

RIGHTING A HISTORICAL WRONG

Attorney General Apologizes to Those Targeted For Serving LGBTQ+ Patrons

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HAITIAN PRESIDENT MOISE MURDERED IN HOME

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NEWARK BETH ISRAEL & PARTNERS OPEN NEW SOCCER FIELD

By Walter Elliott

NEWARK - Children may be literally getting a kick out of Newark's latest soccer field here at the Marquis "Bo" Porter Sports Complex while you read this.

That field, open since July 6 and found towards the rear of 378 Lyons Ave - or the former St. Peter's Recreational Complex/Green Acres Park, will soon have two sisters in Belleville in the coming months.

Nine children, members of the Porter Summer Enrichment Camp, and a PDA Urban Initiative member of a similar age, gave 15 balls their first kick on the new turf field 11:41 a.m. Tuesday.

Their northward half-field kicks were made before an audience of 35: Mayor Ras Baraka, RWJBarnabas Health's officials from Newark Beth Israel Medical Center & Children's Hospital and Clara Maass Medical Center, the Players Development Academy and several media members.

Belleville Mayor Michael Melham and RWJBarnabas Clara Maass CEO Mary Ellen Cline were also present to what their joint soccer field project will look like when finished.

The nine were picked from the 50 enrichment camp members, ages seven through 13, who first



Bo Porter Summer Enrichment Campers at the kick-off event of the new soccer field, a partnership with PDA Urban Initiative, the City of Newark, Newark Beth Israel Medical Center and RWJBarnabas Health. Photos Courtesy NBIMC

visited the field minutes before the opening's 11:30 a.m. scheduled start.

"I know that if I was a kid their age, I wouldn't be going to a press conference on a summer's day," said Baraka. "I'd want to take a plunge in the pool, play on a basketball court on this first day of summer camp. They've been cooped up for 15 to 18 months - and now they'll have a soccer field to play on."

The now-RWJBarnabas Beth Israel Medical Center Field is the result of a collaboration among the city, PDA and both Beth Israel and its RWJBarnabas Health parent.

"This is going to be more than a soccer field," said Beth Israel President and CEO Darrell K. Terry, Sr., "There's going to be education along with the health."

(Continued on page 9)



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Editorial
 Dhiren Shah
 Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

Over 150 people got shot and over 75 fatally on a deadly July 4th weekend. New York and Chicago top the list. New York had 55 shooting incidents, 78 shooting victims and 16 homicides. In Chicago, 100 people were struck by gunfire resulting in 18 deaths since Friday night. Out of about 450 shootings past weekend, 69 were in Chicago alone.

Even police officers are in danger too. In Chicago, about 33 police officers got shot within the first six months. The law is protecting people, and due to cell phone cameras and other videos, police officers must follow the rules. So, the fear of police power has been reduced amongst notorious people. The new rules in

existence are for the protection of people, but at the same time it will be difficult for the officers to perform their duties. If they make a mistake, they will lose their livelihood and hurt their family as well. So sometimes, the politicians who are elected by us, make the rules to get more support from the people, but sometimes, hurt the system.

Now the political game will start. The politicians will announce a gun buyback program and as I've heard, people will return outdated and old guns, get the money and buy new guns. Politicians are happy that they have a program to say they are doing something, the police are happy, and of course the people who returned the guns are happy as well. It's a win-win situation for all, except the people who might get shot in the future.

After a 2020 drought of fireworks due to pandemic, this year people enjoyed the fireworks big time. All over the country, administrations, from small town to large cities, have arranged fireworks. People were tired of staying at home for almost a

year and a half. It was expected to be a busy traveling week, and about 43.6 million people traveled on the Fourth of July weekend, a new record. The previous record was in 2019.

A few more bodies were found in the Miami beach condo collapse debris. So far 36 bodies have been found. Last week, when President Biden and First Lady Jill Biden visited the site, they halted the rescue work by showing some kind of excuse and resumed the work when the President left. Some of the family members were not happy for the stoppage of the rescue work. With the risk of further collapse, the rest of the building was knocked down. Still, they search through debris and hope to find more bodies. I don't think there will be any other survivors, but for the sake of the family members and friends it will be satisfying if they can find the bodies.

Biden pulled troops from Afghanistan. As soon as the troops were back, the Taliban gained momentum and captured some of the province. Is this a failed foreign policy?

India's best actor, screen name Dilipkumar (original name Yusuf Khan) passed away at the age of 98. For over half a century (1944 - 2001) he ruled Indian film industry as the best actor. People used to call him an acting school. He was known as a tragedy king as far as acting is concerned. At the age of 44, he was married to then the most beautiful actress in the Indian film industry, 22 year old Saira Banu. When he was visiting New Jersey, I had an opportunity to see him personally at Randolph, New Jersey. We (6 of us) had to wait for almost 45 minutes, but when he came, he apologized to all of us, stating that going for shopping with wife and mother-in-law took longer than he thought and shook hands with all of us. What a humble person. God bless his soul and condolences to his family and friends.

