaccinate about 3 million people. That is still a far cry from the population of the country, about 328 million. Vaccinating the whole

country will take time. But we hope to have about 40 million doses from both Pfizer and Moderna before the year runs out. This will vaccinate about 20 million people. That is a very good start.

All these talks of distributing vaccines are music to my ears and to those of millions around the country, especially doctors. However, this should not distract us from the fact that the coronavirus is still very much around. The cases are still rising, and deaths are still piling. So, please, observe social distancing, wear a mask, and follow other covid-19 guidelines. Also, getting the vaccine is not a pass from observing these guidelines. 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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CITIES REORGANIZE FOR 2021

(Continued from page 3)

unopposed, were sworn into their eighth and second TC terms. Maplewood's elders also kept colleagues Frank McGehee and Dafis as their Committee President and Vice President.

The BELLEVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION TRUSTEES swore in Frank Velez III and Erika Jacho to their first and second terms 6 p.m. Jan. 4.

Velez, 18, is the youngest Belleville BOT member in its 181-year-old history. Jacho dispelled notions that she would resign due to an Oct. 20-21 DWI arrest by taking her oath of office again.

Velez and Jacho unanimously retained Christine Lamparello and selected Gabrielle V. Bennett-Murphy as their president and vice president.

The EAST ORANGE CITY COUNCIL held its annual reorganizational meeting, although

2020 was a non-election year there, 6 p.m. that Monday. First Ward Councilman Christopher J. James, for the third straight year, was elected as Council President.

The BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP COUNCIL's returning three ward members - Jenny Mundell, Nick Joanow and Sarah Cruz - were sworn-in 6:30 p.m. that night.

The GLEN RIDGE BOROUGH COUNCIL saw the swearing-in of Deborah Mans to her second straight term and David Lefkovits to his second non-consecutive term. Former mayor David Hughes was named Council President.

The ORANGE BOE reorganization meeting 7 p.m. Jan. 5 saw newcomers Fatimah Turner, Samantha Crockett and former Vice President Jeffery Wingfield sworn in at its headquarters.

History was meanwhile made in the WEST ORANGE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL meet-

ing 5:30 p.m. that Tuesday. First-time Council Members-Elect Tammy Williams and Rev. William "Bill" Rutherford joined 2020 returning incumbent and 2020 Council President Michelle Casalino were sworn in at 5:30 p.m.

Williams is West Orange's first African-American woman council member. She, Casalino, Susan McCartney and Cindy Matute-Brown make up a four-to-one female majority to Rutherford. Matute-Brown is the panel's new council president.

The BLOOMFIELD BOE that night first saw incumbent Jessica Salinas and newcomers Nadeisha Greene and Kasey Dudley take their oaths at the Bloomfield High School Media Center.

Board President Jill Fischmann was retained by five members versus four abstentions. Ralph Walker was made vice president by six members against three abstentions.

All three NUTLEY BOE members who were elected unopposed - incumbents Lisa Danchak-Martin and Salvatore Ferraro plus Salvatore Balsamo - were sworn in at 6:30 p.m.

Charles W. Kucinski and Danchak-Martin were re-elected president and vice president.

All three SOUTH ORANGE -MAPLEWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT BOE newcomers - Susan Lewis Bergin, Courtney Winkfield and Ellen Malespina - are to be sworn into their full three-year terms 6:30 p.m. Jan. 6. Incumbent and former appointee Kamal Zubieta is to also be sworn into the last two years of an unexpired term.

Incumbent Tracey St. Auburn, and newcomers Jocelyn Gottlieb and Duval Graham are to be sworn onto the GLEN RIDGE BOE 6:30 p.m. Jan. 6.

Newcomer Melinda C. Huerata is to be inaugurated at the WEST ORANGE BOE 7:30 p.m. Jan. 7.

LOCAL CONTROL

(Continued from page 8)

know well that our education system is the cornerstone of society. Wherever we go as a community, as a state, as a country, and as a civilization depends first on our commitment to education," said U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr. "Amid a pandemic and against long odds, the Silk City has proven itself once again to be the city that never quits. I extend my sincerest gratitude to Mayor Sayegh, Superintendent Shafer, School Board President Simmons, Acting Commissioner Allen-McMillin, and our brilliant school principals whose leadership has brought us to this moment. Thanks to the tireless efforts of school administrators, public servants, and community leaders, our school system will soon return to local control. I could not be prouder of our city."

