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Newark Beth Israel Medical Center Makes Newsweek's World's Best Hospital Listing

Claims Honor for Third Straight Year

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION RESULTS

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"LET'S TALK FOR THE BETTERMENT OF OUR COMMUNITIES"

LOCAL TALK



25¢

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By Kristopher Seals

Minneapolis, MN - Almost a year after an act of unfathomable cruelty, the cop who perpetrated the death of George Floyd is now a convicted murderer.

On April 20, 2021, the 12 jurors overseeing the trial of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin found him guilty on all three counts he faced; unintentional second-degree murder; third-degree murder; and second-degree manslaughter. His bail was immediately revoked, and he was remanded into the custody of the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office.

Not long after, Chauvin was then transferred to the Minnesota Department of Corrections, where he will await sentencing in June. While Minnesota sentencing guidelines suggest that Chauvin will likely face 12-15 years, Judge Peter Cahill could imprison him for as

long as 40-75 years.

The guilty verdict was a sigh of relief for many in the nation. Protests were peaceful, in celebration of justice and accountability, which were the consequences of Chauvin kneeling on Floyd's neck for eight minutes and forty-six seconds, causing the latter's death.

Here now are several notable reactions to the verdict:

"History is here, this is monumental. We said, 'God, we need justice, and we need it now,' and He answered. My family is a family that will not back down from prayer. And I believe because of prayer, we got the verdict we wanted... What a day to be a Floyd, man." - Terrence Floyd, one of George Floyd's brothers.

"We don't find pleasure in this. We don't celebrate a man going to jail. We would rather George be alive... The war and the fight is not

(Continued on page 7)



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Turn to
PAGE 16



Editorial
 Dhiren Shah
 Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

Coronavirus Racism: a key word that has existed for centuries. We all know that one strong and powerful group has always suppressed weaker group in our history. African Americans have been exploited by the way of their property and by the way of cheap labor. The police department is not an exception. Police brutality was always there. However, for the past couple of decades, it is slowly coming to the forefront.

Many groups have united together to protect people against police brutality and racism. Since Local Talk came into existence in 2000, George Floyd was the biggest case of brutality all over the country and the world as well.

On May 25, 2020 in Minneapolis, MN, George was Floyd accused of using a fake \$20 bill. The store called the police. They knew the crime from the beginning. It was not a horrible crime, if true. However, some of the officers - particularly Derek Chauvin - treated George Floyd like he was a murderer who committed some heinous crime. Chauvin knelt on Floyd's for around 9 minutes, and the poor man lost his life over \$20.

On an unprecedented scale, all over the country and world, there were protests. Not only black people, but other minority groups and some Caucasians joined the protests.

According to The New York Times on May 29, 2020: "Mr. Trump held a news conference about China shortly after Mr. Biden delivered his remarks but did not mention Mr. Floyd or take any questions. A few hours later, he addressed Mr. Floyd's death at the start of a round table discussion with executives. 'I understand the hurt. I understand the pain,' Mr. Trump said, while

also criticizing 'looters' in Minneapolis.

"Former Vice President and the presidential candidate of the Democratic Party Joe Biden said: "you know, I just had an opportunity to speak with the Floyd family, a group of them, most of them. They're a close, decent, honorable family, loving one another. And once again we heard the words, and they heard them, 'I can't breathe' - an act of brutality so elemental, it did more than deny one more black man in America his civil rights and his human rights. It denied him of his very humanity."

What a difference between the two. Now, the civil and criminal courts have given the right judgement. In the civil case, Floyd's family and the state of Minnesota agreed on a \$27 million settlement. Tuesday, April 20, 2021 will be marked as a special day when the jury gave a guilty verdict on all three charges.

1. Second degree unintentional murder (called felony murder). To prove this count,

prosecutors had to show that Chauvin killed Floyd while committing or trying to commit a felony.

2. For Third degree murder. Jurors had to find Chauvin caused Floyd's death through an action that was "eminently dangerous" and carried out with a reckless disregard for and conscious indifference to the loss of life.

3. Second degree manslaughter. Prosecutors had to show that Chauvin caused Floyd's death through culpable negligence that created an unreasonable risk, and that he consciously took the chance of causing severe injury or death.

But this case is not the only problem. There are many problems we are facing. Now we must unite, like we did in Floyd's case and protest others against racism, wrongdoing and police brutality.

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>
Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	AM Rain	Sunny	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy
HI 52 LO 38	HI 65 LO 45	HI 70 LO 52	HI 62 LO 43	HI 64 LO 45	HI 72 LO 52	HI 71 LO 53

SPRING 2021 SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION RESULTS

By Walter Elliott

NEWARK - What participating registered voters who made their choices in April 20's Newark and Irvington public school board and budget set several trends.

First, a majority of those who voted by mail or at designated drop boxes and polling stations were emphatic in their selections. Both school budget questions and six of the overall seven overall school board seats were decided by wide margins.

Second, those who were elected or re-elected were candidates supported by the municipal elected leaders and endorsed by the local political establishment.

Third, the still unofficial vote counts show that less than three percent of Essex County's pool of registered voters participated so far.

Essex County Clerk Christopher Durkin's latest figures, posted 7:12 p.m. Saturday, has 5,328 voters in Newark, Irvington and Fairfield pulling voting machine

levers or checking off ballot boxes. (Fairfield held a special school budget question.)

The 5,328, compared to the 181,691 registered voters among all 22 Essex County municipalities, however, comes out to 2.93 percent. That percentage, even factoring in that the elections were for three towns, maybe one of the lowest on record.

Keep in mind that the www.essexclerk.com-drawn results remain unofficial until May 4. This traditional two-week grace period allows for any recount challenges before Durkin can officially certify the results.

To those who voted, "Local Talk" thanks you for exercising your right. To those who did not vote, little, if anything, has changed.

The three 2021-22 SCHOOL BUDGETS on the ballot were either overwhelmingly passed or rejected.

In NEWARK, 2,299 of 2,506 voters passed the \$138,314,942 Municipal Share of Newark Pub-

lic Schools budget.

The 2,299 "Yes" votes, compared to 207 "No" votes translates to a 91.74 percent plurality - perhaps one of the largest for a school budget.

The "Municipal Share" is the school taxes city property owners will pay. It is about 13 percent of NPS' overall \$1.01 billion budget -- the bulk of which is in state and federal education aid.

The \$138,314,942 was unchanged from last year's budget and ballot question.

In IRVINGTON, 266 of 299 voters - or 88.96 percent - passed Irvington Public Schools' \$161,732,073 budget. That school property tax outlay also stayed flat from 2020.

Had the majorities in Irvington and Newark rejected the budget questions, respective town hall and school administrators would have convened boards of school estimate. BSE members would hash out compromise school budgets for mu-

nicipal council passage and submission to the state Department of Education on or before June 30.

(For the record, Fairfield's elders and educators may be convening their BSE while you read this. 787 of that burg's 993 voters, or 79.25 percent, rejected their budget question.)

Six of the seven BOARDS OF EDUCATION members chosen are familiar faces.

The closest contest was found in NEWARK's special election for an unexpired seat.

A majority of 2,804 city voters chose Daniel Gonzalez over Shelia Montague to fill out the rest of the late Octavio "Tave" Padilla's term. Padilla, 57, died Nov. 25 but was re-elected in 2020.

1,839 voters, or 65.58 percent, voted for Gonzalez. 965 voters, or 34.42 percent, favored Montague.