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>
PM T-Storms	Elsa Rain	Partly Cloudy	Periods of Rain	Mostly Cloudy	Isolated T-Storms	Partly Cloudy
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Moses Ayiku, Jr. MBA OP/ED

Increasing Your Income - Part 5

The job market is heating up. The unemployment rate is expected to fall to about 5.7%. More companies are looking to hire, and some are paying sign on bonuses as well as increased wages to get the personnel that they want.

While there continues to be fear of inflation, the overall sentiment is that the economy is moving towards pre-pandemic levels. We are still grappling with the impact of the pandemic on supply chains. This means that going forward we most likely will see signs of shortages of goods sporadically as inputs are unable to be supplied at current demand levels. As the economy continues to recover, the supply chain issues will be resolved, and this will in turn reduce the cost push inflationary pressures.

Wage growth has been upwards but at a limited pace and stage. While some companies are offering higher wages, they are muted by the realities on the ground. Take for example the hospitality industry in a state like Georgia. The bulk of restaurants for example are offering \$7.25 per hour as the wage. It is no surprise then that such positions are full of young teenagers and not adults.

The U.S. economy has been

harsh on employees for a while. Minimum wages throughout the country are from economic, realistic or tempting. This has pushed many job seekers to find alternative types of employment. One of the options that has attracted many adults in various states is the food delivery business. Companies such as Door Dash and UberEATS continue to attract many adults.

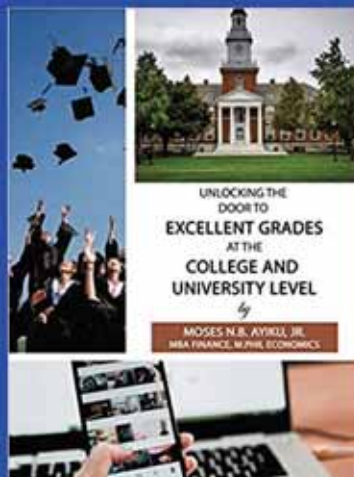
Why are so many people interested in food delivery? The job provides a quick turnaround in terms of applications. For example, one could sign up for Door Dash today and the process would take about 30 minutes or less. Further, one could start working the same day you apply!

There are no time consuming and stressful interviews. Background checks are conducted in minutes. Bank accounts are linked to your account immediately. Once you start working, whatever money you earn is deposited in you bank account every Monday without fail.

In addition, delivery drivers can set up their own times of operation. The drivers almost operate as independent businesses! They decide which orders to take and when. There is no nagging boss.

With UberEATS, the company provides a variety of financial perks that make it worthwhile for drivers to expand their hours of operation. All these factors make the food delivery business attractive. We must point out that during the pandemic many people took advantage of food delivery services.

Even as the pandemic recedes with increased numbers of vaccinated people, this habit seems to be here to stay. More and more people are enjoying their newfound freedom and go-



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ESSEX COUNTY COVID-19 CASE TALLY

Weekly Statistics from June 30 - July 7, 2021

Municipality	6-30-2021	Deaths	7-7-2021	Deaths
Belleville	5670	115	5670	115
Bloomfield	5357	123	5355	123
Caldwell	623	16	623	16
Cedar Grove	1550	120	1552	121
East Orange	7166	313	7176	313
Essex Fells	191	2	191	2
Fairfield	885	31	886	31
Glen Ridge	391	13	391	13
Irvington	4731	233	4742	232
Livingston	1835	89	1838	88
Maplewood	1312	36	1315	36
Millburn	824	10	829	10
Montclair	2278	72	2282	72
Newark	36953	1007	36977	1008
North Caldwell	496	6	496	6
Nutley	3040	66	3040	66
Orange	3559	136	3564	137
Roseland	478	16	478	16
South Orange	863	16	867	16
Verona	994	18	995	18
West Caldwell	1059	53	1060	53
West Orange	4586	231	4588	231
Total	84841	2722	84915	2723

OTHER COVID-19 TALLIES (As of July 7, 2021)
NJ: 894,224 cases / 23,781 deaths (Plus 2,709 probable)
United States (approx.): 33.76 Million / 606,100 deaths
Worldwide (approx.): 184.85 Million / 4 Million deaths

For the first since the pandemic began, New Jersey recorded a day (July 5) without a single COVID-19 fatality.

ing out to eat with friends and family. At the same time, the online orders are still rolling in.

The current situation in the restaurant industry in some states is intense. There are long

lines waiting to be served in the drive-thrus. Indoors, there are also lines at times of people prepared to wait upwards of one hour to get a table to eat.