"As one who has worked hand in hand with stakeholders, and who has also listened to countless constituent parents who have pleaded for decades for the city to take back local control, I am proud to say that the time is now," said Senator Nellie Pou. "Thirty years is a long time, and for Paterson schools, it is long enough. I see today as an exciting day, a day of hope, a day of a well-earned independence, a day of relief - for not only those of us that have tirelessly advocated for this - but for our educators, our families, our children, and the community at-large."

"This final step of restoring full local control of the Paterson Public School District has been long overdue," said Assemblywoman Shavonda Sumter. "This step marks a new beginning of hope, confidence and restoration which allows power to rest in the hands of families and educators.

The continued support from the Department of Education, the Executive Administration, Federal Government, and my teammates in the Legislature will be necessary for continued success along this journey."

"Today marks a new and exciting chapter for Paterson Public Schools," said Assemblyman Benji Wimberly. "This resolution will allow the district to make critical education decisions tailored to our students' needs. I applaud Paterson's administrators and educators for their unwavering commitment to our students and our schools."

"Today is truly a historic day in the City of Paterson," said Mayor Andre Sayegh. "Regaining full local control has been a top priority and this restoration will finally allow Patersonians to have a seat at the table to make decisions toward our children's future. From the administrators to the educators, I

can't thank you enough for your steadfast commitment to lead us toward this milestone."

"Today, the voices of the people of Paterson have been restored to their full strength in the decisions about how the city's children will be educated," said Eileen F. Shafer, Paterson Superintendent of Schools. "We eagerly take on the full responsibility of shaping Paterson's future, and we know that how well this school district succeeds is entirely up to us. We will need everybody - especially educators, board members, administrators, students and parents - to work together.

"This is an achievement that was earned through a tremendous amount of work over a long period of time by a great number of people. I am tremendously grateful for the hard work of the Paterson Board of Education

(Continued on page 14)



From The Pastor's Heart

OP-ED BY DR. ROBERT KENNEDY

Examine Yourself

As we bid our farewell to 2020, it is crucial that we take time to ask ourselves several questions that can give us a sense of where we have been and where we need to go. For precise and close examination, let us place significant questions on a list, with subsidiary questions.

1. What have we done with the time that has been allotted to us?
 - How did we treat the months, the weeks, the days, the hours, the minutes of the year?
 - Did we waste time away?
 - Did we sleep when we should have been working?
 - Did we work when we should have been resting?
2. What have we done with the relationships that we have been permitted to have?
 - How have we treated our family members, our spouses, our children, our extended family?
 - What did we do with our friendships this year?
 - How did we reach out to them? Or have we reached out to them at all?
3. What did we do with the resources that God gave to us during the year?
 - Did we use our resources wisely?
 - Did we budget?
 - Did we squander?
 - Did we hoard?
 - Did we share?
 - Did we bless others?
 - Did we boast about what God has given to us?

- Were we thankful or what?
4. What did we do with our health this year?
 - Did we protect our health?
 - Did we eat wisely?
 - Did we rest when needed?
 - Did we exercise?
 - Did we _____?
 - Did we _____?
 5. What did we do with the talents and gifts that God has given to us this year?
 - How well did we improve ourselves?
 - Did we write down something in a journal?
 - Did we paint a picture? Did we learn a new language?
 - Did we _____?
 - Did _____ we _____?
 - Did we _____?

The questions and follow-ups above are just start-ups for the kind of self-examination that we need to do. If you are like me, you have gone to your doctors this year for your annual exam. They checked your eyes, your ears, your throat, your heart, your lungs and did your blood work. They have given you "a thorough overhaul," as some like to say. If you have been in school during the year, I do not have to explain that you have faced examinations and quizzes. Your teachers want to know what you have learned. Instead of calling what you have taken an examination, they might call it assessment, evaluation or valuation - all the same with variations of intensity. All these approaches demonstrate how well or how poorly you have done.

My greatest interest is to have us do some self-examination on where we have been with our God over the last year. This examination is crucial because there are aspects of our

lives and circumstances over which we have total control and are accountable to God. Since we will have to answer, ultimately to God, there is a need for such self-examination.

I am basing my call on the apostle Paul's thoughts to the Corinthians, where he asked them to look at their behaviors and practices in their relationships within their God. He wanted them to examine or prove themselves to *know* whether they were in alignment with God's mind and will. Check themselves, as it were, to ensure that they were walking worthy of the divine calling. Here is how his instructions were phrased:

"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith." 2 Corinthians 13:5 (KJV)

"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason, many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep." 1 Corinthians 11:28-30 (KJV)

The instructions given are very significant. Allow me to outline what is being suggested in three points, as follows:

1. Examine yourselves

People who fail to examine themselves never know who they are.

