

ATTENTION BUSINESS OWNERS

This includes corner stores, bodegas, supermarkets, etc. and other stores / outlets with retail capability. As Local Talk marches on in its 20th year of existence, we are looking to launch a bold new program. Before we go public with it, we want to discuss the program with local business owners - the very lifeline of the community. PLEASE CALL 973-280-7547 TO GET THE DETAILS.

Should Governor Cuomo Resign?



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JOHNSON & JOHNSON VACCINE APPROVED Kmart & SEARS CHECKING OUT



WASHINGTON, D.C. - On Feb. 27, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued an emergency use authorization (EUA) for the third vaccine for the prevention of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The EUA allows the Johnson & Johnson Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine to be distributed in the U.S. for use in individuals 18 years of age and older.

"The authorization of this vaccine expands the availability

of vaccines, the best medical prevention method for COVID-19, to help us in the fight against this pandemic, which has claimed over half a million lives in the United States," said Acting FDA Commissioner Janet Woodcock, M.D. "The FDA, through our open and transparent scientific review process, has now authorized three COVID-19 vaccines with the urgency called for during this pandemic, using the agency's rigorous standards for

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Photo By Kristopher Seals

By Walter Elliott

BELLEVILLE - "Local Talk" paid a visit to Kmart No. 371 here around 5:30 p.m. on its last full month of business March 2.

It was easier to pick out what goods had gone than what remained during the 15-minute tour of 371-411 Main St, whose parking lot was 30 percent full. The store, a month into its "Store Closing" sale, will reduce the once familiar Kmart and S.S. Kresge presence to three New Jersey locations on or by April 15.

The automotive and hard-

ware items, including Craftsman tools and DieHard batteries, were almost exhausted. There was at least one Kenmore washing machine on the sales floor, but it was grouped among shelving and other store fixtures on sale.

The back wall freezers were empty of frozen food, as were displays for jewelry and kitchen appliances. The layaway office was stripped bare except for its sign. The clothing fitting rooms were closed except for a counter phone where one may call for use permission.

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Turn to
PAGE 16



Editorial
 Dhiren Shah
 Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo is facing a lot of scrutiny right now. First, for allegedly underreporting coronavirus-related nursing home deaths by as much as 50%. The purpose of the underreporting was to avoid federal scrutiny. While this criticism was going on, three women came forward accusing him of sexual misconduct. On February 16, Cuomo admitted that he made a mistake withholding the nursing home deaths.

Regarding the harassment allegations, according to FOX News on March 3, "Cuomo apologizes after misconduct allegations but denies touching anyone

'inappropriately.' He further said, 'I am embarrassed.'

CNN anchor Chris Cuomo, brother of Andrew Cuomo said that he has nothing to do with his brother. Chris said, "Obviously, I'm aware of what's going on with my brother. And, obviously, I cannot cover it, because he is my brother. Now, of course. CNN has to cover it."

As usual, when the ship is sinking, everyone leaves, except the captain. Right now, Andrew Cuomo is the only one on his side.

President Joseph Biden mentioned \$1,400 stimulus checks in his many speeches. There were some Democratic senators who had a problem with the plan. Finally, they agreed to restraining the extended income limit. Before, it was \$75,000 for an individual, and \$150,000 for a married couple. Then, it was extended to \$100,000 for an individual and \$200,000 for couples. They

must have been married for at least one year. Now, with the new proposal, the extended limit remained the same, but the proposed amendment will restrict the extended income limit. With the new amendment, it should be passed in the Senate, and then it has to go back to the House under reconciliation rules. So, by next week, (hopefully) people will start getting their money.

On March 4, the U.S. Capitol Police Department announced it had obtained intelligence that suggests a militia group is plotting to potentially breach the Capitol building on March 5. This time, I feel that Washington's Police, the Capitol Police, federal government and National Guard will protect this time without any problem.

According to Bloomberg News: "Donald Trump is telling allies he's strongly considering another run for president in 2024 - and close advisers want him to

choose someone other than former Vice President Mike Pence for his ticket, according to people familiar with the discussions."

Trump is considering a run in 2024 without Pence. However, if that happens, we might see Pence running as a presidential hopeful for the Republican Party. If that happens, it will be interesting to see the battle for the Republican party nomination. However, Trump will wait to see the 2022 election where the House and several Senate seats are decided. With a +1 gain in the Senate, Republicans will reclaim the majority there. The house also has a thin majority for the Democrats. If Nancy Pelosi continues as Speaker, the Democrats might lose their majority in the chamber.

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>
Sunny & Windy	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy
HI 43	HI 38	HI 35	HI 39	HI 47	HI 57	HI 60
LO 23	LO 28	LO 25	LO 23	LO 34	LO 40	LO 47

HOMELESSNESS - AN UNRESOLVED CRISIS IN NEWARK

By Lev D. Zilbermints

Homelessness is an ongoing unresolved crisis in Newark. Year round, homeless people, also called neighbors without address, are at the mercy of the elements and the capriciousness of unscrupulous people. "Local Talk" wrote in its February 25, 2021 issue about the horrible conditions that homeless people have to endure are the HELP/Urban Renewal shelter on 224 Sussex Avenue in Newark. What follows shows the plight of the homeless people in a greater perspective. Sources include interviews with activists, published data and research on the Internet.

Number of homeless persons in Newark. Causes of homelessness.

According to Munirah El

Bomani, the number of homeless in Newark is about 2000 sheltered, 350 unsheltered. This data is taken from the Point In Time Count taken on January 22, 2019. Patch.com reported in its August 1, 2019 that "commissioned by the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, the "NJCounts" survey is accomplished with the help of local community, government and volunteer groups."

The report stated, "according to researchers, 2,235 homeless people were counted in Essex County on January 22 [2019] - about 25% of the entire state's population. The total dwarfed the next-highest county, Hudson, which had 890 homeless people (10%)."

According to the report, about 87% of Essex County's homeless residents live in New Jersey's largest city, Newark.

During 2019, there were 1927 homeless persons. Of these, 1641 were sheltered homeless persons, and 286 unsheltered homeless persons.

Newark had more homeless persons than Belleville, Bloomfield, Orange, East Orange, Essex Fells, Irvington, Montclair South Orange and West Orange combined. In 2019, these cities put together had a total of 297 homeless persons. Newark had 1927.

Monarch Housing Associates listed 18 different factors causing homelessness. By far the biggest factors were eviction or at risk of eviction, 157 households; released from prison/jail, 151; being asked to leave shared residence, 375; loss or reduction of job income; loss or reduction of benefits, 121; Drug/alcohol abuse. Others included relocation, 63; domestic violence, 41;

mental illness, 29; household breakup/death in household; rent increase/insufficient income, 26 each; physical illness, 24; natural disaster or released from hospital, 11; substandard housing; injury, 6; released from psychiatric facility, 2.

According to Munirah El Bomani, there are more than 2,350 people who are homeless in a city of 290,000. In her interview El Bomani said, "there are about 20,000 people in the eviction list to be evicted on the moratorium is lifted. What the City of Newark and County of Essex plan to [do to] address residents on the list to be evicted?"

The eviction moratorium is scheduled in end on May 18, 2021. However, due to the coronavirus pandemic, hearing of court cases about eviction has

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SPORTS WRAP



By William Hathaway

This week is almost all about basketball. Locally, the East Side boys' basketball team defeated Orange 64-59, while Montclair Immaculate beat Prestige Prep 71-56, and DePaul beat West Orange 73-55. In Newark, University got by Central 75-71 in a great game, while East Orange defeated West Side 57-40.

In girls' basketball action, Montclair handled Weequahic 60-35, Central squeezed Orange 53-28, Caldwell beat Newark Tech 55-42, and Hudson Catholic got a 53-37 win over East Orange.

Turning to college basketball, the Seton Hall men's basketball crew is 13-10 and on the NCAA Tournament bubble after a tough loss 61-52 at Butler. The Pirates will go on the road to St. John's, with a 10-7 record

in the Big East Conference.

Meanwhile, the women's basketball team had a recent game with the Red Storm, and won 59-43 on the road. The SHU ladies are now 14-6 this year. Senior Desiree Elmore scored a game high 30 points in a recent game for the Lady Pirates, who will be the #3 seed in the upcoming Big East Tournament in Connecticut

In NBA news, the New York Knicks are actually doing well this season in the Eastern Conference, sitting as high as fourth place. This is far better than the Atlanta Hawks, who fired dead coach Lloyd Pierce.

Finally, New York Yankees manager Aaron Boone has taken a leave of absence in order to have a pacemaker installed. Also, NFL defensive end J.J. Watt has signed a two-year deal with the Arizona Cardinals.