(Continued on page 7)

RIGHTING A HISTORICAL WRONG

TRENTON - As Pride month came to a close, Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal took action to recognize an ugly moment in the history of the New Jersey Attorney General's Office: the systematic targeting of gay bars by the Office's Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control ("ABC") between 1933 and 1967.

To right this historical wrong, Grewal apologized for these historical practices and issued a directive ordering ABC to vacate 126 enforcement actions that suspended or revoked the licenses of liquor establishments during that era because they served LGBTQ+ patrons.

This marked the first time the Attorney General's Office or ABC has formally apologized for their role in these actions that occurred prior to a landmark 1967 New Jersey Supreme Court decision, which held that ABC could not suspend a liquor license simply because the licen-

see allowed LGBTQ+ individuals to congregate at the premises.

In addition, Grewal and ABC Director James Graziano announced that ABC would both expand its current anti-bias training to root out any implicit bias or discriminatory enforcement efforts and undertake a broader review of the agency's historical practices to determine whether any other communities were subject to discriminatory enforcement actions.

"For too many years, New Jersey failed to live up to its professed values of diversity, inclusion, and respect as it relates to our LGBTQ+ community," said Governor Phil Murphy. "While we cannot undo the injustices of the past, today's action by Attorney General Grewal demonstrates our commitment to recognizing the harms that have been suffered and acting to provide support to New Jersey's LGBTQ+ residents."

"The Attorney General's

Office is charged with furthering justice in New Jersey, and yet for more than three decades, our office fell far short," said Attorney General Grewal. "The time has come to acknowledge this failing, to apologize for what happened, and to make sure it never occurs again. We are committed to righting this historical wrong and strengthening our relationship with New Jersey's LGBTQ+ community."

"To be clear, today's ABC is committed to according respect, dignity, fairness and appropriate due process to all parties and persons before it and will not discriminate - or by extension allow licensees or permittees to discriminate - against protected classes or the public," said Director Graziano. "We join Attorney General Grewal in acknowledging and condemning the harm our agency caused to members of the LGBTQ+ community and offer our sincere apologies to the generations of individuals

impacted by it."

Those actions, like others targeting gay bars, were based on two ABC regulations issued shortly after the end of Prohibition: Rule 4, which prohibited licensed liquor establishments from allowing "female impersonators" (among others) on their premises; and Rule 5, which prohibited licensees from operating their business "in such a manner as to become a nuisance" - a term that, until 1967, included allowing the "congregation of apparent homosexuals" at the establishment.

That year, the New Jersey Supreme Court held in *One Eleven Wines & Liquors, Inc. v. Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control* that ABC could not use its enforcement authority to target gay bars simply because they served LGBTQ+ patrons. However, since then, neither the Attorney General's Office nor ABC has formally apologized

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UNITED STATES

Elsa Strikes U.S.

The latest agent of chaos from mother nature has made its way to American shores after wreaking havoc in the Caribbean.

Elsa, an Atlantic tropical system that has seen time as both a hurricane and tropical storm, hit the gulf side of Florida on July 7. The storm brought the trademark winds, rain, and storm surge associated with such storms, included some spun-off tornadoes.

After finishing off its run via the Florida panhandle, the weakened storm is expected to trek through Georgia and the Carolinas before heading out to sea. However, waters off the coasts of the Delmarva area and New Jersey are expected to be choppy, so boaters and swimmers are advised to take caution.

In anticipation of the storm, President Biden declared a state of emergency exists in the State of Florida and ordered Federal assistance to supplement State, tribal, and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from Elsa beginning on July 4 and continuing.

The President's action authorizes the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), to coordinate all disaster relief efforts which have the purpose of alleviating the hardship and suffering caused by the emergency on the local population, and to provide appropriate assistance for required emergency measures, authorized under Title V of the Stafford Act, to save lives and to protect property and public health and safety, and to lessen or avert the threat of a catastrophe in the counties of Charlotte, Citrus, Collier, DeSoto, Hardee, Hernando,

Hillsborough, Lee, Levy, Manatee, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Pasco, Pinellas, and Sarasota.

Specifically, FEMA is authorized to identify, mobilize, and provide at its discretion, equipment and resources necessary to alleviate the impacts of the emergency. Emergency protective measures, limited to direct federal assistance and reimbursement for mass care including evacuation and shelter support will be provided at 75 percent Federal funding.

CARIBBEAN

Haitian President Murdered

Perpetrators behind the assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse must be brought to justice, the United Nations said on July 7, 2021.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has condemned the incident in the strongest terms, according to a statement issued by his Spokesperson, Stéphane Dujarric.

"The Secretary-General calls on all Haitians to preserve the constitutional order, remain united in the face of this abhorrent act and reject all violence," it said.