First-time runner Gonzalez was on this year's "Moving

(Continued on page 5)

SPORTS WRAP



Photo By Mustafa Hooten



By William Hathaway, Jr.

The excitement is buzzing for three Essex County high schools this spring. Now that high school sports have resumed, a new sport is happening on the football field.

2021 marks the inaugural season of the New Jersey High School Spring Football League, with several teams in the state of New Jersey taking part. However, three of them - Malcolm X Shabazz, East Orange, and Irvington - are representing Essex County.

On April 19, Shabazz took

on William Dickerson High School in the new league's first ever game. It was a great defensive game that went into overtime, where William Dickerson got the game ending touchdown for a 6-0 win.

The NJHS Spring Football League will see Shabazz play Irvington on May 7th and Shabazz then East Orange on May 26th. The teams in the eight squad league are competing in collaboration with the North Jersey Super Football Conference.

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UNITED STATES

Minneapolis P.D. Under Federal Probe

In the wake of the Derek Chauvin guilty verdict, and the death of Daunte Wright, the federal government has taken bold action.

U.S. Attorney General Merrick B. Garland announced April 21 that the Justice Department has opened a pattern or practice investigation into the City of Minneapolis (the City) and the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD). The investigation will assess all types of force used by MPD officers, including uses of force involving individuals with behavioral health disabilities and uses of force against individuals engaged in activities protected by the First Amendment. The investigation will also assess whether MPD engages in discriminatory policing.

As part of the investigation the Justice Department will conduct a comprehensive review of MPD policies, training and supervision. The department will also examine MPD's systems of accountability, including complaint intake, investigation, review, disposition and discipline. The Department of Justice will also reach out to community groups and members of the public to learn about their experiences with MPD.

"The investigation I am announcing today will assess whether the Minneapolis Police Department engages in a pattern or practice of using excessive force, including during protests," said Attorney General Garland. "Building trust between community and law enforcement will take time and effort by all of us, but we undertake this task with determination and urgency, knowing that change cannot wait."

That morning, Department of Justice officials informed Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, MPD Chief Medaria Arradondo, City Attorney Jim Rowader, City Coordinator Mark Ruff, and City Council President Lisa Bender of the investigation. The department will continue to work closely with both the City and MPD as the investigation progresses.

The investigation is being conducted pursuant to the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, which prohibits state and local governments from engaging in a pattern or practice of conduct by law enforcement officers that deprives individuals of rights protected by the Constitution or federal law. The Act allows the Department of Justice to remedy such misconduct through civil litigation. The department will be assessing law enforcement practices under the First, Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, as well as under the Safe Streets Act of 1968, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Special Litigation Section of the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, in Washington, D.C., and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Minnesota, in Minneapolis, are jointly conducting this investigation. Individuals with relevant information are encouraged to contact the Department of Justice via email at Community.Minneapolis@usdoj.gov or by phone at 866-432-0268. Individuals can also report civil rights violations regarding this or other matters using the Civil Rights Division's new reporting portal, available at civilrights.justice.gov.

Additional information about the Civil Rights Division is available on its website at www.justice.gov/crt. Additional information about the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Minnesota is available on its website at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-mn>.

ASIA

There's Something in the Water

Three independent UN human rights experts expressed deep regret on April 15 over Japan's decision to discharge potentially still radioactive Fukushima nuclear plant water into the ocean, warning that it could impact millions across the Pacific region.

"The release of one million tons of contaminated water into the marine environment imposes considerable risks to the full enjoyment of human rights of concerned populations in and beyond the borders of Japan," said Marcos Orellana, Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights, Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on Right to Food, and David Boyd, Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment in a joint statement.

Given the warnings from environmentalists and some governments that the discharge would affect many people as well as the environment at large, the experts called the Government's decision "very concerning."

It comes after years of discussions with communities - including the fishing sector, which was already severely hit by the 2011 disaster - environmental NGOs, neighboring countries and civil society.

"The decision is particularly disappointing as experts believe alternative solutions to the problem are available," they said.

Noting that the water may contain quantities of radioactive carbon-14, as well as other radioactive isotopes, the independent experts raised their concerns with the Japanese Government that discharging radioactive water to the Pacific Ocean threatens the health of people and planet.

Meanwhile, in reply to expert concerns, the Japanese Government has suggested that the treated water stored in the tanks was not contaminated.

However, the experts upheld that the ALPS water processing

technology had failed to completely remove radioactive concentrations in most of the contaminated water stored in tanks at the Fukushima Daiichi plant.

"A first application ALPS failed to clean the water below regulatory levels and there are no guarantees that a second treatment will succeed", they said, adding that the technology did not remove radioactive tritium or carbon-14.

While Japan said that the tritium levels are very low and do not pose a threat to human health, scientists warn that in the water, the isotope organically binds to other molecules, moving up the food chain affecting plants and fish and humans.

Moreover, they say the radioactive hazards of tritium have been underestimated and could pose risks to humans and the environment for over 100 years.

AFRICA

President of Chad Killed

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has underlined the UN's solidarity with Chad following the death of the country's leader, announced on April 20.

President Idriss Déby died from injuries sustained in clashes with rebels in the north over the weekend, according to State media reports.

The Secretary-General was deeply saddened to learn of his death, UN Spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said in a statement.

Mr. Guterres has expressed his profound condolences to the President's family, and to the people and Government of Chad.

"President Déby Itno was a key partner for the United Nations and made significant contributions to regional stability, particularly as part of efforts to combat terrorism, violent extremism and organized crime in the Sahel," the statement said.

"In these difficult times, the United Nations stands with the Chadian people in their efforts to build a peaceful and prosperous

(Continued on page 14)

Newark Beth Israel Medical Center Makes Newsweek's World's Best Hospital Listing

NBIMC Claims Prestigious Honor for Third Consecutive Year

NEWARK - Newark Beth Israel Medical Center, an RWJBarnabas Health facility, has been designated a World's Best Hospital-USA by Newsweek. This is the third-consecutive recognition for Newark Beth Israel.

Newark Beth Israel ranked among the top 250 U.S. hospitals and is one of only five New Jersey hospitals on this prestigious list, which also includes The Mayo Clinic, Cleveland Clinic, Johns Hopkins and Massachusetts General.

"It is truly an honor to receive this designation for a third time. This is a testament to our employees, physicians, nurses and leadership teams who remain steadfast in their commitment to delivering world class, high quality, safe care to all of our patients, even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic," said Darrell K. Terry, Sr., President and Chief Executive Officer of Newark Beth Israel Medical Center and Children's Hospital of New Jersey.

"This is the third year that

Newsweek has partnered with Statista Inc., the respected global data research firm, to reveal the World's Best Hospitals - and it may be our most important ranking yet. As the events of 2020 made clear, our lives and those of our loved ones may rest on the kind of health care we have access to. The 2,000 hospitals named in this list -which covers 25 countries, including United States, United Kingdom, Germany and Canada -stand out for their consistent excellence, including distinguished physicians, top-notch nursing care and state-of-the-art technology," said Nancy Cooper, Global Editor in Chief of Newsweek.

Newsweek created the World's Best Hospital listings in partnership with Statista Inc., a respected data-research firm. Their researchers and experts assessed public data, surveyed medical professionals and patients, and found that Newark Beth Israel Medical Center sets the standard for excellent care.

dilla's term last winter.