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UNITED STATES

Gov. Cuomo Has Fallen

A once popular governor is facing heat for actions that allegedly led to lives lost and lives ruined.

First, Governor Andrew Cuomo (D-NY) has been accused of withholding COVID-19 deaths in nursing homes. This came after he received praise for his efforts during the pandemic, in which he was even awarded the International Emmy Founders Award for his daily briefings. Cuomo also wrote the book "American Crisis" detailing what he heralded as victories against the virus.

However, an investigation conducted by state attorney general Letitia James determined that Cuomo's administration undercounted nursing home COVID-19-related deaths by as much as 50%. Later, Cuomo aide Melissa DeRosa said in a call with state Democratic leaders that the governor's administration intentionally delayed the release of data pertaining to nursing home COVID-19-related deaths because of political fears should a federal investigation by the Department of Justice be launched.

While this matter was being investigated, another Cuomo aide, Lindsey Boylan, accused the governor of sexual harassment, including allegations of forced kissing and strip poker. On Feb. 27, Charlotte Bennett, an executive assistant and health policy advisor under Cuomo, added her own accusation of sexual harassment.

Two days later, Anna Ruch, who met Cuomo at a wedding reception in Sept. 2019, alleged that he sexually harassed her as well. With this allegation, The New York Times published a photograph from the event which showed Cuomo putting his hands upon Ruch's face, to which Ruch said the incident made her feel "uncomfortable and embarrassed."

Although he denied the alle-

gations of sexual harassment, Cuomo admitted in a statement, "I now understand that my interactions may have been insensitive or too personal and that some of my comments, given my position, made others feel in ways I never intended...Some of the things I have said have been misinterpreted as an unwanted flirtation. At work sometimes I think I am being playful and make jokes that I think are funny. I mean no offense and only attempt to add some levity and banter to what is a very serious business."

Several political leaders, including Cuomo rival and New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, has called for Cuomo to either be stripped of his emergency powers during the pandemic and/or resign. Among those calling for an independent investigation into the allegations were both of the state's U.S. Senators, Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, and President Biden, whose sentiments were shared by White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki.

25 Passengers, 13 Dead

A terrifying car crash in California led to a stunning number of deaths, and an even more stunning question.

On March 2, an SUV collided with a gravel truck on a road in Imperial County, roughly 100 miles from the Mexican border, at the intersection of State Route 115 and Norrish Road near Holtville, California.

Despite only two vehicles involved, the number of the injured was unusually high, as the SUV reportedly had 25 passengers. Out of everyone involved 14 people died at the scene, in addition to one more who died upon arrival at El Centro Regional Medical Center. Six of the survivors were taken to that hospital, while others were taken to other medical facilities.

According to Border Police, surveillance video showed a Ford Expedition, which was the SUV in the crash, and a Chevrolet Suburban driving through a hole cut in a border fence earlier that day. Ten of the victims were identified as Mexican citizens. Meanwhile, the Suburban caught fire in another location, and the 19 people in that vehicle were apprehended by authorities.

AFRICA

Over 200 Girls Going Home

While the release of more than 200 girls abducted from their school on Friday in northwest Nigeria is a welcome development said senior UN officials there on March 2, civilians and aid facilities have come under attack in the country's northeast, highlighting the plight of civilians who have suffered years of conflict and insecurity.

UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria Edward Kallon denounced the attack, in Dikwa, in restive Borno state, which started late on Monday (local time).

"As information is still coming through, I am outraged to hear the premises of several aid agencies and a hospital were reportedly set ablaze or sustained damage," Kallon said in a statement.

"Civilians and aid workers, their facilities and assets should never be a target. They must be protected and respected at all times," Mr. Kallon added, calling on all armed groups to immediately stop the violence.

The UN official also voiced deep concerns for the safety and security of thousands of residents of Dikwa, including internally displaced persons living inside and outside camps as well as those who had returned to the community to rebuild their lives after years in displacement.

Dikwa, a town which is about 90 kilometers (56 miles) from the provincial capital Maiduguri, is a key transit location, serving as a gateway to Bama, Ngala, Mafa and Marte local government areas.

"The attack will affect the support provided to nearly 100,000 people who are desperately in need of humanitarian assistance and protection, particularly as the COVID-19 pandemic risks spreading in Borno state," he added.

Northern Nigeria has been in the grip of a Boko Haram extremist insurgency for over a decade, which has led to widespread displacement as well as skyrocketing levels of hunger and malnutrition.

Also, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) expressed relief at the reported release of over 200 girls abducted in an attack

on their school in Jangebe in Zamfara state, northwest Nigeria, in the early hours of Feb. 26.

"While we rejoice at the release of the schoolgirls and look forward to their safe return to their families, we reiterate that attacks on students and schools are not only reprehensible but a violation of the right of children to an education," Peter Hawkins, UNICEF Nigeria Representative, said in a statement.

"It is a right that any society can ill-afford to violate," he stressed.

Mr. Hawkins called on the authorities to "take all measures" to protect schools in the country so that children will not be fearful of going to school, and parents afraid of sending their children to class.

EUROPE

Volvo Ditching Gas

On March 2, one of the largest car companies in the world made a bold announcement on its future.

Swedish carmaker Volvo released the following statement: "Volvo Cars is committed to becoming a leader in the fast-growing premium electric car market and plans to become a fully electric car company by 2030.

"By then, the company intends to only sell fully electric cars and phase out any car in its global portfolio with an internal combustion engine, including hybrids.

"The company's transition towards becoming a fully electric car maker is part of its ambitious climate plan, which seeks to consistently reduce the life cycle carbon footprint per car through concrete action.

"Its decision also builds on the expectation that legislation as well as a rapid expansion of accessible high quality charging infrastructure will accelerate consumer acceptance of fully electric cars.

"Volvo Cars' move towards full electrification comes together with an increased focus on online sales and a more complete, attractive and transparent consumer offer under the name Care by Volvo. All fully electric models will be available online only.

(Continued on page 5)

WORLD NEWS FLASH

(Continued from page 4)

“The 2030 ambition represents an acceleration of Volvo Cars’ electrification strategy, driven by strong demand for its electrified cars in recent years and a firm conviction that the market for combustion engine cars is a shrinking one.

“To remain successful, we need profitable growth. So instead of investing in a shrinking business, we choose to invest in the future - electric and online,” said Hakan Samuelsson, chief executive. “We are fully focused on becoming a leader in the fast-growing premium electric segment.”

“Volvo Cars launched its first fully electric car, the XC40 Recharge, in markets around the globe last year. Later today the company will reveal its second fully electric car, a new model in the 40 Series.

“In coming years Volvo Cars will roll out several additional electric models, with more to follow. Already by 2025, it aims for 50 per cent of its global sales to consist of fully electric cars, with the rest hybrids. By 2030, every car it sells should be fully electric.

“There is no long-term future for cars with an internal combustion engine,” said Henrik Green, chief technology officer. “We are firmly committed to becoming an electric-only car maker and the transition should happen by 2030. It will allow us to meet the expectations of our customers and be a part of the solution when it comes to fighting climate change.”

ASIA

Death of Journalist Questioned

On March 1, the UN's top human rights official called for transparent investigation into the death in custody of a writer in Bangladesh, who was held in pre-trial detention for nine months for publishing an article and sharing social media posts critical of the Government's COVID-19 response.

Writer Mushtaq Ahmed died on Feb. 25 after he was transferred to a prison hospital for treatment. The authorities have announced they will investigate

his death, according to a news release by the UN human rights office (OHCHR).

“The Government must ensure that its investigation into Ahmed’s death is prompt, transparent and independent,” Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said.

She urged the authorities to conduct a review of the Digital Security Act, under which Mr. Ahmed was charged; suspend its application; and release all those detained under it for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and opinion.

“Various UN human rights bodies have long raised concerns about the ill-defined, overly broad provisions of the Digital Security Act that have been used to punish criticism of the Government,” the High Commissioner said.

Ms. Bachelet also voiced concerns at reports that police allegedly used excessive force during protests demanding justice over Mr. Mushtaq’s death, with reports that 35 people were injured and seven arrested.

The High Commissioner also expressed serious concern at allegations that another man detained on similar charges as Mr. Ahmed, cartoonist Ahmed Kishore, was subjected to torture or other ill treatment.

She reminded the authorities of their obligation to promptly and effectively investigate the claims and to ensure his safety and well-being.

According to OHCHR, Mr. Ahmed and Mr. Kishore were among 11 individuals arrested in May last year for allegedly spreading misinformation about COVID-19 or criticizing the Government response.

The men were repeatedly denied bail and remained in pre-trial detention for nearly nine months before they were officially charged on Jan. 20 this year for posting “propaganda, false or offensive information, and information that could destroy communal harmony and create unrest,” the Office noted.