President Moïse, 53, was shot dead in an overnight attack in his private residence in Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince. His wife, Martine, was also injured and is receiving treatment, according to media reports. The entrepreneur and politician was elected in November 2016 and began serving the following February.

Mr. Guterres has extended his deepest condolences to the people and Government of Haiti, and to the family of the late President. The UN will continue to stand with the Government and the people of Haiti, the statement continued.

Haiti is the poorest country in the Americas, and has experienced serious political, economic and humanitarian challenges in recent years. Six prime ministers have been appointed since the late President took office, with a seventh appointed this week who has yet to be sworn

in.

Last month, the top UN official in Haiti, Helen La Lime, briefed the Security Council on the worsening socioeconomic conditions in the country, rising gang violence, resurgence of COVID-19, and the "ever-growing polarization of Haitian politics."

She said despite several Haitian-led mediation efforts, "the deep-rooted political crisis which has gripped the country for the better part of the last four years, shows no sign of abating," while the rhetoric used by some political leaders was growing increasingly acrimonious.

Speaking at the outset of its meeting, Security Council President Ambassador Nicolas de Rivière of France said members were saddened by the death of the Haitian leader.

"The members of the Council express their deep shock at the assassination of President Moïse, which occurred earlier today in Port-au-Prince, and their concern at the fate of the First Lady, Martine Moïse, who was also shot in the attack," he said.

The heinous act also got the attention of America's president.

"We are shocked and saddened to hear of the horrific assassination of President Jovenel Moïse and the attack on First Lady Martine Moïse of Haiti. We condemn this heinous act, and I am sending my sincere wishes for First Lady Moïse's recovery. The United States offers condolences to the people of Haiti, and we stand ready to assist as we continue to work for a safe and secure Haiti," said President Biden.

CANADA

Delta Variant Worsens

The head of the World Health Organization (WHO) has urged leaders to push back against daunting new COVID surges through increased vaccination efforts and public health measures, warning that with Delta quickly becoming the dominant strain in many countries

'we are in a very dangerous period of the pandemic.'

"In those countries with low COVID-19 vaccination coverage, terrible scenes of hospitals overflowing are again becoming the norm. But no country is out of the woods yet," said Tedros Adhanom Gebreyesus, during his biweekly press conference.

Tedros explained that the Delta variant is 'dangerous' and continues to evolve and mutate, and this requires constant evaluation and 'careful adjustment of the public health response.'

"Delta has been detected in at least 98 countries and is spreading quickly in countries with low and high vaccination coverage," he warned.

In the United States, the Delta variant accounts for roughly 20 percent of cases now.

During journalists' questions, WHO's technical leader for COVID-19 response, Dr. Maria Van Kerkhove, reminded that the virus has been evolving since it first emerged.

"It is what viruses do. The variants of concern that we are tracking are currently four: Alpha, Beta, Gamma and Delta. They will continue to evolve: there will be more mutations, there will be more variants detected, and some of those will be variants of concern," she predicted.

Dr. Van Kerkhove said there were 'sub lineages' of the Delta variant that experts are currently tracking and urged countries to expand their genomic sequencing efforts.

WHO is calling on leaders to vaccinate at least 10% of people as soon as possible, in all countries, to ensure that health workers and those most at risk are protected.

According to Tedros, ensuring this would effectively end the acute stage of the pandemic and save a significant number of lives.

"It's a challenge but we know it's possible because already three billion vaccines have been distributed. It is within the collective power of a few coun-

(Continued on page 15)

FINANCE (Continued from page 4)

Restaurants are still using an old business model that is no longer viable. They need employees desperately yet are not able to recognize the need to adjust to take advantage of the increased demand that they are enjoying. Existing staff members are overstretched. Customers are not being given the best treatment because of these bottlenecks.

Some restaurants are offering sign on bonuses to new employees. Others such as McDonalds are offering increased wages. Another group of restaurants are also improving work conditions.

Unfortunately, these positive improvements are not across the board. Even during a dire shortage of hands, some restaurants are still using the old processes, for example having two interviews for menial staff. Online

applications for some of these basic positions such as servers and cooks take hours to complete. This makes no sense. Why waste time on all these steps that could be easily shortened, especially when there is a clear shortage of personnel?

According to the June Jobs report, U.S. employers added about 850,000 jobs. Average hourly wages have increased 3.6% since last year. The unemployment rate settled at 5.9% in June.

This is the time for many employees to assess their job options. Companies are vying with each other to hire the best. Here are a few suggestions for those interested in seeking job options at this time.

- Do not take the first offer unless it immediately exceeds by far your goals including salaries, perks, sign

- on bonuses and benefits etc.
- Scan the market to get a sense of the general remuneration packages for your job area.
- Investigate the options out there even if you have a job. Why? Because some of the opportunities may provide enough reward for you to seriously consider it.
- Remember, the market will not be like this forever.