Yolanda Johnson, at 488 or 5.64, placed fourth and first among the independent challengers. Nadirah A. Brown was next at 425 or 4.91. Philip "Phil" Wilson completed the on-ballot field with 362 or 4.18.

In IRVINGTON, who among the three unchallenged incumbents would get the most votes was the only contest.

Annette L. Beasley came out on top with 311 votes or 33.69 percent. Beasley, who was first elected in last year's special election, starts on a full three-year term.

Gloria Chison drew 310 votes or 33.59. She, like

WILL ORANGE PUBLIC

LIBRARY REOPEN?

(Continued from page 3)

Newark Schools Forward" platform with Dawn Haynes, Asia J. Norton and Vereliz Santana.

Haynes was the top vote-getter among the six candidates vying for three three-year BOE seats. The current board vice president was re-elected by 2,590 voters, or 29.93 percent.

Fellow incumbent Norton received her second term with 2,440, or 28.20.

Santana completed MNSF's sweep with 2,349, or 27.1. She was first appointed to fill Pa-

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| Paint thinners and solvents | Pool chemicals | Fluorescent light bulbs and ballasts | Car batteries |
| Oil based paints and stains | Automotive fluids (antifreeze, motor oil, steering fluids, etc.) | Mercury and products containing mercury | Fire extinguishers (home) |
| Chemistry sets | Darkroom/Photographic chemicals | Gasoline/Kerosene | Driveway sealer |
| | | | Aerosol spray paints |

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|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|
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| Asbestos | | | |

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— Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr.

Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr., Essex County Executive, the Board of Chosen Freeholders and the Essex County Utilities Authority

Beasley, was first appointed and then elected in 2020 to fill a lapsed term.

Ronald J. Brown was re-elected by 302 votes or 32.72. He now starts his fourth elected term,

going back to 2012.

NPS' school board is to reorganize 6 p.m. April 27. The IPS board's reorganization, to be announced, can be on or around their April 28 regular meeting.

Finance At Your Fingertips



Moses Ayiku, Jr. MBA OP/ED

Investments, Stocks

Last week, we started discussing investments. Once we have laid the foundation of our finances with sound budgets, planning, and saving, we need to go to the next step and determine the types of investment we would want to make from our savings. Savings accounts provide very little by way of return. In the U.S., the average savings account has an interest rate of 0.04%. This is according to data from the FDIC. The return is low, to say the least.

Ultimately savings accounts can be used to build up funds but they are not a way to grow one's money at a meaningful rate. Investments in stocks for example allow a person to expose themselves to the possibility of a return on their money. It is possible to make sizeable returns on stocks.

However, take note that stocks do not guarantee a high rate of return. There is a risk in investing in stocks and it is possible for prices to fall as well as rise. Stated more clearly, one could make money in the stock market or lose money. There is always a risk.

Stocks are shareholdings in a company. When you buy the stock of a company you become a part owner of that business. While you may not own enough stock to sit on the Board of the company, you would have an opportunity to vote at Annual Shareholders meetings. The stock market brings together buyers and sellers of stocks. The market provides an option for individuals to either buy or sell stocks in the companies listed on

the exchange.

When we buy stocks, we are typically trying to get a return through the following means:

- Dividends:** companies declare the portion of their net profit that should be given out to shareholders. A company may announce for example that they are giving each shareholder \$1 in dividends. Assuming you had 100 shares of stock in that company, you would receive a check for \$100, being your dividend payment.
- Capital gains:** Stock prices change over time. This price change provides stockholders with the potential to sell their stock at a profit. If for example, you bought stock at \$10 each and after a year the stock price is \$15, this means you have had a capital gain of roughly 50%. You could sell your \$10 stock for \$15 and have a capital gain of 15-10= \$5. This represents a 50% return on investment which is quite high.

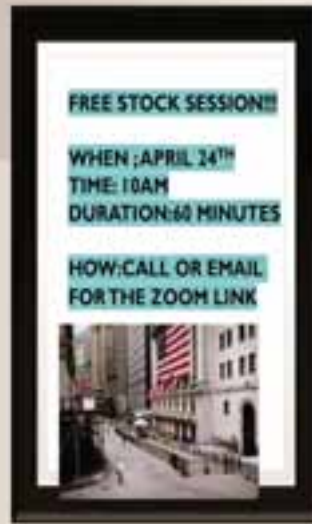
In terms of return in the long term, the average annual stock market return is about 10%. This is one key reason why many people are advised to buy stocks and hold them for a long period of time. However, take note that when we are calculating returns on investments, it is appropriate to adjust for inflation. Inflation refers to when price levels of goods and services increase.

If for example a stock provides a 10% return in a particular year, then we subtract the rate of inflation to obtain the real rate of return. With a 3% rate of inflation, then the real rate of return on that stock would be 10-3=7%.

One method of tracking the performance of stocks is to monitor the performance of the S and P 500. The S and P 500 is a collection of the 500 largest publicly traded companies in the U.S. The average performance of the companies is calculated daily and changes as the stock prices change. On average the S and P 500 increases by about 8-12 % annually.

This is perhaps one of the

WALL STREET COMES TO BRICK CITY



- Join us on Saturday April 24th from 10:00am to 11:00 am for a free session on stocks and the stock market
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- Tel: 646-643-3400 Email: Moses@Ayiku.com
- Moses Ayiku Jr. MBA Finance M.Phil. Economics Instructor/Mgt Consultant
- Moses has worked in the business and financial sectors for 30 years, including a stint on Wall Street. He is a graduate of Rutgers Business School and has been an adjunct professor of Business and Economics for 15 years. Moses designed and introduced the course, "Wall Street Comes to Newark" at Essex County College over 5 years ago. He taught Economics/Business at Essex County College for 12 years as an adjunct faculty.

ESSEX COUNTY COVID-19 CASE TALLY

Weekly Statistics from April 14 - April 21, 2021

Municipality	4-14-2021	Deaths	4-21-2021	Deaths
Belleville	5474	105	5665	107
Bloomfield	5083	117	5235	118
Caldwell	586	16	602	16
Cedar Grove	1504	119	1526	119
East Orange	6614	284	6888	290
Essex Fells	183	2	187	2
Fairfield	839	31	860	31
Glen Ridge	362	12	380	13
Irvington	4266	218	4450	218
Livingston	1754	81	1780	82
Maplewood	1223	35	1251	35
Millburn	800	10	819	10
Montclair	2177	71	2236	71
Newark	36848	923	37895	931
North Caldwell	484	6	492	6
Nutley	2876	61	2998	62
Orange	3377	127	3484	128
Roseland	460	16	463	16
South Orange	817	15	833	16
Verona	944	17	984	17
West Caldwell	1038	51	1059	51
West Orange	4425	224	4539	226
Total	82134	2541	84626	2565

OTHER COVID-19 TALLIES (As of April 21, 2021)

NJ: 865,733 cases / 22,660 deaths (Plus 2,611 probable)
United States (approx.): 31.83 Million / 569,000 deaths
Worldwide (approx.): 143.3 Million / 3.05 Million deaths

The United States of America has now reached President Biden's second vaccination goal of 200 million Americans receiving at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose.

most important Investment Principles; do not put all your eggs in one basket. It emphasizes the point that we need to diversify our portfolio by buying stocks of firms in different industries for example. That way when one sector has a poor performance,

the other stocks may have fared better and could lift your overall portfolio. An investment portfolio is simply all the stocks you own grouped together. This is a way of tracking your investments and their performance.