They were brought before a court on Tuesday last week, where Mr. Kishore alleged that he had been subjected to torture by two Rapid Action Battalion officers, the Office added. According to reports, he appeared visibly injured.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

The Orange Board of Education has scheduled its next virtual regularly Public Board Meeting on Tuesday, March 9, 2021, at 7:30 p.m., closed session to begin at 6:00 p.m.

NJ DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH INVESTIGATING CLUSTER OF LEGIONNAIRES' DISEASE CASES

TRENTON - The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) is investigating a cluster of Legionnaires’ disease cases in Union County. The Department is aware of 14 confirmed cases of Legionnaires’ disease, including one death, among individuals who live in or spend time in the county.

The cases were reported to the Department between Feb. 3 and Feb. 26, 2021. The Department is working with the local health departments in Union County to investigate this cluster. The individual who died was a male resident of Union County in his late 60s.

“This is a continuing investigation. The risk to anyone who lives in Union County is very small,” said New Jersey Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli. “Out of an abundance of caution, the Department recommends that

individuals who live in Union County who become ill with pneumonia-like/respiratory symptoms, such as fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, muscle aches, and headache visit their healthcare provider.”

As it can take up to two weeks for symptoms to develop, NJDOH recommends that those who develop symptoms within two weeks of being in Union County also seek medical attention. NJDOH has alerted healthcare providers in the area. Legionnaires’ disease is treatable with antibiotics.

The risk of Legionnaires’ disease among residents or recent visitors to Union County is low. Most healthy people exposed to Legionella do not develop Legionnaires’ disease. People over the age of 50, especially those who smoke ciga-

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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 - The Newark Public Schools system may be in an institutional race against time in getting back the Maple Avenue Elementary School building through New Jersey Superior Court-Newark.

NPS, in its now-10-month old lawsuit against the Newark Housing Authority, is looking to void its sale. The plaintiffs claim that NHA was not transparent in its \$1.2 million sale to 33 Maple Urban Renewal LLC/Hanini Group Dec. 28, 2017.

The state's largest public school system further asserts that NHA's "lack of transparency" in that sale amounted to violating its "right of return" clause in its 2016 deed conveyance contract. NPS transferred the deeds of Maple Avenue School and 11 other buildings to the housing authority for \$1 each.

NHA had found a buyer in 33 Maple/Hanini, who then removed its asbestos and was converting the 1925-built 31 classrooms into apartments. Hanini then sold 33-47 Maple Ave. to The Friends of TEAM Charter School March 19, 2020 for \$10 million.

Maple Avenue School, should a judge agree with NPS and void the NHA-33 Maple/Hanini sale, would be taken from the Friends of TEAM Charter School. Friends of TEAM is an independent fundraiser for KIPP:NJ, who has 11 charter schools in Newark and are planning for three more.

KIPP Seek Academy School Leader Valerie Arroyo, in her Feb. 5 letter to families, said that the school is still on track to move into Maple Avenue School for the 2021-22 school year. KIPP Seek would be moving out

as a tenant from the third floor of 100 Aldine St., some four blocks northwest of MAS.

"100 Aldine, 3rd Flr." is the western entrance and top level of NPS's George Washington Carver-Bruce Street School building. NPS, as its colocation part of its then "One Newark" plan, started leasing out that floor to KIPP's TEAM SPARK Academy Aug. 1, 2011.

IRVINGTON - The earthly path of Fred M. Bost, Irvington's first African American councilman, ended with a burial at Wrightstown's Brig. Gen. William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery after a funeral at Barnegat's Bayside Chapel Feb. 26.

Bost, 82, who died in Barnegat Feb. 21, was elected majority of registered East Ward voters first for 1980-84 and again 2000-04 under respective mayors Robert H. Miller and Sarah B. Bost. F. Bost, between council terms, served on the township's planning and zoning boards serving mayors J. Walter Jonkoski, Michael G. Steele, S. Bost and Wayne Smith.

Bost was part of a growing African American community here who rose from 40 percent in the 1980 U.S. Census to 81.66 percent in 2000. Steele was the first African American elected to the Irvington Public Schools Board of Education in 1980 and as mayor in 1990. Wife Sarah was Irvington's first African American woman mayor 1994-2002.

The then-Essex County Sheriff's Office administrator, before running for councilman, won a 1979 East Ward District Leader's race against two Democratic Committee-favored candidates. He then established the Fred Bost Civic Association.

Bost, after his 2003 retirement to Baregat's Four Seasons at Mirage, was appointed to that township's planning board. He became a voice for Barnegat's African Americans, whose population rose from .53 percent in 2000 to 6.75 in 2020.

Bost's earthly entry was as the youngest of 11 children March 12, 1938 in Monroe, N.C. His formal education followed with his and his family's residences: North Carolina, Washington, D.C., Detroit, a hitch in the U.S. Army (into 1958), Essex

County and Bloomfield colleges. He was also promoted through the state civil service until he was appointed as Essex County's Assistant Director of Community Affairs.

Bost's death leaves brother John, who lives in the Philippines, as the last of the 11 siblings. Sarah, sons Olatungi and Kenneth, daughters Nina, Kimberly, Latasha and Sybil; 10 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren also survive.

EAST ORANGE - Relatives of city resident Christopher Meikle, 46, held his last rites at Newark's Perry Funeral Home Feb. 26 - while the man authorities say is responsible for his Feb. 15 death remains held in Elizabeth's Union County Jail.

First responders, including the N.J. State Police and local EMS medics, were responding to a two car collision just past the Garden State Parkway's southbound Clark Centennial Avenue Exit 136 when they found Meikle's four-door Lexus on fire by the center median around mile marker 136.1 at 2:45 a.m. Feb. 15.

Troopers, aided by Clark firefighters and police officers extricated Meikle, who was then rushed by medics to RWJ University Hospital Rahway. Meikle, who was born Aug. 3, 1974, was pronounced dead there 3:35 a.m.

Medics also transported the driver of the white four-door Range Rover SUV -identified as Ronaldo Godwin, 43, of Newark to Newark's University Hospital for treatment of his serious injuries. Godwin, upon that hospital's release, was remanded to Union County Prosecutor's Office custody.

State Police and UCPO Homicide Task Force detectives have found that Godwin had rear-ended Meikle's Lexus "at high speed"; 55 mph is the Parkway's posted speed limit there. The impact put Godwin's Range Rover on its passenger side - and ruptured the Lexus' fuel tank. Another driver told detectives that Godwin approached him and asked to be taken away from the crash scene with an offer of an unspecified amount of cash.

Godwin was charged Feb. 17 with second-degree counts of death by auto and witness tampering. Each count carries up to

20 years' maximum state prison terms if found guilty.

ORANGE - Students, parents and other Orange Public Schools community members should have received Schools Superintendent Dr. Gerald Fitzhugh II's decision to postpone the district's on-site and remote learning hybrid reopening model to April 19 by now.

Fitzhugh's decision, which continues OPS Remote Synchronous, or Reopening Phase II plan B, now through April 16, was posted on the district's website and Facebook page Feb. 22. The superintendent's announcement was also featured on March 1's Central School "Central Elementary News" monthly.

Postponing on-site and remote learning reopening Phase IV was made while he had consulted "with health officials" during the district's scheduled Feb. 15-19 Winter Break.

"Again, the health and safety of all students and staff are the primary drivers regarding this decision," said Fitzhugh.

Extending Phase II Plan B, which has been in effect since Oct. 5, means that teachers report to the district's 11 schools twice a week, to teach remote learning from classrooms. Principals, assistant principals, secretaries and department heads also come on-site twice a week; Central Office staff four days a week.

Moving Phase IV's April 19 start means that teachers and supports staff are to begin classroom preparations on April 12.

Fitzhugh's announcement has also been posted in Spanish and Creole. Details may be found and questions left at: www.orange.k12.nj.us.

WEST ORANGE - The West Orange High School hockey team's abbreviated 2020-21 season ended with an official 4-4 overall record Feb. 26 - or 6-4 if one includes their two bouts against the COVID-19 Coronavirus.

The WOHS Mountaineers came back from two virus test-induced quarantines to get as far as one of two New Jersey Interscholastic Ice Hockey League McMullen Cup semifinals, held Sunday night at Englewood's MacKay Ice Arena.

(Continued on page 15)

JOHNSON & JOHNSON

VACCINE APPROVED

(Continued from page 1)

safety, effectiveness and manufacturing quality needed to support emergency use authorization.”

The FDA has determined that the Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine has met the statutory criteria for issuance of an EUA. The totality of the available data provides clear evidence that the Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine may be effective in preventing COVID-19. The data also show that the vaccine’s known and potential benefits outweigh its known and potential risks, supporting the company’s request for the vaccine’s use in people 18 years of age and older. In making this determination, the FDA can assure the public and medical community that it has conducted a thorough evaluation of the available safety, effectiveness and manufacturing quality information.