If you are working, explore the benefits for current staff. Several companies are improving overall conditions for existing staff. The bottom line is that they would prefer to keep existing staff than to lose them and incur increased costs of operation. Your firm may be one of such firms. The situation is dire for some industries. Several of them have had to turn away customers or shut down due to a

shortage in staff. It is indeed an employee's market.

Lemonade Stand for Kids!!!

The latest to enter the market is a virtual lemonade stand for kids! Mighty.com is an E-Commerce site where kids can operate their own store front. Online money-making opportunities are limited for kids and this app attempts to resolve this issue. Mighty is a version of Shopify for kids. On this platform kids can sell homemade items that they make.

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RIGHTING A WRONG (Continued from page 5)

for its actions prior to the 1967 ruling.

To address these failings, Grewal ordered ABC to take the following actions, with the support of and in consultation with Director Graziano.

- Issue a Special Ruling that formally vacates all 126 ABC enforcement actions issued prior to 1967 that relied on Rule 4 or Rule 5 to suspend or revoke a liquor license because the licensee served LGBTQ+ patrons
- Post on the agency’s website the records of all 126 actions vacated by today’s directive, to ensure that the historical record is available to the public
- Expand anti-bias and cultural diversity training for ABC investigators and attorneys, with a focus on interactions with the LGBTQ+ community, to ensure that the agency’s staff treat all New Jerseyans with dignity and respect
- Conduct a full review of the agency’s historical records to determine if the agency’s enforcement authority was used to target any other marginalized communities, with a report to the Attorney General due no later than October 15, 2021.

“We are immensely grateful to the Attorney General for his historic acts of restorative justice today,” said Christian Fuscarino, Executive Director of Garden State Equality. “As the Garden State’s chief law enforcement officer, Attorney General Grewal is uniquely positioned to not only acknowledge past government persecution of LGBTQ establishments and community members, but also to correct that past wrongdoing and be a significant part of the decades-long efforts to bring equity and legal protections to New Jersey’s LGBTQ community.”

“This unprecedented action by Attorney General Grewal represents a profound and meaningful acknowledgment of the unfair discriminatory treatment visited upon the LGBTQ community in the past by state law enforcement officials,” said Thomas Prol, a founding and current Executive Committee member of Garden State Equality and the past president of the New Jersey Bar Association.

“The very people who were supposed to protect my community were actually the ones who led the charge in persecuting us - often viciously so - and they lost their jobs, homes, friends and families by those devastating actions. Attorney General Grewal and his senior staff should be commended for taking this deep dive to explore these terrible law enforcement practices, expose the truth, and reconcile with members of the LGBTQ community.”



STUDY PROJECTS SURGE IN COASTAL FLOODING

NASA - High-tide floods - also called nuisance floods or sunny day floods - are already a familiar problem in many cities on the U.S. Atlantic and Gulf coasts. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported a total of more than 600 such floods in 2019. Starting in the mid-2030s, however, the alignment of rising sea levels with a lunar cycle will cause coastal cities all around the U.S. to begin a decade of dramatic increases in flood numbers, according to the first study that takes into account all known oceanic and astronomical causes for floods.

Led by the members of the NASA Sea Level Change Science Team from the University of Hawaii, the new study shows that high tides will exceed known flooding thresholds around the country more often. What’s more, the floods will sometimes occur in clusters lasting a month or longer, depending on the positions of the Moon, Earth, and the Sun. When the Moon and Earth line up in specific ways with each other and the Sun, the resulting gravitational

pull and the ocean’s corresponding response may leave city dwellers coping with floods every day or two.

“Low-lying areas near sea level are increasingly at risk and suffering due to the increased flooding, and it will only get worse,” said NASA Administrator Bill Nelson. “The combination of the Moon’s gravitational pull, rising sea levels, and climate change will continue to exacerbate coastal flooding on our coastlines and across the world. NASA’s Sea Level Change Team is providing crucial information so that we can plan, protect, and prevent damage to the environment and people’s livelihoods affected by flooding.”

“It’s the accumulated effect over time that will have an impact,” said Phil Thompson, an assistant professor at the University of Hawaii and the lead author of the new study, published this month in Nature Climate Change. Thompson pointed out that because high-tide floods involve a small amount of water compared to hurricane

(Continued on page 10)

SOCCER FIELD

(Continued from page 1)

We’re working with the city’s Department of Recreation, Cultural Affairs and Senior Services in having providing programs.”

Patrick Council, as the department’s deputy mayor, and Beth Israel’s Chief Equity Officer and Vice President Atiya Jaha Rashidi were present to field after-ceremony questions on that aspect of the collaboration.