(Continued on page 10)

GUILTY (Continued from page 1)

over.” - Rev. Al Sharpton.

“On behalf of all of Newark and our residents, we applaud the jury for its decision in the Derek Chauvin case and congratulate Minnesota’s prosecutors for their work in bringing it about. It sends a clear message that people who use the cover of the law to commit murder and violate people’s fundamental rights will be met with justice. Today, Black Lives Mattered, which means all of our humanity matters.” - Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka.

“Justice has prevailed. Now the work begins to healing, restoring and rebuilding our communities. This is a good first step, but the road to recovery will be long. Social justice is the fair treatment of all people at all times. Until this is achieved, we must always be ready and willing to fight for what’s right. Rest in power, George Floyd.” - East Orange Mayor Ted R. Green.

“On Tuesday, April 20, 2021, American justice blindly peaked through the veil of tragedy brought about the defenseless killing of George Floyd, and so many other Black people. On behalf of the City of Orange Township, I applaud the jury’s just guilty verdict rendered against ex-police officer (Derek) Chauvin. Technology and courageous citizens have helped deliver justice that is long overdue. I pray that the full weight of this verdict will serve to asphyxiate lawless behavior in the guise of justice. May our voices and our ongoing actions be equal to the task of achieving justice for all.” - Dwayne D. Warren, Esq. Mayor, City of Orange Township.

“The verdict is a positive step in right direction. ‘Black Lives Matter,’ we must still be vigilant and continue to highlight injustice. At the same time ‘we’ must Vote. Policies and laws must be changed by elected officials.” - Charles N. Hall, Local 108 President.

“Justice has prevailed. But we must not stop here. The conviction of Derek Chauvin is a step in the right direction towards ending structural racism

in the United States. Let this verdict be a message that we are ready to begin holding police accountable and rebuilding our judicial system...” - Kevin Brown, 32BJ SEIU NJ Director and Vice-president.

“Justice has been served in Derek Chauvin’s trial for the murder of George Floyd. The three guilty verdicts cannot undo the injustice that was done a year ago, but it represents a positive change in our criminal justice system. It is time for our country to continue to heal, learn to respect and understand our differences, and grow stronger from them.” - Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr.

“Today’s verdict that found Derek Chauvin guilty on all counts for the Murder of George P. Floyd, Jr. is applauded by all justice loving people. Chauvin’s conviction is an indication that when the evidence of murder is overwhelming, beyond a shadow of a doubt, a true jury of one’s peers can and will do the right thing.

“A potentially catastrophic political reaction in the streets has been averted, but there is much to be done to eliminate systemic racism and foster new and improved definitions of policing and community relations. The fear of unnecessary force for even minor interaction with police is many times traumatizing for people of color, and our children grow up amidst this trauma. The fear factor must be eliminated by redefining the purpose of policing and the role of police in our communities. As we figure out how to keep our communities peaceful, we must support legislation, programs and initiatives that prove that our lives matter. In order to move forward, the killings at the hands of police must cease.” - Essex County Commissioner President Wayne L. Richardson.

“This was the right verdict. But as a career prosecutor, I know how even a successful trial verdict can leave the families of victims with a sense of emptiness. A conviction cannot undo the trauma; it can never bring back a lost loved one. We simply hope it can bring some clo-

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“A flawed system laid the groundwork for the death of George Floyd. It’s a system that too often fails to recruit police from the communities they guard, fails to train officers properly, fails to place just limits on the use of force against citizens, and fails to create mechanisms for the independent investigation of misconduct. It’s a system that badly needs reform - and across the country...” - Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal.

“Today’s verdict is justice served, but it is not justice for George Floyd... True justice would be a country where George Floyd is alive today, where Daunte Wright is alive today, where Adam Toledo is alive today. Where countless others whose names history will never know are alive today. True justice demands action, it demands change, it demands that we do everything in our power to prevent this from continuing to happen.” - U.S. Senator Cory A. Booker (D-NJ).

“The jury in the state trial of Derek Chauvin has fulfilled its civic duty and rendered a verdict convicting him on all counts. While the state’s prosecution was successful, I know that nothing can fill the void that the loved ones of George Floyd have felt since his death. The Justice Department has previously announced a federal civil rights investigation into the death of George Floyd. This investigation is ongoing.” - U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland.

“Today, we feel a sigh of relief. Still, it cannot take away the pain. A measure of justice isn’t the same as equal justice. This verdict brings us a step closer. And, the fact is, we still have work to do...” - Vice President Kamala D. Harris.

“Today, a jury in Minnesota found former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin guilty on all counts in the murder of George Floyd last May.

“It was a murder in the full light of day, and it ripped the

(Continued on page 12)

**NEW JERSEY TRANSIT CORPORATION
FISCAL YEAR 2021 REQUEST FOR FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ TRANSIT), under Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, and under provisions of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), gives notice of its intent to apply for Federal Fiscal Year 2021 federal financial assistance, Federal Fiscal Year 2020, Federal Fiscal Year 2019, Federal Fiscal Year 2018 and Federal Fiscal Year 2017 carryover funds from the following programs: \$427.18 million under 49 U.S.C. Section 5307 for operating and capital assistance; \$248.00 million under Section 5309 for Capital Investment Grant Program; \$206.17 million under Section 5337 State of Good Repair; \$8.89 million under Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities; \$11.98 million under 49 U.S.C.; Sections 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities and Section 5311 Rural Transportation Program; \$89.75 million of Federal Highway Authority; and \$39.61 million of Discretionary funding for a total of \$1.03 billion.

Federal operating funds will be matched as required with funds provided by the State of New Jersey and local recipients in conformance with Federal and State guidelines. NJ TRANSIT intends to provide the non-Federal share of capital projects through credit for toll revenues. The Federal Fiscal Year 2021 Federal program is described below.

**FISCAL YEAR 2021 FEDERAL PROGRAM
Proposed Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Program
(in Millions of Dollars)**

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>FEDERAL</u>
Capital Lease Payments	85.37
Cumberland County Bus Program	1.02
Dual Power Locomotives	70.43
Elizabeth Intermodal Station Reconstruction	25.08
HBLRT Weehawken Tunnel Repairs	4.83
Lyndhurst Station Reconstruction	11.58
Perth Amboy Intermodal ADA Improvements	10.69
PL42 Locomotives	9.30
Preventive Maintenance - Bus	113.93
Preventive Maintenance - Rail	88.05
SANDY Dmg 06NLR 4 NPS Storm Protection	0.48
SANDY Rsl 08MAS 4 ROC Unit Substations	6.42
Total:	\$427.18

**Proposed Section 5309 Capital Investment Grant Program
(in Millions of Dollars)**

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>FEDERAL</u>
Portal North Bridge FFGA	\$248.00
Total:	\$248.00

**Proposed Section 5337 State of Good Repair
(in Millions of Dollars)**

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>FEDERAL</u>
PL42 Locomotives	41.38
Preventive Maintenance - Bus	4.53
Preventive Maintenance - Rail	160.26
Total:	\$206.17

**Proposed Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities
(in Millions of Dollars)**

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>FEDERAL</u>
Bus Operations Control Center	6.26
Howell Garage CNG Compressor Replacement	1.08
Wayne Bus Garage Modernization	1.55
Total:	\$8.89

**Proposed Section 5310, 5311
(in Millions of Dollars)**

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>FEDERAL</u>
Local- Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Ind. w/Disabilities	7.47
Local- Rural Transit Program Contracts	4.51
Total:	\$11.98