Janssen’s COVID-19 Vaccine is manufactured using a specific type of virus called adenovirus type 26 (Ad26). The vaccine uses Ad26 to deliver a piece of the DNA, or genetic material, that is used to make the distinctive “spike” protein of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. While adenoviruses are a group of viruses that are relatively common, Ad26, which can cause cold symptoms and pink eye, has been modified for the vaccine so that it cannot replicate in the human body to cause illness. After a person receives this vaccine, the body can temporarily make the spike protein, which does not cause disease, but triggers the immune system to learn to react defensively, producing an immune response against SARS-CoV-2.

“After a thorough analysis of the data, the FDA’s scientists and physicians have determined that the vaccine meets the FDA’s expectations for safety and effectiveness appropriate for the authorization of a vaccine for emergency use,” said Peter Marks, M.D., Ph.D., director of the FDA’s Center for Biologics

Evaluation and Research. “With today’s authorization, we are adding another vaccine in our medical toolbox to fight this virus. At the same time, the American people can be assured of the FDA’s unwavering commitment to public health through our comprehensive and rigorous evaluation of the data submitted for vaccines to prevent COVID-19.”

On Feb. 28, CDC Director Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH, gave a statement on signing the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices’ Recommendation to use Janssen’s COVID-19 Vaccine.

“This official CDC recommendation - which follows Saturday’s FDA decision to authorize emergency use of the vaccine - is another milestone toward an end to the pandemic.

“As vaccination scales up, so too does our nation’s overall protection from serious outcomes due to COVID-19. The Janssen vaccine has been shown to be safe and effective in preventing severe COVID-19 illness, hospitalization, and death.

“This vaccine is also another important tool in our toolbox to equitably vaccinate as many people as possible, as quickly as possible. As a one-dose vaccine, people do not have to return for a second dose to be protected. In addition, this vaccine does not need to be kept in a freezer and can be stored at refrigerated temperatures - so it is easy to transport and store and allows for expanded availability in most community settings and mobile sites, as supply scales up.

“This third safe, effective COVID-19 vaccine comes at a potentially pivotal time. CDC’s latest data suggest that recent declines in COVID-19 cases may be stalling and potentially leveling off at still very high numbers. That is why it is so critical that we remain vigilant and consistently take all of the mitigation steps we know work to stop the spread of COVID-19 while we work our way toward mass vaccination.

“I know that many Americans look forward to rolling up

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their sleeves with confidence as soon as a COVID-19 vaccine is available to them. Having different types of vaccines available for use, especially ones with different dosing recommendations and storage and handling requirements, can offer more options and flexibility for the public, jurisdictions and vaccine providers. Getting vaccinated with the first vaccine available to you will help protect all of us from COVID-19.”

Not long after getting approvals from the FDA and CDC, officials at Johnson & Johnson responded.

“This milestone follows a year of incredible work by our dedicated teams and unprecedented collaboration with health leaders around the world - all of whom shared a goal of bringing a single-shot vaccine to the public,” said Alex Gorsky, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer at Johnson & Johnson.

“We will do everything we can to help bring this pandemic

to an end, in the United States and throughout the world.”

“We believe the Johnson & Johnson single-shot COVID-19 vaccine is a critical tool for fighting this global pandemic, particularly as it shows protection across countries with different variants. A vaccine that protects against COVID-19, especially against the most dire outcomes of hospitalization and death, will help ease the burden on people and the strain on health systems worldwide,” said Paul Stoffels, M.D., Vice Chairman of the Executive Committee and Chief Scientific Officer, Johnson & Johnson.

“We look forward to our continued efforts around the world as we collectively aim to change the trajectory of this global pandemic.”

On March 2, President Biden announced that Merck, another New Jersey based pharmaceutical company, would assist in production of the Janssen vaccine.

LOCAL WEEKLY NEWSPAPER



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UNITED STATES DEATH RECORDED FROM COVID-19 & ALL SOURCES: JANUARY 1, 2020 - JANUARY 20, 2021

Sex	Age Group	Covid19	Total	pneumonia	C-19 Pneu.	Flu	Flu, C-19 Pneu.
All Sexes	All Ages	478,912	3,741,316	414,677	229,982	8,904	671,310
All Sexes	Under 1 y..	45	20,217	222	8	21	280
All Sexes	0-17 years	204	25,478	602	36	178	948
All Sexes	1-4 years	34	3,671	126	4	60	206
All Sexes	5-14 years	75	5,909	172	13	76	310
All Sexes	15-24 years	684	38,265	830	266	81	1,324
All Sexes	18-29 years	1,684	67,628	1,914	730	149	3,005
All Sexes	25-34 years	3,037	79,120	3,066	1,363	236	4,958
All Sexes	30-39 years	5,030	96,170	4,638	2,279	317	7,684
All Sexes	35-44 years	8,002	113,401	7,195	3,719	357	11,799
All Sexes	40-49 years	13,482	144,684	11,663	6,533	493	19,036
All Sexes	45-54 years	22,170	208,933	19,482	11,185	772	31,124
All Sexes	50-64 years	70,160	609,507	65,050	36,531	2,104	100,471
All Sexes	55-64 years	56,523	483,951	52,774	29,551	1,638	81,143
All Sexes	65-74 years	103,451	747,834	94,568	54,557	1,907	145,071
All Sexes	75-84 years	133,557	914,163	117,211	66,963	1,928	185,471

Sex	Age Group	Covid19	Total	pneumonia	C-19 Pneu.	Flu	Flu, C-19 Pneu.
Female	65-74 years	40,036	312,446	37,304	20,723	841	57,360
Female	75-84 years	58,430	436,223	50,042	27,808	958	81,509
Female	85 years a..	87,405	685,253	63,444	32,617	1,085	119,196
All Sexes	All Ages	9,103	71,476	6,398	3,078	150	12,557
All Sexes	Under 1 y..		411				
All Sexes	0-17 years		711	11			16
All Sexes	1-4 years	0	88		0		
All Sexes	5-14 years	0	108		0	0	
All Sexes	15-24 years		776	14	0		25
All Sexes	18-29 years	28	1,279	28			50
All Sexes	25-34 years	54	1,453	58	23		93
All Sexes	30-39 years	99	1,861	97	34		167
All Sexes	35-44 years	171	2,344	133	54		256
All Sexes	40-49 years	276	3,110	198	85		395
All Sexes	45-54 years	494	4,506	330	158	14	680
All Sexes	50-64 years	1,564	13,248	1,139	506	50	2,245

Sex	Age Group	Covid19	Total	pneumonia	C-19 Pneu.	Flu	Flu, C-19 Pneu.
Male	All Ages	261,101	1,958,615	231,542	132,402	4,601	364,101
Male	Under 1 y..	30	11,216	133	6	10	167
Male	0-17 years	120	20,880	335	22	97	530
Male	1-4 years	15	2,098	60	3	38	110
Male	5-14 years	42	3,514	95	10	37	164
Male	15-24 years	409	28,303	500	156	38	787
Male	18-29 years	1,044	49,463	1,146	421	77	1,837
Male	25-34 years	1,927	55,778	1,856	833	116	3,054
Male	30-39 years	3,292	65,282	2,875	1,494	157	4,815
Male	35-44 years	5,250	74,319	4,447	2,442	188	7,416
Male	40-49 years	8,900	92,159	7,194	4,291	273	12,027
Male	45-54 years	14,797	131,194	12,147	7,465	451	19,849
Male	50-64 years	45,264	376,904	39,972	23,447	1,218	62,791
Male	55-64 years	36,150	298,266	32,284	18,760	944	50,453
Male	65-74 years	63,415	425,388	57,264	33,836	1,066	87,711

Sex	Age Group	Covid19	Total	pneumonia	C-19 Pneu.	Flu	Flu, C-19 Pneu.
All Sexes	55-64 years	1,238	10,523	928	397	39	1,806
All Sexes	65-74 years	2,309	15,790	1,631	812	42	3,167
All Sexes	75-84 years	2,663	18,266	1,880	954	25	3,609
All Sexes	85 years a..	2,163	17,211	1,414	679	15	2,908
Male	All Ages	4,874	37,225	3,487	1,680	88	6,761
Male	Under 1 y..		241		0		
Male	0-17 years		445		0		
Male	1-4 years	0	50	0	0	0	0
Male	5-14 years	0	71		0	0	
Male	15-24 years		579		0		12
Male	18-29 years	19	944	14			31
Male	25-34 years	34	1,005	35	13		58
Male	30-39 years	58	1,205	59	21		98
Male	35-44 years	98	1,475	81	34		148
Male	40-49 years	159	1,921	122	51		233
Male	45-54 years	275	2,596	195	89		388