The sport and education collaboration stands out from other public-private youth sponsorships - like the MLS New York Red Bulls and the NBA’s then-New Jersey Nets - where new or refurbished fields or courts were provided.

What educational and sports programs they come up with will be aligned with the aims of PDA’s Urban Initiative - whose director, Gerry McKeown, explained during and after the grand opening.

“Soccer in North America has become a (Continued on page 14)

The Doctor Is In



Dr. Adil Manzoor OP/ED

2021 Summer Olympics And The Coronavirus

The Summer Olympics is hands-down the biggest sporting event in history. Talk about the intrigue, the diversity, the rich history; there's no other sporting event that can match it. Over the years, it has even moved away from being just a sporting event to being a kind of global tradition.

Unfortunately, there was a hitch last year when the Olympics had to be postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic. This, of course, was painful to the thousands of participants and millions of viewers, but it is

something that had to be done. I get the history of the sports, but as a medical practitioner, it's health over any other thing.

Now, fast forward a year later, and the games are going on as planned in Tokyo. Is that a hooray for me? Nah. I mean, the games will be fun and are always something to look forward to, but the safety assurance leaves much to be desired.

For one, Japan is still lagging in vaccinations. Of the fifty richest countries in the world, Japan has one of the lowest vaccination rates. Right now, only about 14% of the population has been fully vaccinated, and about 25% have received at least a dose. This is poor. Very poor, in fact, considering Japan is one of the more technologically advanced and enlightened countries.

As if that were not bad enough, Japan went through its fourth spike in cases back in May. There's a 7-day average of about 1,600 as I write. I hate to be that guy, but all of these don't make the Olympics going on in Japan seem like the smartest idea.

I'm not against the Olympics at all; I'm just all for it being done safely. Of course, the IOC, the governing Olympics board, has put forth several rules to guide athletes and spectators

about how to comport themselves during the games. There's one where spectators can't even cheer or shout during the games. That's kind of funny.

It makes sense that there are steps to limit the spread of the virus, but will it be nearly enough? Consider this - 90,000 athletes from all over the world in one big village for about a month, in a country where less than 14% of the population is fully vaccinated. The coronavirus is probably jumping for joy as we speak.

Another issue is the fact that people may come with more resistant and infectious strains of the virus. There's no way you can assure me that every single one of the 90,000 athletes and more than 110,000 volunteers will be COVID-free. And because of the different locations involved, they may end up bringing new strains to Japan. And this also means some athletes may take these strains back to their respective countries. I sound like a pessimist, I know. But we have to anticipate the worst.

While the coronavirus is definitely at the top of the list, one must not neglect the other diseases that may be transmitted in the games.

I hope it works out for good,

and there is no outbreak at the end of the games. My hopes are not too high, though.

Stay safe. Get vaccinated.

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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FLOODING

(Continued from page 9)

storm surges, there's a tendency to view them as a less significant problem overall. "But if it floods 10 or 15 times a month, a business can't keep operating with its parking lot under water. People lose their jobs because they can't get to work. Seeping cesspools become a public health issue."

Why will cities on such widely separated coastlines begin to experience these higher rates of flooding at almost the same time? The main reason is a regular wobble in the Moon's orbit that takes 18.6 years to

complete. There's nothing new or dangerous about the wobble; it was first reported in 1728. What's new is how one of the wobble's effects on the Moon's gravitational pull - the main cause of Earth's tides - will combine with rising sea levels resulting from the planet's warming.

In half of the Moon's 18.6-year cycle, Earth's regular daily tides are suppressed: High tides are lower than normal, and low tides are higher than normal. In the other half of the cycle, tides are amplified: High tides get higher, and low tides get lower. Global sea level rise pushes high tides in only one direction - higher. So half of the 18.6-year lunar cycle counteracts the effect

of sea level rise on high tides, and the other half increases the effect.

The Moon is in the tide-amplifying part of its cycle now. However, along most U.S. coastlines, sea levels have not risen so much that even with this lunar assist, high tides regularly top flooding thresholds. It will be a different story the next time the cycle comes around to amplify tides again, in the mid-2030s. Global sea level rise will have been at work for another decade. The higher seas, amplified by the lunar cycle, will cause a leap in flood numbers on almost all U.S. mainland coastlines, Hawaii, and Guam. Only far northern coastlines, including Alas-

ka's, will be spared for another decade or longer because these land areas are rising due to long-term geological processes.

The researchers uncovered these tipping points in flood numbers by studying 89 tide gauge locations in every coastal U.S. state and territory but Alaska. They created a new statistical framework that mapped NOAA's widely used sea level rise scenarios and flooding thresholds, the number of times those thresholds have been exceeded annually, astronomical cycles, and statistical representations of other processes, such as El Niño events, that are known to affect tides. They projected results to 2080.