People who fail to look at themselves in a mirror will go out with a dirty face.

2. See whether you are in the faith are not.

People who never examine their faith, spirituality, or spirituality are on shallow ground.

People who never examine

their faith will never know whether their faith has been weakened or strengthened.

3. Failure to examine oneself leaves one open to the judgment (or condemnation) of others.

You can fool yourself, but you can't fool everyone.

Greatest of all, you cannot fool God.

Here are we - we need to take some time to look at where we have been and where we are going. We need to take a look at our motives, actions, hearts, consciences, and spirits. In fact, as deceptive as we are, we need to ask the Lord to help us through the self-examination. While Socrates said, "Know thyself." David said, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:23-24 KJV).

Both recognized the significance of knowing the self, but while the one offered a looking to oneself, the other offered the best way to self-knowledge by looking to God, the heart searcher. (cf. Romans 8:27; Jeremiah 17:9, 10; 1 Samuel 16:7).

The point is that we need to consistently take time to do some examination as to where we have been and where we need to go. We need to acknowledge what and where we have seen weakness and sure up for the days ahead.

We must do as is done at our doctors' offices. We are to do as our mechanics do when we take our cars to them for service. We are to be like the engineers who examine our roads, cables on our bridges, or our insurance agents, so we can know what next to do.

We must do the self-examination. Examine ourselves this and every moment we have in this life. Take time to do it. It is worth it.

WORLD NEWS FLASH

(Continued from page 6)

statistics, countries in which women have access to information, contraception and the right to terminate pregnancies have the lowest rate of actual terminations.

Against the backdrop of several unsuccessful attempts to get the law through Argentina's Congress in recent years, the experts applauded "the extraordinary mobilization of all activists in the country who contributed to the adoption of this law."

At the same time, they cautioned that "much remains to be done to ensure women's and girls' rights to equality and highest standard of sexual and reproductive health."

"It's now important that the law be applied in the whole country and not be usurped by a political agenda or religious dogma," the experts underscored.

News media reported that after a marathon debate that lasted through the night, the vote that yielded the decision was held at 4:00 am - registering 38 in favor, 29 against and one abstention.

MIDDLE EAST

Iranian Assets Get Seized

On Jan. 5, the United States Justice Department announced that it has collected \$7 million of Iranian funds that will be allocated to provide compensation to American victims of international state-sponsored terrorism.

The funds are the United States' share of a civil forfeiture investigation that is part of the government's pursuit of a complex international conspiracy which spanned the globe. The conspiracy's purpose was to violate the United States imposed international economic sanctions regime on Iran and included several Iranian nationals and others, who fraudulently transferred approximately \$1 billion worth of Iranian-owned funds to accounts around the world.

Beginning in 2011 and continuing up to 2014, the conspirators, including three Iranian nationals and, allegedly, one U.S. citizen, defrauded South Korean banks by submitting false documents purporting to show that Iranian companies were doing legitimate business with Korean companies. Based on these false documents, the conspirators succeeded in unlawfully transferring approximately \$1 billion worth of Iranian-owned funds out of South Korea and into the world's financial markets.

The American who is an alleged conspirator, Kenneth Zong, was indicted in December 2016 in the District of Alaska, for 47 counts of violating the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) and the Iranian Transaction and Sanctions Regulations (ITSR), providing unlawful services to the Government of Iran, conspiracy to commit money laundering, and money laundering. Kenneth Zong remains in South Korea, where he recently completed serving a sentence of longer than five years for violating Korean law as part of the same scheme.

The conspirators transferred the Iranian-owned funds to accounts worldwide, including to Anchorage, Alaska. In 2018, a federal judge sentenced Mitchell Zong (i.e. Kenneth Zong's son) to two and a half years imprisonment for his role in laundering approximately \$968,000 of Iranian-derived funds, knowing the funds came from his father's illegal transactions with Iranian nationals. In a separate forfeiture civil action, Mitchell Zong and other members of his family were ordered to forfeit to the United States approximately \$10 million in assets, which were purchased with funds traceable to Kenneth Zong's 2011 illegal IEEPA activity in Seoul, South Korea.