Sex	Age Group	Covid19	Total	pneumonia	C-19 Pneu.	Flu	Flu, C-19 Pneu.
Male	75-84 years	75,127	477,940	67,169	39,155	970	103,962
Male	85 years a..	63,939	440,599	55,587	29,736	743	90,428
Female	All Ages	217,811	1,782,701	183,135	97,580	4,303	307,209
Female	Under 1 y..	15	9,001	89	2	11	113
Female	0-17 years	84	14,598	267	14	81	418
Female	1-4 years	9	1,573	66	1	22	96
Female	5-14 years	33	2,395	77	3	39	146
Female	15-24 years	275	9,962	330	110	43	537
Female	18-29 years	640	18,165	768	309	72	1,168
Female	25-34 years	1,110	23,342	1,210	530	120	1,904
Female	30-39 years	1,738	30,888	1,763	785	160	2,899
Female	35-44 years	2,752	39,082	2,748	1,277	169	4,383
Female	40-49 years	4,582	52,525	4,469	2,342	220	7,009
Female	45-54 years	7,373	77,739	7,335	3,720	321	11,275
Female	50-64 years	24,896	232,603	25,078	13,084	886	37,680
Female	55-64 years	20,373	185,685	20,490	10,791	694	30,690

Sex	Age Group	Covid19	Total	pneumonia	C-19 Pneu.	Flu	Flu, C-19 Pneu.
Male	50-64 years	890	7,912	633	285	31	1,268
Male	55-64 years	715	6,310	513	226	26	1,027
Male	65-74 years	1,373	9,114	986	493	26	1,890
Male	75-84 years	1,465	9,245	1,017	511	13	1,981
Male	85 years a..	908	6,439	652	314		1,252
Female	All Ages	4,229	34,251	2,911	1,398	62	5,796
Female	Under 1 y..		170			0	
Female	0-17 years		266				
Female	1-4 years	0	38		0		
Female	5-14 years	0	37		0	0	
Female	15-24 years		197		0	0	13
Female	18-29 years		325	14		0	19
Female	25-34 years	20	448	23	10		35
Female	30-39 years	41	656	38	13		69
Female	35-44 years	73	869	52	20		108
Female	40-49 years	117	1,189	76	34		162

The Doctor Is In



Dr. Adil Manzoor OP/ED

500,000 COVID Deaths In The U.S.: The Next Step?



The United States is a country with a very rich history. We, citizens, have been used to breaking records and setting milestones. However, some days ago, we set a very horrible one. For a while now, we have been leading the whole world in COVID cases and deaths. That

lead widened. We hit 500,000 COVID deaths.

One of the most astonishing things about this horrifying milestone is how numb people have become to the pain. I remember in the early stages of the coronavirus when a few deaths were guaranteed to make the news. The fear of the virus then was at an all-time high. Then, gradually, the fear reduced, and now 500,000 people are dead, and many aren't even batting an eye.

I don't think many Americans really understand how terrifying this figure is. That's not just 500,000 people dead, but 500,000 families thrown in turmoil. 500,000 homes that got visited by sorrow. And millions more that will feel the effects of these deaths. As a doctor, I can't begin to tell you how bad it makes me seeing a person die; how much more 500,000?

It is sad really, just like the whole of the last year. Looking at charts only makes matters worse. We have a very large gap over Brazil, the country with the second most deaths. To show you how awful it is, Brazil has barely 250,000 deaths. That means we have more than double the deaths of the second most country. It is more of the same with the total number of cases.

But I haven't come here to brood or gloom; now is not the time. Our focus should not be on the fallen, but on the living. How exactly can we prevent more people from dying? That has been the question on the lips of virtually every health worker over the last few months, and it still hasn't changed.

There is no straightforward answer to that question. In fact, up until a few months ago, we had very little idea of what to do

at all. Then came the vaccine - our calvary. But that didn't stop the deaths. There's no denying that it has reduced cases and deaths, but it still isn't enough. Right now, there are over 19 million vaccinated people in the US. The president has promised 100 million vaccinated before summer, and we should even surpass that figure if all goes according to plan. But how many more people have to die?

This is why one of the very first steps to beating the vaccine now is getting people vaccinated. There's some good news on that front. Johnson & Johnson's vaccine is right around the corner. And unlike the other two vaccines in circulation now, it only requires a single shot and doesn't have to be stored at very low temperatures. This will increase the number of vaccinations even more, which is good news.

All these talks of vaccines have led many to believe they don't need to obey COVID guidelines again. I understand the frustration that has built for months now. I get the anger with having to wear a mask everywhere. I understand how difficult it is to miss reunions and events with family members and loved ones. But please, don't neglect COVID guidelines. I'm begging you. People often ask how they can ever repay doctors; this is one way.

This fight is one we cannot beat individually. We need the collective strength of Americans to beat this virus. That is why I'm pleading again not to neglect these guidelines. 500,000 people are dead. That's 500,000 more than should have died; let's not get that cursed number higher. Even after getting one shot of

the vaccine, you shouldn't be careless. You aren't fully immune until after the second shot of both vaccines available now.

Also, relenting now will mean not valuing the effort medical workers and other front-line workers have put into getting us through the pandemic. Everyone wants to return to the new normal, but we cannot afford to get ahead of ourselves. There's still a long way to go.

One day, it will be all over the news - HOORAY! THE LAST CORONAVIRUS PATIENT IN THE US RECOVERS. One day. But before then, we have to fight together to reduce the deaths to the barest minimum. And we can do this by following COVID guidelines. So, let's do just that.

I wish you well. Stay safe. And wear a mask.

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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LEGIONNAIRES CLUSTER

(Continued from page 5)

rettes, or those with certain medical conditions, including weakened immune systems, chronic lung disease or other chronic health conditions, are at increased risk for Legionnaires' disease.

NJDOH receives approximately 250-350 reports of Legionnaires' disease each year. Legionnaires' disease is a type of pneumonia (lung infection) caused by bacteria called Le-

gionella. People can get Legionnaires' disease by breathing in aerosolized (small droplets) water containing Legionella bacteria. Aerosolized water can come from cooling towers (air-conditioning units for large buildings), hot tubs, cooling misters, decorative fountains, and plumbing systems.

Less commonly, people can get sick by aspiration of tap water containing Legionella. This happens when water accidentally goes into the lungs while drinking ("goes down the wrong pipe"). People at increased risk

of aspiration include those with swallowing difficulties. Home A/C units do not use water to cool, so these home units do not aerosolize water and are not a risk for Legionella growth. Legionnaires' disease is not spread person to person.

As part of the continuing investigation, the Department is conducting epidemiologic and environmental investigations to identify possible sources of exposures to the bacteria, conducting environmental sampling for Legionella, and recommending environmental remediation strat-

egies to prevent further transmission of Legionella. Some potential sources have been identified and remediation has begun at those sites, but other sources may be identified as part of the ongoing investigation. Investigations into these types of Legionnaires' clusters are complex. It is often not possible to determine the origin of the bacteria that infected people.

For more information, please visit www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/legion.shtml which includes Frequently Asked Questions on Legionnaires' disease.

Kmart & SEARS

(Continued from page 1)

Electronics - except for a rack of ear buds, an end cap of alarm clock radios and a bin of CDs - were gone. There are no more lottery sales, but still price checks available, at the courtesy desk.

The Little Caesars pizza snack bar and internet cafe of 12 years ago have long disappeared. So too the blue light sales and the Blue Light cartoon character of the early 2010s.

One can still get Thom McCann shoes, among other footwear, racks of Route 66 brand and other clothes, and a range of toys, packaged food and household products. They were on 15 to 70 percent final sale.

Walking past the three active cashier stations and out the door, one can hear on the store PA Hall & Oates' 1984 hit, "You're Out of Touch, I'm Out of Time."

SB360 Capital Partners, who is doing Sears Holdings' latest round of liquidations, listed Belleville among the 32 Kmart and Sears nationwide Feb. 2 to close by April 15.

Sears Holdings had closed 96 Kmart and Sears stores, including the one at West Orange Plaza, 235-51 Prospect Ave. on or by Feb. 2, 2019. It and the Sears at the Livingston Mall were vacant until their landlords volunteered the spaces for Essex County's COVID vaccination sites.

The last two rounds of liquidating now 128 stores are seen as a survival bid for Sears Holdings, which had entered federal Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization protection Oct. 11, 2018.

Sears, during this bankruptcy, has sold Craftsman Tools to Black & Decker, DieHard to Advance Auto Parts and its Sears Outlets to American Freight. It reminded one of how A&P supermarkets sold away its signature 8 O'Clock Coffee brand in 2003 before completely liquidating in 2015.