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 - City police detectives have had both a 23-year-old man and a 15-year-old girl, accused of shooting a nine-year-old girl in her home on June 30, in custody since July 3.

Nazir Cruz, 23, of Newark was arrested after what Newark Public Safety Director Brian O'Hara called "round-the-clock detective work," Saturday. The 15-year-old girl was arrested near the Wynona Lipman Gardens scene June 30.

Both Cruz and the girl were each charged with five counts each of aggravated assault and possession of a firearm for an illegal purpose, three counts of endangering the welfare of a child and a count each of possessing a weapon without a license, conspiracy and burglary by remaining in the building.

O'Hara said that the first NPD units responded to a call of a shooting on the 400 block of Holiday Court 5:25 p.m. that Wednesday. They found a nine-year-old girl, with a bullet wound each on her left calf and right foot, near her townhouse at 5:32 p.m. The victim was rushed to Newark's University Hospital, where she was admitted in stable condition.

The girl, her 19 and 16-year-old siblings and a 15-year-old boy who was visiting said that Cruz and the 15-year-old girl entered the house - and one of them fired at them with a handgun. The 15-year-old suspect had had a previous argument that turned into a fight.

O'Hara said that the girl suspect was found wearing an ankle monitoring bracelet. She had

been wearing the bracelet since her arrest regarding a June 6 carjacking and release.

Wynona Lipman Gardens was built in 2002 and is owned by the Newark Housing Authority. Its 200 two-story units replaced the 1,600-unit, 13-story, eight-building 1956-94 Christopher Columbus projects.

"Dye Pack" Bank Robber Caught

It took NPD detectives about 48 hours to find and arrest a man who had robbed \$2,500 from a Central Ward bank July 3. The man was easy to spot on nearby surveillance recordings once the dye pack a teller had included exploded before he could cross Springfield Avenue.

Employees at the CapitalOne Bank at 487 Springfield Ave. said that a man entered their branch at 10 a.m. Saturday, wrote a note on the back of a withdrawal slip and handed that to a teller.

The slip read: "I have a gun give me all the money from the register please, and no one will get hurt."

The teller gave the suspect \$2,300 cash plus another in a dye bag. That bag emitted a plume of red smoke, causing the suspect to flee north on Blum Street.

O'Hara announced Monday that a detective arrested Esau Grant, 27, of Newark by Broad Street and Prudential Drive. Grant is being held in the Essex County Jail on a count each of robbery, unlawful possession of a weapon and possession thereof for an illegal purpose.

The CapitalOne Bank branch was originally built as a KFC restaurant.

IRVINGTON - The family of two Rahway brothers is planning their funeral while ECPO detectives search for the shooter who had opened fire on them during a July 3 block party.

Neighbors around 38 Montrose Terrace told arriving Irvington police and the ECPO Major Crimes Task Force said they were holding a cookout when the suspect began shooting around 11:45 p.m. Montrose is among the one block rungs of a north-

south stepladder framed by East-ern Parkway and Grove Street.

The witnesses said they first thought they were hearing firecrackers - until the smoke cleared. It was then when they saw Malik McCalliter, 38 and Tarik Barnes, 42 lying on the front and back parts of a pickup truck.

Neighbors applied CPR to McCalliter and Barnes until first responders' arrival. Medics rushed them to Newark's University Hospital - where they had died shortly afterward.

EAST ORANGE - Last rites for former Councilwoman Sharon Fields, 73, were given here at the New Vision Full Gospel Baptist Church before some 150 mourners July 7. They included 37 members of Fields' family, 22 East Orange police officers, 11 recent and current City Council members and a range of local, county, state and federal dignitaries with connections to her.

Those who recollected Fields at the pulpit - including Mayor Theodore "Ted" Green, Assemblyman Tomas Giblein (D-Montclair) and Cong. Donald M. Payne, Jr. (D-Newark) - consistently remembered Fields as an honest, compassionate and humorous person who ranked her family and the voiceless alongside her public and private work.

Fields, who was born in New York City May 5, 1948, died in University Hospital June 27. The New York business school graduate and former administrator at the Ogilvy and Mather advertising agency moved to East Orange with her daughter Nicole to open Nikki's Lingerie in Orange.

Fields parlayed a position with the Seton Hall Law School Legal Education Opportunity Program to become an administrator in Newark Public Schools and several Essex County posts. The East Orange Democratic Committee's Fourth Ward district leader and chairwoman was appointed by Mayor John S. Hatcher onto the Rent Leveling Board and, later, the East Orange Parking Authority.

Fields was appointed to fill Zachary Turner's unexpired Fourth Ward term in 2005. Voters elected her to a full four-year

term in 2008 and re-elected her in 2011. The East Orange Football Team volunteer worked with Wyclef Jean in their 2010 Haitian Earthquake relief drive and held regular Thanksgiving dinner and coat drives.