**Proposed Federal Highway Authority (FHWA)
(in Millions of Dollars)**

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>FEDERAL</u>
CMAQ/5307 Local Initiatives DVRPC	1.01
CMAQ/5310 Local Initiatives DVRPC	0.99
HBLR Route 440 Extension	8.00
Multi-Level III Rail Car Purchase	75.00
Newark Intermodal	0.50
Underwater Hoboken Ferry Funds	4.25
Total:	\$89.75

**Proposed Discretionary Funding
(in Millions of Dollars)**

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>FEDERAL</u>
Articulated Buses	17.27
Electric Bus Acquisition for Route #25 at Hilton Garage	7.07
Public Transportation Covid-19 Research Demonstration Grant Program	0.60
Wayne Bus Garage Modernization	14.67
Total:	\$39.61

A. Property Acquisition/Environmental, Economic, and Social Aspects

Any property acquisition or relocation that may be required will be conducted in accordance with the appropriate provisions of the law and regulatory requirements. As appropriate, the social, economic, environmental, and relocation aspects of the projects will be investigated. If required under applicable laws and regulations, interim findings may be presented at a future public hearing and further public comment will be solicited. Prior to the implementation of any of the projects and to the extent required, NJ TRANSIT may prepare an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to Federal regulations. The availability of this document will be made known by publication in the same manner as this notice. NJ TRANSIT will adhere to all Federal statutes and regulations affecting structures or properties eligible for or on the National Register of Historic Places.

B. Comprehensive Planning

NJ TRANSIT projects are developed in coordination with the following planning organizations: The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, which is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Northeast New Jersey urbanized area; the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, which is the designated MPO for Camden, Mercer, Burlington, and Gloucester counties; and the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization, which is the designated MPO for Cumberland, Salem, Atlantic, and Cape May counties. The MPOs are the forums for local decision-making concerning the proposed projects. The projects are developed in consultation with local elected officials, interested citizens, and providers of private bus services.

C. Private Enterprise Participation

Through the comprehensive planning process administered by the MPOs and ongoing communication with NJ TRANSIT's Office of Private Carrier Affairs, NJ TRANSIT continues to discuss with private carriers their participation in the capital program. In addition, NJ TRANSIT encourages, to the maximum extent possible, the participation of the private sector in the development and implementation of public transportation in the State of New Jersey.

D. Senior Citizens and Individuals with Disabilities

Services to be provided will be consistent with NJ TRANSIT's program of reduced interstate and intrastate rail and bus fares for senior citizens and individuals with disabilities. Every reasonable effort will be made to plan and design program elements involving facilities generally available to the public with careful consideration of the special needs of senior citizens and individuals with disabilities.

E. Public Input

NJ TRANSIT invites public comments on the above projects and its performance. Request for additional information on NJ TRANSIT's program of projects, written comments and/or requests for a public hearing should be sent to Joyce J. Zuczek, Board Secretary, Office of the Secretary to the Board, NJ TRANSIT, One Penn Plaza East, Newark, New Jersey 07105-2246 by **May 28, 2021**.

Based on comments received in response to this notice and information made available, NJ TRANSIT may modify the above program before final submission to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and will make a determination, pursuant to FTA regulations, as to whether a public hearing is in order. The above list of proposed projects will become the final list of projects unless notification is provided in the same manner as this public notice.

Kevin S. Corbett
President & CEO
New Jersey Transit Corporation

The Doctor Is In



Dr. Adil Manzoor OP/ED

How The Coronavirus Vaccine Can Revolutionize Flu Shots



When was the last time you heard someone make a fuss about the flu? Me too! There used to be a time in the not-so-distant past where the flu season used to be the worst medical pe-

riod in the year. Everyone talking about it and how to lower the number of deaths for the season. That was not the case last year because we were talking about something bigger, something deadlier - the coronavirus.

It's like when you're playing a video game, and you ignore the lesser enemies to face the bigger villain. While the flu can most definitely not be written off, it isn't in the same league as the coronavirus. Consider this, in the 2019-2020 flu season, 22,000 people died because of the flu; in the year before, 34,200 people died from the influenza virus. From last year till today, on the other hand, about 570,000 people have died from the coronavirus. And that's just in the US.

The reason for the particularly low deaths from the flu last year is because most of the measures we take to prevent the coronavirus can actually prevent the flu. I'm not even talking of medications now. Social distancing, regular hand-washing, use of masks, and many more can offer a level of protection against many respiratory diseases, the flu included.

But we shouldn't for one minute think this is the end of the flu as we know it. The coronavirus will come and pass, and that's looking more of a matter of when rather than if. However, there's still going to be the flu after all of this. The flu, although not as deadly as the coronavirus, still kills people in their thousands, which is simply unacceptable.

Right now, there are flu

shots or vaccines. But there's a significant difference between the flu vaccines and the coronavirus vaccines. While they both serve the same purpose of teaching the body how to respond to a virus before the virus actually enters the body, they do so differently. The coronavirus vaccine employs a new technology, the very first of its kind - mRNA.

Traditional vaccines work by introducing a weakened or dead strain of the virus into the body and letting the body's immune system deal with it. This way, when the actual live virus comes into the body, the body quickly deals with it. This system is tested and trusted, effectively wiping away many of the serious illnesses to have plagued humanity, like smallpox, polio, and measles. This vaccine technology is what our regular flu shots also employ.

The next question to address then is, 'if it ain't broke, why fix it?' The answer is simple, when there is a chance to save even one more human life, 'you got to fix it.' And that's what the mRNA technology can offer.

mRNA vaccine technology is new but not unknown. Scientists have been studying this vaccine technology for more than 30 years now. With this model, there is no need to introduce the live, weakened, or dead strain of the virus into the body. What is done is to introduce messenger RNA, or mRNA, into the system to synthesize a protein or protein piece of the virus, which is then displayed on the cell surface.

The protein piece or critical piece responsible for the coronavirus is called the 'spike protein.' So, for the coronavirus mRNA vaccine, the cell displays the spike protein on its surface after the introduction of mRNA. The body's immune system quickly recognizes that the protein is a foreigner and attacks it, building an immune response and developing antibodies against it. This will teach the body how to respond when live coronavirus enters the body.

While it all sounds simple, scientists needed decades to figure out how to make the mRNA vaccine fully functional. When the coronavirus first reared its ugly head in late 2019, scientists set out to develop a very effective vaccine using knowledge from mRNA studies.

This new technology, aside from being more effective than the traditional vaccine technology, can also see vaccines developed in a month. For context, the flu vaccine takes roughly six months to develop. There's more. Scientists have to pick a strain they think will be prevalent before developing the vaccine. When the vaccines are ready for distribution, another strain may be prevalent.

When the first mRNA flu vaccine will be developed is unknown, but many pharmaceutical giants are working on it. It may eventually take years before one is approved, but it's refreshing to know we're being proactive for once. Stay safe.

(Continued on page 12)

FINANCE *(Continued from page 6)*

These days stocks are easier to buy than ever. There are various apps available on the market that can assist you in purchasing stocks. Remember, you are buying stocks for the possible return you could get, either dividends or capital gains. Apps available on the market to buy/sell stocks include RobinHood, SoFi and Stash. It is important to do your homework and research the different apps to determine which one would be best for your investment needs.