In addition to the prosecutions of Kenneth Zong and Mitchell Zong, the U.S. Attorney's Office filed a forfeiture complaint seeking to seize money held in a sovereign wealth

ESSEX COUNTY COVID-19 CASE TALLY

Weekly Statistics from Dec. 30, 2020 - Jan. 6, 2021

Municipality	12-30-2020	Deaths	1-6-2021	Deaths
Belleville	3121	83	3265	84
Bloomfield	2948	90	3107	91
Caldwell	309	12	328	12
Cedar Grove	884	121	942	119
East Orange	3766	247	3986	250
Essex Fells	109	2	122	2
Fairfield	491	23	514	24
Glen Ridge	165	9	182	9
Irvington	2601	175	2722	178
Livingston	1042	77	1095	79
Maplewood	669	29	698	30
Millburn	410	7	449	7
Montclair	1163	56	1239	59
Newark	21093	761	22236	774
North Caldwell	216	6	232	6
Nutley	1470	43	1568	44
Orange	1945	104	2029	106
Roseland	257	15	273	15
South Orange	377	8	410	9
Verona	468	15	510	15
West Caldwell	566	50	601	50
West Orange	2646	203	2777	204
Total	46716	2136	49285	2167

OTHER COVID-19 TALLIES (As of Jan. 6, 2021)
NJ: 504,647 cases / 17,464 deaths (Plus 2,059 probable)
United States (approx.): 21.2 Million / 359,600 deaths
Worldwide (approx.): 86.9 Million / 1.88 Million deaths

Due to expanded COVID-19 restrictions, the Grammy Awards have been postponed to another date.

fund in the United Arab Emirates. These funds, which are also traceable to the scheme, were part of a down-payment made by the Iranian co-conspirators for the purchase of a Sheraton Hotel in Tbilisi, Georgia in 2011 and 2012. The agreement announced resolves that forfeiture case with a proposed order that \$7 million be forfeited to the United States. The forfeiture case, Civil No. 3:20-cv-00126-JMK, was filed and remains pending in the U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska.

The \$7 million will be allocated to the U.S. Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Fund, which Congress established to provide compensation to certain individuals who were injured in acts of international state-sponsored terrorism, including victims of the 1979 U.S. embas-

sy hostage situation in Iran, among others.

The Justice Department commended the FBI and IRS-CI for the successful investigation.

The forfeiture case and the case against Mitchell and Kenneth Zong were litigated by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Steven Skrocki and Jonas Walker. Former Deputy Chief Woo S. Lee and Senior Trial Attorney Michael Olmsted of the Criminal Division's Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section handled the prosecution. The Justice Department's Office of International Affairs provided valuable assistance in this matter.

An indictment is merely an allegation. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

LEGISLATION SIGNED TO REDUCE UI PAYROLL TAX

TRENTON - On Jan. 4, Governor Phil Murphy signed A-4853/S-3011 to reduce businesses' UI contribution rate for a period of time.

"COVID-19 continues to pose economic challenges to businesses across the state," said Governor Murphy. "Today's bill signing will alleviate the financial burdens many businesses are facing and help them get back on their feet during this difficult time."

This legislation will reduce the amount of an employer's unemployment taxes through Fiscal Year 2023. Additionally, the bill will permit nonprofit and governmental employers that elect to make UI payments equal to the full amount of benefits paid to individuals attributable to service in the employ of the nonprofit or governmental employer to reduce their UI benefit payments by fifty percent for the duration of the public health emergency.

The bill will result in cost savings to State entities, public institutions of higher education, local governments, and school districts during the pandemic. The short-term savings will be

made possible by federal unemployment insurance advances. The recently enacted federal stimulus package extended interest free borrowing of these loans through March 14, 2021. As of December 17, 2020, 20 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands have availed themselves of these loans.

"The contributions New Jersey employers have made to our Unemployment Trust Fund have helped keep a record number of workers afloat during this pandemic," said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo. "This new law will help reduce further hardship on employers, while protecting the vital lifeline of unemployment for the future."

"Many New Jersey businesses are struggling right now, and we cannot allow them to be further penalized by a rise in Unemployment Insurance costs when layoffs were the only option for them to save their business," said Senate President Steve Sweeney. "This law will be influential in preventing further economic damage to our businesses and communities."

"Due to a loss of revenue,

COVID-19 has forced many small businesses to lay off or furlough dedicated employees in an effort to stay in business," said Senator Fred Madden, chair of the Senate Labor Committee.

"These layoffs were not wanted by any employer and, as a result, they should not be punished with paying the cost for Unemployment Insurance claims."

"The coronavirus has left businesses reeling from months of closures, mass layoffs and declining revenue," said Assemblyman Louis Greenwald.