The present state is a far cry from when Kmart, of Troy, Mich., and Sears, of Hoffman Estates, Ill., merged Nov. 17, 2004. The thinking was that

Sears would sell its lines like Craftsman tools and Kenmore appliances in the greater number Kmart.

The upper-scaled Sears' acquisition of the more discount-minded Kmart could be compared to when the Packard car company, of Buffalo, bought Studebaker, of South Bend, in 1954. Its executives were hoping that the Packard luxury cars and the more mainstream Studebakers would give them a broader lineup to compete against General Motors, Ford and Chrysler.

Studebaker-Packard, however, never had the development and marketing resources of Detroit's Big Three. The last Packards, in 1958, were Studebakers in all but the nameplate. Studebaker-Worthington built its last car in 1966. (Yes, that's "Worthington" as in the Worthington Pump factories in Newark and East Orange's Ampere section. Worthington got absorbed by West Orange's McGraw-Edison in 1978.)

In Sears-Kmart's case, they, like many brick-and-mortar general retailers, have had a harder time competing against online sales sites in the 2010s.

It can be argued that Kmart and Sears had been having a generation-long sunset in "Local Talk" Land since their mid-20th Century heyday here.

Kmart started out as the rebranding of the S.S. Kresge department store chain in 1962. Sebastian S. Kresge bought the existing Plaut department store in Newark or otherwise opened stores in East Orange, Irvington, Bloomfield and Montclair in the 1920s and 30s.

Kresge, as one of the nation's largest discount department stores, competed against McCrory's, W.T. Grant, Woolworth's, Kress and other chains in Downtown Newark and along East Orange's Central Avenue, Irvington's Springfield Avenue and Bloomfield-Montclair's Bloomfield Avenue.

The Kresge's at 580 Central Ave., East Orange has been cited for its terra cotta facade by architects and historians.

Kresge, when rebranded as Kmart, began to move farther

ESSEX COUNTY COVID-19 CASE TALLY

Weekly Statistics from February 24 - March 3, 2021

Municipality	2-24-2021	Deaths	3-3-2021	Deaths
Belleville	4317	97	4447	99
Bloomfield	4082	100	4216	100
Caldwell	442	15	454	15
Cedar Grove	1224	119	1276	119
East Orange	5255	271	5410	273
Essex Fells	148	2	150	2
Fairfield	656	29	666	29
Glen Ridge	281	11	295	11
Irvington	3434	204	3521	207
Livingston	1441	81	1475	81
Maplewood	928	33	957	33
Millburn	660	8	688	8
Montclair	1659	65	1734	65
Newark	30262	869	31056	879
North Caldwell	349	6	367	6
Nutley	2237	54	2337	56
Orange	2686	120	2753	122
Roseland	387	15	392	15
South Orange	605	12	637	12
Verona	746	16	777	16
West Caldwell	826	51	841	51
West Orange	3621	216	3691	218
Total	66246	2394	68140	2417

OTHER COVID-19 TALLIES (As of March 3, 2021)

NJ: 710,046 cases / 21,052 deaths (Plus 2,397 probable)
United States (approx.): 28.75 Million / 518,000 deaths
Worldwide (approx.): 115 Million / 2.56 Million deaths

NJ Gov. Murphy has announced that on March 15, Pre-K to 12 educators & support staff, child care workers, transportation workers and additional public safety workers will be eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccinations. More essential workers will be added on March 29.

out into the suburbs from the 1960s.

Kmart No. 371 here in Belleville's Valley section was built as a standalone building in 1979, replacing the Eastwood Wire factory. It was also once the highest grossing store on the East Coast.

Kmart's move into West Orange Plaza in 1999 made it its third anchor store there. It replaced the regional Caldor chain, who had moved into E.J. Korvette's original space in 1981.

Some may first think of Kmart's blue light sales, some others may remember Kmart (and, later, Sears) clothing lines from actresses Jaclyn Smith and Kathy Ireland. Others still may remember Kmart's sponsorship

of Indycar and NASCAR stock car teams in the 1980s-90s.

It was title sponsor for Paul Newman and Carl Haas' Indycar team for legendary driver Mario Andretti. Kmart also sponsored the cars of NASCAR Cup race winners John Andretti and Lake Speed and, with its Route 66 brand, three-time Cup champion Darrell Waltrip.

Kmart first entered bankruptcy in 2002.

When Kmart unplugs its blue light on or by April 15, it would be following Sears' six-month lead. The Sears Outlet at West Orange's Essex Green Town Center shopping plaza became American Freight in September.

The Chicago-based Sears, (Continued on page 12)



*From
The
Pastor's
Heart*

OP-ED BY DR. ROBERT KENNEDY

Repentance

Some time ago, I listened to a Christian album, and one of the songs that resonated with me had lyrics from Kent Henry and Stephen Wolf. The lyrics to which I refer say:

America, when will you bow your knees.

America, come back to God, oh won't you, please.

America, Land of the Free, Home of the Brave

Oh, America, it is the Christ alone who says

We must fulfill our Godly destiny, lifting[?] Mighty God from sea to shining sea It's righteousness that exalts our humble nation

To the people that remember it's God who's their salvation

Wake up, America, it's not too late, America

America, when will you come and bow your knees

America, come back to God, oh won't you, please

America.

After reflecting on the lyrics and some other songs that struck

the same notes, I mused that it is quite evident that America has not been listening. A broad spectrum of individuals is saying America is marching into the pit of destruction. Are they just talking hopelessness, I ask? Is the nation taking the next generation into the pit with its devastation? Former U.S. President Ronald Reagan, who was not considered a churchman, made a significant point when he said, "If we ever forget we are one nation under God, then we will be a nation gone under."

As is now observed by the Director of the FBI and other law enforcement agencies, the seditious actions at the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021, was the after-effect of the seeds of evil that were being sown in the society through the prostitution of reckless political ideology and conspiracy theories for quite a few decades. Instead of admitting such realities, lawmakers pass the blame from side to side. This effort is to shame each other while excusing themselves from any responsibility.

Of course, there is no need to lay all the blame at the lawmakers' feet, for the news media, of the right and the left, or conservative and liberal, have done a lot to perpetuate the evil. And let us not stop with the lawmakers and news media, for it is quite evident that many church leaders and members alike are caught up in the fray. Instead of proclaiming the gospel of truth, many in the church have been

conjoining with political forces to propagandize theories of conspiracies and corruption. And what is tragic is that, as we all can see, God and the Bible are being used to endorse a lot of evil.

It seems that the call to repentance is falling on deaf ears. So, while calling for the nation to repent, let me invite you to recognize that it is not a call for others; it is a call for each of us to take responsibility and share in the repentance. We need to turn back to God with a humble spirit, lest we will all be consumed.

Here are the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke to some who tried to hide behind the actions of others so that they would not have to think of their own repentance:

"There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, 'Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all *other* Galileans because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; **but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.** Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all *other* men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; **but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.**'" (Luke 13:1-5 NKJV, emphasis mine)

Instead of repenting, the peo-

ple of Israel were most recalcitrant. The Prophet Isaiah had to issue this warning, "This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: **"In repentance and rest is your salvation,** in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it." (Isaiah 30:15 NIV, Emphasis mine)

One of my favorite authors takes note of what the apostle Paul states concerning the nation of Israel that was looking for the Messiah's coming as the consummation and glory of their national existence. The author notes further that the nation had rejected the Messiah who would have given them life and had chosen another leader, whose reign would end in death.

Paul endeavored to bring home to his hearers that repentance alone couldn't save the Jewish nation from impending ruin. He revealed their ignorance of those Scriptures, which they boasted that they fully understood. He rebuked their worldliness, their love of station, titles, display, and their excessive selfishness. (*Acts of the Apostles*, 247)

What happened to the nation of Israel in AD 70 will happen to any nation that rejects the message of repentance today. I am therefore making an open call to my readers, as I pray that God will intervene in our nation's situation. I pray that we will heed the call to repentance before it is too late, for without repentance, there is no salvation.

Kmart & SEARS

(Continued from page 11)

Roebuck & Co., began opening stores in Newark, East Orange and Montclair in the 1920s-30s. Its East Orange store was directly across Central Avenue from S.S. Kresge.

Sears was looking to compete against the other department stores while supplementing its mail order catalog business. What watch salesman Richard Sears and Alvah Roebuck started in 1886 had become the Amazon.com of its time by 1900.

One can order by mail most

anything, from underwear and shoes to ready-to-assemble cars (1908-1912) and houses (1910-40). The Sears catalog was an avenue for minorities to have middle-class items because the mail could not see race or ethnicity.

Sears, Roebuck was the nation's largest retailer through 1990. Its Sears Tower headquarters opened in 1973 as the world's tallest building.