Before buying any stocks, it is important to conduct a certain level of research on the companies. Through annual reports and

other SEC filings, one can learn a great deal about a company. This can assist you in deciding whether to invest in that company or not. One can learn things such as the past financial performance, the management of the business, dividend payment track record, legal battles, future financial obligations, and a host of other pieces of information.

Based on all your research the next question should be; how will this company perform in the future? Not scientific but the research can assist you in making an informed opinion. For example, if you want to invest in a food company, you may gauge that the business should do well in the future as you expect the

demand for the product to grow with time, as the population increases. In other words, more and more people may end up buying that food product.

As I did last week, I will end with this note of caution; stocks do not rise every year! Typically, the S&P 500 falls three out of every 10 years. At times, the market can be quite volatile. A key step is to make sure that you understand the stock market quite well before beginning to invest. There are some pillars of knowledge that one should learn before taking the plunge to invest in stocks. Next week we shall continue our discussion on investing in the stock market.

This week we discussed one

key pillar of Investing; "Do not put all your eggs in one basket." In other words, it is safer to diversify your stock holdings than to have only one type of stock. This is a method of protecting your investment. If you diversify, a fall in one stock in your portfolio could be counteracted by a rise in other stocks in your portfolio.

Please feel free to share with me your questions and experiences on stocks and investments. I will do my best to respond, and, in some cases, I will write on some of these questions. Your questions and comments can be sent to localtalk-news@gmail.com.

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*From
The
Pastor's
Heart*

OP-ED BY DR. ROBERT KENNEDY

**Rejoicing For Justice
Now, But Wait For
Lasting Justice In
The World To Come**

Historical moments cause people to feel a profound sense of relief and the need to rejoice. They rejoice that justice has been done. Such was the moment with Israel at the Red Sea when God parted the waters, and Moses and Aaron led, what is estimated to be, two million Israelites across, and Pharaoh and his army drown into the Sea.

Such a moment cannot be forgotten in the history of Israel and has served as a moment of faith for all of God's people in moments of suffering that oppressive forces will be broken. I desire to reflect on that moment at the Red Sea, but let me suspend it for a little to speak of the reaction to the verdict in Derek Chauvin's trial, for this is also an epoch-making moment.

Yes, people are reacting to the verdict everywhere. Immediately after the decision, some people were jumping with raised hands out in the streets. Some were behind the fences, around the courthouse building. Some,

including a Jazz band, gathered at George Floyd's Plaza. The built-up tension that people felt for weeks during the trial as they repeatedly watched the video of George Floyd's death was broken. Yes, as the verdict was announced, people were hugging, crying, shouting, and giving praise to God that justice had been done.

As members of the Floyd family spoke, I paid particular attention to one of the brothers who took the stand during the trial. He said he felt relieved. He said it was horrible to sit in court and repeatedly watch the video of his brother being murdered. But he said that today, he and the entire world could breathe again, at least for a moment.

The focus of the trial might have been in Minneapolis, but the reaction reverberated throughout the United States and all across the world. President Biden and Vice President Harris spoke after the verdict. Both asserted that they rejoiced that justice had been served and hoped that much will be learned from the verdict. They asked that peace will follow the verdict and that the country will listen and seek to reform policing.

Two of my brothers who live outside of the United States were glued to their TVs but took time to phone me, even to have me repeat my story and my sons' stories about what happened years ago with certain police force members. Many others with whom I have spoken since

have also been reciting their stories. Every time they see an experience like Floyd's, the old memories return.

Many people are now saying that this verdict is just a beginning because they want to see more justice in other cases. With the sight of Chauvin being cuffed and taken away to jail, they say Chauvin is just one individual who's being held accountable, but they want to look at the system that allowed for a man like George Floyd to die. In Floyd's case, there was a nine-minute-and-29-second video that documented every moment, but they talked about all the other cases that had no nine minutes and 29 seconds documentation of what happened. The desire is that George Floyd's case will serve as a movement towards looking at the whole system, hoping that positive transformation can be made.

Yes, when justice triumphs, there is reason to feel a profound sense of relief and give God some praise. It was gratifying to hear just about every member of Floyd's family who spoke say what has kept them was their faith and prayers to God.

Just listening to Floyd's family and people rejoicing at the courthouse in Minneapolis, I was drawn back to our starting point with Israel at the Red Sea. Their moment of rejoicing is briefly recorded in Exodus 15, when Moses crossed with the host of Israel and together, they began to sing. Commentators say that

Moses must have written the song and handed it to Israel, and together they sang. And they became more exuberant as Miriam led the chorus with the women repeating, "Pharaoh and his army are drowned into the Sea."

Yes, it was a real moment. The people of Israel who had been shut up in Egypt, working in the kilns, making the great pyramids and other structures that draw the imagination of tourists today, were not allowed to speak and sing with their true vigor during the time of their oppression. However, when they stepped across the Sea and realized that their oppressors had drowned in the Sea, it was a moment to rejoice.

Let me close my reflection by inviting each one who reads, not only to rejoice for the brief moments in declarations of justice in this world but to look forward to the day when, as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. quoting (Amos 5:24). used to say, "justice (will) roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!"

I am looking forward to such a moment. And even if we experience some justice now, the system needs to be reformed. As a country, we must not sit by and expect it to happen. We must all pray and advocate to make it happen. Yes, I know that lasting justice will only follow the consummation when our Lord Jesus shall "set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed." (cf. Daniel 2).

GUILTY (Continued from page 7)

blindness off for the whole world to see the systemic racism the Vice President just referred to - the systemic racism that is a stain our nation's soul; the knee on the neck of justice for Black Americans; the profound fear and trauma, the pain, the exhaustion that Black and brown Americans experience every single

day.

"The murder of George Floyd launched a summer of protest we hadn't seen since the Civil Rights era in the '60s - protests that unified people of every race and generation in peace and with purpose to say, 'Enough. Enough. Enough of the senseless killings.'

"Today - today's verdict is a step forward. I just spoke with

the Governor of Minnesota, who thanked me for the close work with his team.

"And I also just spoke with George Floyd's family again - a remarkable family of extraordinary courage. Nothing can ever bring their brother, their father back. But this can be a giant step forward in the march toward justice in America...

"...We must not turn away.

We can't turn away. We have a chance to begin to change the trajectory in this country. It's my hope and prayer that we live up to the legacy.

"May God bless you. And may God bless the - George Floyd and his family... This can be a moment of significant change." - U.S. President Joseph R. Biden.

THE DOCTOR IS IN

(Continued from page 10)

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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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 - A proposed \$500,000 State of New Jersey budget line-item brought University Hospital and city elected officials to one of the former's parking lots here April 14.

University Hospital President and CEO Shereef Elnahal - joined by Mayor Ras Baraka, Sen. M. Teresa Ruiz and Lt. Governor/Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Shelia Y. Oliver - stood in the "Blue Barracks" lot bordered by Bergen Street, 12th Avenue, West Market Street and part of Cabinet Street to say that want the \$500,000 on that block.

Gov. Phil Murphy is proposing the line-item in his to-be-passed 2021-22 state budget to study "the potential of a new medical facility to expand medical services" and help the surrounding community. Murphy (D-Rumson) is also proposing \$8.5 million to address UH's immediate infrastructure needs.

Elnahal said, at that Wednesday press conference, that the study can well result in expanding UH's Level 1 Trauma Center and emergency ward. The 519-bed hospital had 83,122 emergency visits, 15,572 admissions and 199,804 outpatient clinic visits in 2020. The institution is the Newark area's principal teaching hospital, thanks to the Rutgers Medical School here.