"By next year, the unemployment tax rate is expected to rise to the highest bracket, requiring employers to pay more at a time when many will likely still be getting back on their feet. We need to take action to ease the tax burden on employers during this economic crisis."

"Many businesses were required to close quickly at the start of the pandemic. New Jersey's economic recovery will not come as swiftly," said Assemblyman Vince Mazzeo.

"Anything we can do to reduce rising tax obligations resulting from COVID-19 is a

step we need to take."

"Not since the Great Depression has our country faced an economic crisis like the one we are seeing today," said Assemblyman Anthony Verrelli.

"After all they've endured, businesses need relief so that they can keep employees on the payroll and rise to meet any future challenges brought on by the coronavirus. This new law will provide critical tax relief to employers as they continue on the long road to recovery."

"A similar phase-in payroll tax measure was utilized after the financial crisis of 2007-2009," said Michael Egerton, Executive Vice President of Government Relations for the New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce.

"This legislation will provide predictability and certainty to employers, especially during these challenging economic times due to the pandemic. Rather than move businesses into the most expensive of six columns to replenish the unemployment insurance fund, the bill will shift them one column over instead of five this July."

LOCAL CONTROL

(Continued from page 11)

Commissioners who have taken their role very seriously to achieve local control, as well as the district's parents, the teachers, principals, vice-principals, supervisors, administrators, counselors, nurses, secretaries, paraprofessionals, food service professionals, facilities staff, custodians, child study teams members, and all school and district employees.

"I want to thank Governor Murphy, Acting Education Commissioner Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, former Education Commissioner Dr. Lamont Repollet, Board of Education President Kathy Goldenberg, and the state's Highly Skilled Professionals Theodore Best, Dr. Stephen Cowan, and Dr. Alexis Colander. All of Paterson Public

Schools students, families, and professionals greatly appreciate the leadership and assistance all of you have provided."

"This is a great day for Paterson Public Schools," said Kenneth L. Simmons, President of the Paterson Board of Education. "Let it be a starting point for the great achievements of our students and our schools that will be made in this new era of Paterson Public Schools that is ultimately governed by the people of Paterson. There will be important decisions to be about the future of our children. But those decisions will be made by the people of the Paterson community through their duly elected members of their Board of Education."

"The board is more empowered now to act than it has been in 30 years, but we must always act with the needs of our stu-

dents as our top priority. I thank Superintendent of Schools Eileen Shafer, Deputy Superintendent Susana Peron and everyone in the district administration for their efforts, and Governor Phil Murphy, State Acting Education Commissioner Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, former State Education Commissioner Dr. Lamont Repollet, N.J. Board of Education President Kathy Goldenberg and everyone who helped us achieve this great milestone for Paterson Public Schools."

"Public schools are successful when parents, educational leaders, and local residents are able to have input to help provide support for their schools within a community. Today's action fully restores the deserved academic decision-making to the people of Paterson," said State Board of Education President Kathy Goldenberg.

"I am confident that the Paterson community will utilize its talents, creative resources and vision to cement the foundation of success for each student within the district along with the leadership provided by their teaching staff, administrators, Superintendent Eileen Shafer and the Paterson Board of Education members."

"Today is an important step worth celebrating. It speaks to the hard work that's already been done and the progress that has already been made," said Sean Spiller, Vice President of the New Jersey Education Association.

"The best way to build upon that success to continue that progress: To listen, to hear, to understand that all the voices of those who know Paterson's students best need to be heard."

TOWN WATCH

(Continued from page 7)

floor and smoke and water damage to the below floors. Both blazes' causes, as a standard procedure, are being probed by MFD and ECPO arson investigators.

BLOOMFIELD - A Funeral Mass was held in Belleville's St. Peter's Church Jan. 5 for retired Bloomfield Police Chief John "Jack" McNiff prior to his burial at Glendale Cemetery. McNiff, whose 40 years' service topped out as chief 1986-2005, died Dec. 31 - three days after his 81st birthday.

McNiff was an honorably discharged U.S. Army advanced infantryman when he joined "Bloomfield's finest" in 1965. His ability to solve some of Bloomfield's toughest crimes, leadership and ability to help others in need earned him promotions to sergeant in 1965, lieutenant in 1970, captain in 1977 and one of the state's youngest police chiefs in 1986.

Chief McNiff started BPD's anti-crime and community policing units and its DARE program. McNiff got officers EMT training and brought laptop computers. The PBA Local No. 32 and county and state police chiefs associations member was also a longtime Bloomfield Civil Rights Commissioner.