Sears, like Kmart and most other retailers, began following 1950s suburbanization. It closed its "Local Talk" area stores in favor of anchoring the likes of

Livingston Mall.

When Sears started opening smaller, specialized hardware and outlet stores - like the latter in Essex Green - it was already losing out to the likes of Walmart.

It had folded its catalog division in 1993, only to reopen an online version 1998-99. It sold its Sears Tower in 1994 and moved to Hoffman Estates.

Despite getting an initial revenue boost by absorbing Kmart in 2004, Sears Holdings had lost \$11 billion before entering its 2018 bankruptcy. It had fallen to 31st ranking in retail sales.

"Local Talk" walked into American Freight at Essex Green 4:15 p.m. March 2. The three customers were greeted by as many salespersons and wall-to-wall furniture and major appliances.

"Local Talk" looked in vain for "Sears" on any signage or products.

"We dropped the Sears name six months ago," said a salesman.

On the way out the door, "Local Talk" did see a new refrigerator among two others along a midway aisle. It was a silver Kenmore model.

HOMELESSNESS*(Continued from page 3)*

been suspended for an indefinite time. Thus, the landlord may file eviction papers against the tenants, but the hearing of the actual case might take a while. It is not clear whether the moratorium on evictions and the delay in hearing cases would be extended. The eviction moratorium is subject to extension. More information may be found on north.dsanj.org/housing-justice.

Status of homeless shelters in Newark. Where do the homeless stay?

Asked about how homeless people find shelter, El Bomani said, "All shelters are full to capacity. People are doubling up at their family and friend's house. [Those] who are homeless and are not being counted and their people are squatting in abandoned houses are around the city. [These are the ones] that are not being recognized or counted. So there are more neighbors without addresses that the Point of Count don't actually see because they refuse to count on Newark's unprofessional, unreliable and horrible services.

"The way some of most of the shelters have the residents living is inhumane and cruel. Someone from a higher authority needs to step in and do a thorough independent investigation on the state of homelessness in Newark. [Also needed is] A forensic audit and investigation for all the millions of dollars that have been allocated for the homeless and housing assistance in Newark and the County of Essex."

New York City used to send its homeless to Newark, but not anymore.

Adding to the problem is the fact that New York City used to send its homeless families to Newark.

CBS2 reported in 2019 that New York City's Department of

Homeless Services (DHS) pressured families to move to Newark from a Manhattan shelter. New York used the Special One-Time Assistance Program (SOTA) to pay for a year's rent up front to the landlords, CBS2 reported in a November 24, 2019 report.

The report went on to say that about 1,200 New York City residents were relocated to Newark by the (DHS). According to the report, some landlords provided housing with no heat, or hit water, and many other problems. In response, the City of Newark passed an ordinance requiring that housing enforcement inspect a home before it is rented. The ordinance also bans subsidized rent vouchers for more than one month. This way, the landlords cannot take a bulk one-time payment for a year, as is under the SOTA program.

According to the 2019 article, the ordinance took effect on December 24. Penalties for violating the ordinance are fines ranging from \$250 to \$1,000 or 90 days in jail.

Not everyone was happy that Newark restricted the use of the Special One-Time Assistance Program. Giselle Routhier, Coalition for the Homeless Policy Director, issued a statement on November 27, 2019 blasting Newark for "unlawfully targeting homeless people."

"People have the right to choose the community in which they wish to live, regardless of their economic status, source of income, or the level of government providing them with a housing subsidy. The Newark City Ordinance announced last week [November 20, 2019] unlawfully targets homeless people, solely because of their economic status. It is an extreme overreach and likely unconstitutional," Routhier wrote in her statement.

"As written, Newark's proposed law would criminalize being poor and those who try to help the poor, making it even harder for vulnerable families to

get back on their feet. Newark should start over and find a more reasonable and lawful approach to dealing with the concerns it has raised about New York City's policies, and New York City should address homelessness in a more effective way by actually creating more housing for homeless New Yorkers."

What solutions are needed? Activists speak.

Munirah El Bomani, a community activist, said, "the solution is we [Newarkers] need more housing for the homeless, for the low and extremely low income residents because the rents are too high in Newark where we are living in poverty, working below livable wage or most residents are unemployed."

According to a press conference held on February 25, Mayor Ras J. Baraka, Claremont Development and arc Building Partners announced the commencement of a construction on an adaptive-reuse project designed to create an innovative, transitional, emergency homeless facility at the 47-63 Miller Street site in Newark. The 24,000-square-foot facility will provide 24/7, 365 days a year emergency shelter and supportive services to transition homeless Newark residents into housing. The facility is expected to open in September 2021.

The project is intended to offer various human-centered services and pathways toward permanent housing, income stability, and personal health responsibility. The Miller Street Pathways to Housing Center will be located at the former Miller Street Elementary School structure, where Catholic Charities currently operates and offers an array of emotional, behavioral, and health support services," the press release said.

"Local Talk" has a more in-depth story on the construction of this shelter in this issue.

El Bomani, the activist, was skeptical about opening another

shelter. She felt that sustainable and permanent housing is the solution.

In her text message interview, El Bomani wrote, "all Newark is doing is putting a bandage on an open wound. No sustainable solutions. Opening up another shelter is not the solution. We have plenty of shelters. Sustainable and permanent housing is real solutions! Use the funding towards Section 8 vouchers and 12-24 months rental assistance to help residents gain stability like NYC Mayor offered the residents. Don't place them in inhabitable apartment like Newark did. Treat people like they are human, not worse than animals."

Examples

El Bomani said that Newark is not doing enough to help the homeless. Instead of offering cards or money, Newark should offer shelter, El Bomani said.

According to El Bomani, "the City of Newark [would] rather offer people a \$25 gift card to get tested for COVID, and offered to take the vaccine... [Yet the City] offered no shelter for the neighbors without address. Yesterday, 2/21/21, I have noticed a disabled man in the wheelchair was offered no assistance. Just ask to take COVID test or vaccine shot for a \$25 gift card. Shame on Newark!"

"Local Talk" attempted to verify these statements. El Bomani sent photos and video that validated everything she said. The photos showed homeless people sleeping at Penn Station; outside Penn Station; and in the doorways of buildings and the streets.

Shelters

Research done by "Local Talk" staff located at least 23 homeless shelters in Newark. Their rating ranged from 5 stars for Newark Homeless Shelter, located at 101 14th Avenue to 1

(Continued on page 14)

Legally Speaking



Cassandra Savoy, Esq.
OP/ED

Victim of Intimate Partner Violence? So, What To Do?

Beginning in March 2020, as COVID-19 cases surged, stay-at-home orders were put in place. Schools closed, and many workers were laid off, or told to work from home. The pandemic caused housing instability, food instability, economic worries, home schooling all stressors which increase the likelihood of domestic violence.

Stay-at-home orders, intended to protect the public and prevent widespread infection, left many people, mostly women and children trapped in their homes with their abusers. COVID-19 has enabled people who abuse their intimate partners to use power and control tactics such as isolation, coercion, and threats, in new and chilling ways to prevent domestic violence survivors from seeking help to escape abuse.

By the way, the new, more “sophisticated” name for domestic violence, a.k.a., getting the hell beat out of you is “intimate partner violence.” I know this is true by the sheer number of DV cases that have come to my office within the past eight months. So, what to do?

Experts have reached a consensus on several common characteristics among batterers. Abusers are controlling, manipulative, and believe that men have a pre-ordained right to be in charge of all aspects of a relationship. For some abusers, violence is a tool to keep their intimate partner from leaving the relationship or keeping them from being unfaithful, even if it means physically forcing her to stay.

What I always wonder is why women stay, and it is mostly women, but not always. I represented a woman who had been beaten badly. Her eyes were swollen shut. Her lip was busted. Her face was badly bruised. After she had begun to heal about two weeks later, she came into my office and I barely recognized her. I had managed to obtain a temporary restraining order for her using photos and the police report.

Before we could get to court for the final restraining order, he showed up at her door. She called me at 10:00 PM on a Saturday night. I screamed into the phone, “Call the police.” She said, “But he touched my breast. I am going to let him in so we can talk!”

Experts tell us that abused women often have low self-esteem. They feel they will be

harmful if they leave. Their partner still loves them; they are the blame for the abuse; their children need their father. The abused harbor feelings of isolation, and loneliness. The two big reasons are believing their partner will change, and lack of money, job, means to survive alone.

So, what to do? Well, of course, get a final restraining order. But, at the end of the day, a restraining order is a piece of paper. A piece of paper, even one with legal import, might be good for the prosecutor to use when he throws the book at your abuser, but of little value to you as you recuperate from your injuries. You have got to find the courage to get out! And you can get out even if your abuser is a powerful person in your community.