The expansion, which Elnahal had said would cost an overall \$1 billion, would include new operating rooms, a stroke center and an extended liver transplant theater.

This projected new building would replace the Blue Barracks - a group of one-story "temporary" buildings that were built in 1969. The now-white structures were once the link between the former 1950's Martland Hospital and the mostly 42-year-old University/UMDNJ complex.

The state and federal government supply an annual overall \$44 million to UH for treating uninsured patients. It is the largest share among New Jersey's 72 hospitals.

Elnahal added that the \$9 million in state 2022 line items and projected \$1 billion in construction funds are needed because UMDNJ-now-UH has almost exhausted its 2015 bond fund. The bond issue raised \$250 million - mostly used to handle emergencies.

IRVINGTON - Newark rescuers extricated and transported a motorist whose crash actually happened here on the township side of 14th Avenue early April 12.

Newark police officers and a city-based EMS came to the 450 block of 14th Avenue, between Irvington's Oak Street and the City's Speedway, at 1:50 a.m. that Monday. They found the single-car and its entrapped driver on the 454-56, or Irvington, side of 14th.

The Irvington-Newark border cuts northeasterly through the neighborhood until it stops along South Orange Avenue. This section is historically known for the long-leveled Hoffman Soda bottling plant and Pabst Blue Ribbon brewery.

Rescue crews removed the woman driver and took her to Newark's University Hospital. She is expected to recover from non-life-threatening injuries.

EAST ORANGE - It took all available city firefighters to extinguish a pre-dawn house fire here on April 15.

The first unit's incident commander, upon arriving at 76 Amherst St. 3:10 a.m. that Thursday, found "heavy fire coming through the roof" of the 2.5-story

house. The commander promptly pulled the second alarm while the crew began by containing the blaze away from adjacent houses.

On-scene and arriving firefighters, with the help of a ladder truck hose, attacked the fire's exterior until it was brought under control by 4 a.m.

There were no injuries reported. 76 Amherst was built on a .08 acre lot in 1925. City and county arson investigators, who arrived as a standard procedure, have not disclosed the fire's cause as of April 20.

ORANGE - The City Council ended their nearly five-hour meeting by tabling a bill that would ban cannabis-based business within city limits 11:45 p.m. April 20. The tabling, which passed on a split-vote, allows Orange elders to consider or reconsider the bill as early as their May 4 meeting.

The council, in their sixth attempt, voted 4-2-1 to table Ordinance 14-2021. The measure was carried by Council President/East Ward Councilman Kerry Coley, bill sponsor North Ward Councilwoman Tency Eason, West Ward Councilman Harold Johnson and Councilman Clifford Ross.

South Ward Councilwoman Jamie Summers-Johnson and Councilwoman Adrienne Wooten voted "No." Councilman Weldon "Monty" Montague abstained. The vote duplicated the March 16 roll-call where the ordinance was introduced.

Ord. 14-2021 calls for the city to prohibit the growing, selling, most transportation and any consumption establishments within Orange. The measure would use will use the state's 2020 recreational and updated medicinal marijuana regulations' opt-out clause 31a.

It is not immediately clear whether BrwnBox or any prospective cannabis-based business that is set up here would be grandfathered in. The retailer had moved from Maplewood to the Orange Valley in February 2020.

BrwnBox co-founder Almaz

Adeigbola presented a petition that she started April 1 against the ordinance. Summers-Johnson and Wooten, who opposed the ban, had held community meetings April 10 and 17, the latter attracting News12 New Jersey cameras.

How many members of the public spoke before the council is not immediately known as of April 21 deadline. Some virtual audience members took to Facebook Wednesday, complaining that they had problems logging on or got "kicked off." There were 31 citizens who commented on 14-2021's March 16 introduction - all of whom opposed the proposed ban.

WEST ORANGE - Township police officers collared three juveniles here at the Essex Green Town Centre, who are accused of attempting two carjackings some 30 minutes earlier, April 9.

The first WOPD patrol cars arrived at the Shop Rite side of the plaza at 6:55 p.m. that Friday on the first carjacking attempt call. The victim said that three males, one of whom displayed a gun, and told him to get out of the car. The victim-driver did not - and they left.

Officers were taking the victim's report when their dispatcher told them of a second report - this time by AMC Theater. That victim said that three males approached him, showed a gun and demanded exiting the vehicle. The driver refused - and, again, they left.

Police, bolstered by backup cruisers, found three boys who matched the victims' description by the plaza's Cold Stone Creamery. One of the trio was found possessing a BB gun.

The trio, who were identified by the victims, was arrested and taken downhill to the WOPD Headquarters Juvenile Aid Bureau. No further details were given.

SOUTH ORANGE / MAPLEWOOD - A State Superior Court Judge issued her report card to the South Orange-Maplewood School District and the South

(Continued on page 15)

Legally Speaking



Cassandra Savoy, Esq.
OPI/ED

Marijuana Decriminalization

Many people have mixed emotions about the decriminalization of marijuana. On one hand, too many young men, in particular are prosecuted for possession of even small quantities. On the other hand, maybe marijuana is a gateway drug to stronger, more debilitating drugs and should be barred. Regardless of your position, as of February 22, 2021, the State of New Jer-

sey decriminalized marijuana creating a two-tier framework.

Legal amounts of Marijuana

Possession of the following quantities of marijuana are no longer considered a violation of the law:

- Simple possession of 5 ounces or less of marijuana
- Simple possession of 17 grams or less of hashish
- Being under the influence of marijuana or hashish
- Failure to properly dispose of marijuana or hashish
- Possession of paraphernalia for marijuana or hashish
- Possession of marijuana or hashish while operating a motor vehicle.

Consistent with the revised amounts that you can legally possess, the law creates a new framework for individuals you distribute 1 ounce or less of marijuana or 5 grams or less of hashish.

First offense: Officers shall issue a written warning to individuals for their first offense. However, to date, law enforcement agencies have not created the mechanisms to track the issuance of warnings.

Second Offense: Second offenses and those thereafter will be subject to a complaint-summons for a fourth-degree crime. Under the new law, the prohibitions against distribute of marijuana also apply to possession with intent to distribute marijuana.

Under the new law, the police can no longer detain, arrest or otherwise take into custody a person for violating certain marijuana or hashish offenses:

- Simple possession of more than 6 ounces of marijuana
- Simple possession of more than 17 grams of hashish
- Distribution of 1 ounce or less of marijuana
- Distribution of 5 grams or less of hashish

Instead, the police must collect the person's personal information and process them accordingly. All four of these offenses are crimes of the fourth degree, except when it is the person's first offense. The police shall process the person with a complaint-summons rather than a complaint-warrant. The difference between a complaint summons and a complaint warrant is that with the summons, you get to spend the night in your own bed. With a complaint-warrant, you spend the night at the County.

This is legal news you really what you need to know. The odor of marijuana or hashish, either burnt or raw, by itself no longer establishes "reasonable articulable suspicion" to initiate a stop, OR TO SEARCH A PERSON OR THE PERSON'S CAR to determine a violation of a possession offense or a fourth-degree distribution offense.

Be sure to read Part 2 of my explanation of the decriminalization of marijuana law.

WORLD NEWS FLASH

(Continued from page 4)

future."