The young Jack and his sisters Anne and Kathleen were born in Mahanoy City, Pa. before parents John and Magdalene moved to Newark's Ironbound. John, Sr. died in 1948, inducing the talented boxer to abandon scholastic athletics for post-school full time work. A contemporary newspaper photo of him working at the Bloomfield Forest Hill A&P was among his jobs before joining the Army.

McNiff, Bloomfield High School Class of 1957, eventually earned an associates degree from Essex County College. He also liked to say that he earned "a Doctorate in Street Smarts from the University of North Newark and Silver Lake."

The then-Lt. McNiff met a nurse, Karen Clark, while both were Sacred Heart Church parishioners. Their 1975 marriage produced Jack, Jr. and Michael. Young Jack was sworn in as Wayne Chief of Police May 30 (with his father attending); Michael C. McNiff is a WPD lieutenant.

Sister Kay and three grandchildren are also among McNiff's survivors. Memorial donations may be made to St. Peter's Church, 155 William St., Belleville, 07109.

GLEN RIDGE - Assessors from the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police will be taking electronic comments from the public while visiting the bor-

ough's police headquarters Jan. 11.

NJSACOP, said Police Chief Sheila Byron-Lagattuta, will be looking at the department's management, operations, policy, procedures and support services as part of the accreditation renewal process.

"Verification by the team that the GRPD meets the Commission's 'best practice' standards," said Byron-Lagattuta, "is part of a voluntary process to achieve accreditation - a highly prized recognition of law enforcement professional excellence."

The public may directly call NJSACOP about the department's ability to comply with its standards 10-11 a.m. Monday at (201) 306-7554. The calls are limited to five minutes.

The public may directly email the Accreditation Program Director H. Delgado at hdelgado@njsacop.org or mail to NJSACOP, Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission, 751 Rt. 73 North, Suite 12, Marlton, NJ 08503.

Questions on this matter may be sent to GRPD Capt. Sean Quinn (973) 748-5400 ext. 113 or spquinn@glenridgenj.org.

BELLEVILLE - Montclair's apparent loss in opening a Lidl supermarket in the "Local Talk" area may be Belleville's gain by mid-2021.

Lidl spokeswoman Chandler Ebeier confirmed Nov. 24 that "we're working on a store in Belleville and expect it to open in 2021."

Although Ebeier did not say where in Belleville Lidl will land, Ripco Real Estate representative Colby Piper said that he had been talking with Belleville Shopping Center landlord Michael Rawlins about moving into its anchor store.

That anchor store at 354-74 Main St. had been recently vacated by Bell Farm Supermarket. The 30,000-square-foot space on the center's north end had opened as an A&P in 1964 before that grocer turned it into one of its budget-minded FoodBasics.

FoodBasics was liquidated with the rest of A&P's holdings in 2015. A Fine Fare and Bell Farms have since come and gone.

Lidl is following the lead of close rival Aldi, which had opened a store in Bloomfield in 2016. The German-based chain was to have opened in the former Montclair Lackawanna Plaza PathMark anchor before historic preservation issues sent that proposed redevelopment into the courts.

NUTLEY / CLIFTON - A debate over whether an internal ON3 street is an internal road or a throughway to Route 3 may tear apart the Nutley-Clifton Prism Capital Partnership.

The City of Clifton filed suit in November in State Superior Court-Newark over the township erecting a barrier across Metro Boulevard in the ON3 property in October.

The barricade enforced a township ordinance that made the boulevard a "no through street" May 15. Metro Boulevard had run between Nutley's Kingsland Street and Route 3 East on the Clifton side within the Roche Pharmaceutical headquarters site.


Nutley and Clifton formed Prism Capital Partners and ON3 in 2012 to attract tax ratables and redevelop the Roche property. It is the single largest redevelopment project in New Jersey.

Clifton is arguing that blocking Metro Boulevard separates Nutley's 118 acres from Clifton's 67. The barricade, furthermore, counters agreements made between Essex and Passaic counties and NJDOT.

Nutley counters that they have wanted a comprehensive traffic plan from Clifton and had presented the city's planning board with plans for a Kingsland-Rt. 3 East "flyover" ramp. Mayor Mauro Tucci added that Clifton's "piecemeal" redevelopment with bring 65 percent of ratables to the city - and 35 percent to Nutley.

"Where will this ramp go?" responded Clifton Mayor James Anzaldi. "Across the highway is a shopping center."

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