The experts tell us that intimate partner violence always goes from bad to worse. First, it’s yelling and belittling you. Next its shoving. Then, its slapping, and who knows where it goes from there. You can’t continue to allow him to either knock your head off, or threaten to knock your head off, or cause you to otherwise live in mortal fear every second of your life. You really must make a safety plan before a crisis occurs and before you decide to leave.

1. Find someone you trust. Give them extra keys, important papers, clothing so that you can leave quickly.
2. Try to save some money. Leave it with the friend.
3. Teach our children to call 911, a friend, or a neighbor.

4. Devise a code word or signal so you can tell your children or neighbors that you need them to call the police.
5. Know where you are going. Have an escape route. Find a list of shelters and support groups in your area if you don’t have a friend or relative who is able to take you in temporarily. If you don’t know where you are going, you are more likely to return to the abuser.
6. This is what you will need when you leave:

- Driver’s license
- Birth certificates: yours and your children’s
- Money, checkbook, credit cards, ATM cards, car title
- Social security card, work permit, green card, passport
- Insurance papers and medical records
- Lease, rental agreement and/or house deed
- School and health records
- Keys: house, car, friend’s
- Medications, glasses, hearing aids, for you and the children
- Address book
- A toy for each child.

If you are concerned about your immigration status, fear not. you may qualify to obtain status independent of your partner under the Violence Against Women’s Act. There are a number of services like the Catholic Archdiocese Immigration Service or Legal Services of New Jersey who can help you find out if you qualify under the act.

HOMELESSNESS

(Continued from page 13)

star for Urban Renewal Shelter located at 224 Sussex Avenue in Newark. A few, like Covenant House New Jersey, located at 330 Washington Street, were open 24 hours. That shelter had a 3.8 rating, and offered social services. Covenant House NJ catered to people aged 17-21.

Circle of Life, located at 55 Reeves Street, had a 4.4 rating

on a 5-star system. It was described as a “good homeless shelter!” by one poster.

Peace House Inc., at 257 Mount Prospect St., was for women. Goodwill Rescue Mission, located at 79 University Avenue, is a men’s homeless shelter. It is temporarily closed. Apostles House, with two shelters on 24 Grant Street and 513 Avon avenue respectively, offers social services. The two shelters rate 4.23 and 3.9 respectively,

according to the Internet.

Helping the Homeless Incorporated, located at 268 Mount Prospect, had a 4.5/5 stars rating.

Questions answered

El Bomani, the activist, told “Local Talk” in an interview that there are many reasons the families of the homeless are not helping them. “Grown people want their own privacy; financial crisis; housing restrictions; addic-

tion; disabilities, and mental health. It depends [on a case-by-case basis]”, El Bomani wrote in her text message interview earlier last month.

Homeless people get their food, clothes and other essentials from churches, agencies and donations. During cold winter months and days, some homeless “are sleeping on the streets, abandoned houses, shelters, hotels and doubled up with their family and friends.”

TOWN WATCH

(Continued from page 6)

Head Coach Eddie Scafidi's squad started off with a 3-0 regular season start, including a Jan. 23 win against Parsippany here at the Richard Codey Arena, when some of its 17 members had tested positive for the coronavirus Jan. 26. The team had to be quarantined for 10 days, canceling its Feb. 6 welcoming of Newark's Eastside High School. (EHS, unable to find a replacement team, also lost that date.)

The Mountaineers, looking to regain their ice legs, lost back-to-back games with Scotch Plains-Fanwood and Springfield's Jonathan Dayton Feb. 12-13. Another round of COVID-positive tests put them back into a second mandatory 10-day isolation.

WOHS, despite finishing the regular season 3-3 with a Feb. 23 loss to Bayonne, qualified for NJIHL's McMullen Cup playoffs. It was one of the rare state high school sports associations that are holding postseason play this winter.

The Mountaineers won their first round, 4-3, against the Kearny Cardinals Feb. 23. They fell, 6-1, against the 2018 champions Frisch Cougars in Englewood Sunday night.

The first COVID outbreak, as reported Jan. 26 by West Orange Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Scot Cascone, also affected members of the Mountaineers' boys and girls swimming teams. The WOHS girls' squad are to finally start their season March 9 here at Seton Hall Prep and the boys March 12 at Caldwell's West Essex Regional High School.

SOUTH ORANGE / MAPLEWOOD - Those who regularly put their recycling into bins or onto curbs may want to pause during their next deposit in memory of the late longtime villager and legislator Harry McEnroe.

McEnroe, 90, who died Feb. 8 from cancer in Mantoloking, drafted what became "The McEnroe Act," expanding solid waste recycling, while a state General Assemblyman in 1985. The longtime villager's legislation helped reduce the use of landfills - and sponsored creating the N.J. Poison Control Center.

McEnroe, before retiring in 1996, had represented the village and neighboring towns either in Newark's Essex County Hall of Records or Trenton's State House for 23 years. He was an eight-term Assemblyman 1980-96.

The former longtime South Orange Democratic Committee Chairman was an Essex County Freeholder, including its Director in 1976, 1973-79. The award-winning Liberty Mutual Insurance sales executive was in the midst of his 30-year career from its 240 S. Harrison, St. East

Orange tower office when the Our Lady of Sorrows parishioner became interested in politics.

Harry A. McEnroe, Jr. came to South Orange from Newark via Bonaventure, N.Y. and the U.S. Army. The Vailsburg native and Seton Hall Prep graduate was a scholar-athlete on St. Bonaventure University's baseball and basketball teams and served a tour in the Army before returning to his father, Harry Sr.'s plumbing business.

Wife Margaret, sons Harry, Paul, Brian, Thomas, and Robert; daughters Elizabeth Hirsch and Moira Carey, seven grandsons and five granddaughters are among his survivors.

McEnroe's Funeral Mass was celebrated in-person and on livestream Feb. 12 at Sea Girt's St. Mark's Church. Memorial donations may be made to: SHO, 120 Northfield Ave., West Orange, 07050; and/or St. Bonaventure University, PO Box 2519, 14778.

BLOOMFIELD - An East Orange man has been held in Newark's Essex County Correctional Center since his alleged Feb. 22 armed robbery and attempted arson of an Ampere here.

Elvis Holder, 54, has been charged with robbery, possession of a weapon and possession thereof for an unlawful purpose. Holder was arrested from an East Orange backyard Feb. 24 after his image matched that of the man in the surveillance video two days before here at 137 La France Ave.

The employee told BPD's Detective Bureau and Crime Scene Unit that the suspect had entered DJ&H Newsstand at 7:55 p.m. that Monday and asked her to play some NJ Lottery numbers for him.

She then described a scene that may recall one from the 1995 movie "Money Train," where Jennifer Lopez played an undercover cop who, while out to catch a firebug, was working as a decoy NYC subway token booth clerk.

The employee said she was playing the numbers when the suspect took out "a Nestle water bottle and poured an unknown substance onto the countertop." When asked, the man "angrily said 'Give me everything in the register,' produced a lighter "and threatened to set the substance on fire."

The suspect left with \$968 in cash - whose status remains undisclosed.

MONTCLAIR - The co-owner of a Montclair Center hair salon and/or his attorney may be responding to hostile work environment, sexual assault and wrongful termination complaints lodged by a former employee in Superior Court-Paterson Feb. 16.

Stylist "Jane Doe," said Morristown attorney Juan Fernandez, was filed against Bangz Salon and Wellness Spa co-owner

Richard Cronk in Paterson because his client resides in Passaic County.

Fernandez and Doe are seeking damages from Cronk for alleged sexual battery, assault, infliction of emotional distress and invasion of privacy. Damages are also being sought from Bangz for alleged wrongful termination, failing to maintain a safe work environment and negligent hiring and supervision.

Doe, as plaintiff, accuses Cronk of forcing her to sexually contact him during an October visit to the office he shares with co-owner Dominick Sansvero. She came into the office looking for a ruler to help a staff member measure hair for a "Locks of Love" cancer donation. Sole office occupant Cronk, she said, unzipped his pants, forcibly shut the office door and forced her hand to "clamp" around his genitals.

The plaintiff, who said she "could not get out of bed for two days," told Sanservo Oct. 22 of the incident. Sanservo's "corrective action," as per the complaint, was to twice say, "sorry, it happened," twice and "to accept her decision to no longer work at Bangz since no action was taken."

The plaintiff accused Cronk of creating a hostile environment of openly making remarks "of a sexual nature," from strip club visit recollections to commenting on her breasts, on three occasions leading to the office incident.

ECPO spokeswoman Katherine Carter said that they have not had any criminal complaints or cases filed against Cronk or Bangz. The plaintiff said she did not file a criminal complaint for fear of retaliation from Cronk.

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