President Déby, 68, had been in power for more than three decades. The announcement of his death came a day after provisional results of elections held on April 11 showed he would win a sixth term in office.

The President of the UN General Assembly, Volkan Bozkir, has also expressed his condolences to the people of Chad.

"The President said he would soon convene a General Assembly meeting to pay tribute to Mr. Deby's memory," his Spokesperson, Brenden Varma, said during his daily briefing from New York.

RUSSIA

Concern Grows for Longtime Putin Opponent

Experts appointed by the UN Human Rights Council have called for the urgent medical evacuation of detained Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny, fearing he is in "serious danger" due to deteriorating health and harsh prison conditions.

"We believe Mr. Navalny's life is in serious danger," the UN independent human rights experts said in a statement.

"He has been incarcerated under harsh conditions in a high security penal colony and denied access to adequate medical care. Despite having recently been transferred to a hospital, doctors of his own choosing have not been allowed to visit him."

Mr. Navalny, a longtime Kremlin critic, was arrested and detained in January when he returned to Russia from Germany, where he was receiving treatment after falling violently ill on a flight in August 2020. Toxicology reports later determined he had been poisoned with No-

vichok, a Soviet-era nerve agent.

In February he was sentenced to more than two years in prison for alleged parole violations while he was abroad. In early March, reports emerged of a sharp deterioration in his health. Prison authorities reportedly failed to provide him with adequate medical care or to allow his own doctors to visit him, the experts said, citing information they had received.

Mr. Navalny began a hunger strike in protest on March 31 and was transferred to a prison hospital.

"We are deeply troubled that Mr. Navalny is being kept in conditions that could amount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in a facility that reportedly does not meet international standards," the UN experts said.

They stressed that under international human rights law, the State bears responsibility for the care and "bodily integrity" of detained persons, irrespective of

the reason for their detention.

The Russian Government must take all necessary measures to protect Mr. Navalny's physical and mental health, and well-being, they added.

"We are extremely concerned that the current danger to Mr. Navalny's life, his most recent incarceration and the past attacks on him, including an attempt against his life last August with the nerve agent Novichok, which the Russian authorities have yet to effectively investigate, are all part of a deliberate pattern of retaliation against him for his criticism of the Russian Government and a gross violation of his human rights," the experts said.

They urged the authorities to ensure that Mr. Navalny has access to his own doctors, and to allow him to be evacuated abroad for urgent medical treatment, as they did in August 2020.

TOWN WATCH

(Continued from page 13)

Orange-Maplewood Education Association on their school reopening progress April 19.

Judge Jodi Lee Alper, from her Chancery Court bench Monday afternoon, said she was "heartened" on how SOMSD and SOMEA had complied with their March 16 reopening agreement. The district administrators-teachers union pact brought before the judge has led to the start of in-classroom hybrid learning April 19.

Alper, however, said she will keep her monitoring conditions so that both sides adhere to their reopening timetable. SOMSD some of their classrooms so that teachers can instruct from there and via Zoom simultaneously as part of Reopening Phase 3.

Alper's report and ruling came four days after a federal court judge, in another part of Newark, dismissed a parents lawsuit that could have immediately returned SOMSD to full-time five-day all in-classroom learning.

"This' a serious issue," summarized U.S. New Jersey District Judge John Michael Vazquez in his hour-long Friday afternoon decision, "but, legally, I don't think there's a strong case here for federal involvement."

Vazquez effectively ended a 14-week bid by 11 parents and East Orange-based attorney Keri Avellini for full and immediate SOMSD reopening. Avellini and husband/lead plaintiff Christopher Donohue have a child in a South Orange school and a second in Columbia High School.

BLOOMFIELD - One of this township's major parties was mentioned as the recipient of a "pay to play" ploy in a Morristown attorney's confession there April 14.

Elizabeth Valandingham, 48, before a State Superior Court-Morristown judge, admitted that she used a straw donor to contribute \$48,750 to "Bloomfield Democrats" in 2018 - and failing to report it on her tax returns.

Valandingham, or believed straw donor Matt O'Donnell, allegedly received \$500,000 of tax attorney contracts from Bloomfield and Mt. Arlington. She had similarly confessed to donating \$11,000 to that borough's Republicans - and failing to disclose those donations for 10 years.

The \$500,000 in Bloomfield and Mt. Arlington contracts benefitted O'Donnell McCord LLC, of Morristown. N.J. Attorney Gurbir Grewal, in his April 15 press

release, said that O'Donnell, as the firm's CEO, turned state's witness.

By "Bloomfield Democrats," Valandingham's plea bargain did not say whether the \$48,750 went to the township's Democratic Committee or particular candidates.

Bloomfield Mayor Michael Venezia, on Dec. 27, 2019, said that, "on the advice of our township attorney," had rescinded his and the Township Council's Dec. 16 reappointment of O'Donnell McCord. O'Donnell lost contracts with five more municipalities, causing him to dissolve his firm.

Valandingham, in exchange for her plea, loses her law license and has been assessed a \$75,000 fine. She is barred from public contracts for 10 years.

MONTCLAIR - State Sen. Nia Gill can return to practicing law, now that she has paid an overdue fee to the New Jersey Lawyers; Fund for Client Protection.

Gill (D-34th LD), as of April 15, had paid the \$252 fund fee plus a \$50 reinstatement fee. She had been on the NJL barred attorneys list for six months, going back into October.

The six-term senator, however, attended six of the last seven Essex County Improvement Authority's board of directors meetings as their general counsel. Her representing and advising the ECIA are for a \$70,146 annual salary. (The ECIA issued the \$125 million, 30-year lead service replacement line bond issue for Newark in 2019.)

ECIA Executive Director Steven C. Rother, when asked by a reporter April 15 of Gill's ineligibility, said he would "take this up with her immediately."

BELLEVILLE / NUTLEY - Towns along nine miles of the Passaic River north of Newark, including Belleville and Nutley, will have their turn and their say of the US EPA's \$441 million dredging project now through May 14.

The EPA, on April 15, launched a resident comment period through May 15 on the project, which will remove decades-old dioxin from the riverbed. The federal agency will be holding a virtual public meeting at 6 p.m. April 27.

Bank-to-bank dredging will remove the dioxin sediment, which was deposited by the Diamond Alkali chemical plant in Newark in the 1960s-70s.

The Vietnam-era defoliant's residue drifted north with the tide up to Clifton and Garfield's Dundee Dam.

The dredging and sediment removal will also take out heavy metals, pesti-

cides, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), furans and other contaminants.

Some 387,000 cubic yards of dredged sediment would be taken to "licensed disposal facilities" for processing. The exposed riverbed would then be capped. Existing state Department of Environmental Protection bans on fishing and crabbing along the overall 17-mile length of the Lower Passaic River south to Newark Bay. (That lower eight-mile stretch began in 2016 as part of a Superfund site.)

This phase of the overall \$1.4 billion project is to take four years. Part of the funding is coming from the EPA Superfund and in part from polluter reparations. The EPA is still in court against Diamond Alkali successor Maxus Energy Corp.

Meeting viewers sign in at: https://epa_proposed_plan_lprsa.eventbrite.com. Comments may be left with Remedial Project Manager Diane Salkie, USEPA, 290 Broadway, 18th Floor, NYC 10007-1866; salkie.diane@epa.gov.

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West Orange: 92 Old Northfield Road <small>(currently closed for renovations)</small>	Tel. 973-736-5552