Granddaughters Fallon and Skylar, companion Ernest and great-grandchildren Quadir and Azz'ure are also among her survivors. Her visitation, arranged by Westfield's Plinton-Curry Funeral Home, was held here 6-8 p.m. July 6.

ORANGE - Funeral services for city native and longtime ECPO attorney Shelton McCall, 60, has been set for the Roseville Presbyterian Church 11 a.m. July 9. McCall, of late a West Orange resident, had died June 30.

Shelton L. McCall, Jr., who was born here Oct. 10, 1960, left to pursue a law degree after graduating with the Orange High School Class of 1978. He returned to eventually become Assistant Essex County Prosecutor in May 1998. He retired in May 2018 after 25 years and a month's time.

McCall, in retirement, was a Rutgers Newark Law School instructor. "Race and Crime" was among his taught courses.

McCall led Samson Lodge No. 66 of the Free and Accepted Masons as its 48th Worshipful Master 2019-20. The lodge is affiliated with the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge, both of Newark.

SOUTH ORANGE / WEST ORANGE - A Wyoming intersection in the village has been renamed after a township boy who had died in a traffic accident there 10 years to the day.

Some 70 people came to the intersection of South Wyoming and Lenox avenues June 11 to more than hold an annual 2:45 p.m. moment of silence for the late Nikhil Badlani.

Members of Badlani's family and the Nikhil Badlani Foundation were joined by State Assembly Members Mila Jasey (D-South Orange), and John McKeon (D-West Orange) and former Village Trustee Steve Schnall for the unveiling of Nikhil Badlani Way.

(Continued on page 13)



From The Pastor's Heart

OP-ED BY DR. ROBERT KENNEDY

Deliberate Deception

My wife and I got into “trouble” not very long ago. Yes, I said “trouble” because we found ourselves arguing with a dearest friend in our family about the vaccination.

We know the phrase that says, “A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still,” but we thought we were being helpful to one who was dearest to us. I heard my wife talking to this friend on the phone, making an appeal for the friend go take the Covid vaccination. My wife was saying, “I do not want anything negative to happen to you and your two children with the aggressive variants.”

But as my wife sought to encourage, I could hear the voice of the friend rising. She was insisting that she and her two children will not take the vaccine. This is their freedom to choose, she argued.

What got me tuned into the conversation was when I overheard the friend stating that she and her two children were about to travel. Then the suggestion that they were carrying vaccination ID cards. I could hear my wife saying, “No, you can’t do that. That is deception.” By then the friend became recalcitrant, “That is my right to choose,” she emphasized.

I then ask if I could make a comment. With the permission, I said “Yes that is deception, you cannot do that.” I wish I had not entered the conversation, be-

cause the voice of the friend got a bit hysterical. We said, “Ok, we pause for now.” But after closing we said we trust we have not lost a friend.

We cannot say, for sure, that we handled the situation that well, but after closing. We commented that it is a pathetic thing that our friend and her two grown children are engaging in “deliberate deception” by carrying those cards, despite the fact that they are not vaccinated.

Later in the week I told my wife I am going to write on this because it is evident that a lot of people are doing this, telling people they are vaccinated when they are not, carrying vaccination ID Cards when they are not vaccinated.

I do not know how you react to the above, but I think that anyone whose conscience is alive knows that it is wrong to deceive. According to Wikipedia:

“Deception or falsehood is an act or statement which misleads, hides the truth, or promotes a belief, concept, or idea that is not true. It is often done for personal gain or advantage. Deception can involve dissimulation, propaganda and sleight of hand as well as distraction, camouflage or concealment. There is also self-deception, as in bad faith. It can also be called, with varying subjective implications, beguilement, deceit, bluff, mystification, ruse, or subterfuge.

“Deception is a major relational transgression that often leads to feelings of betrayal and distrust between relational partners. Deception violates relational rules and is considered to be a negative violation of expectations. Most people expect friends, relational partners, and even strangers to be truthful most of the time. If people expected

most conversations to be untruthful, talking and communicating with others would require distraction and misdirection to acquire reliable information.”

By expansion on the Wikipedia article is to point out that “deliberate deception” or deception on any sort, is not a game. Deception might be used by government entities, diplomats, politicians and the armies of the world as the major strategy for carrying on their trade. But deception always has a negative impact. The motivation of deceivers might be to win, to gain an advantage, to bring success, but it is corrupting to the soul and society.

Think about how when deception is used in business, or in spousal relationships or in dating or in the workplace how destructive it can be. Think of how children are affected when parents teach them how to lie.

I was a book salesman in a certain country many years ago, long before the computer age. When I sold my ware, I had to return to the homes that people credited to collect the money owed to me. Often when I returned, I would be met at the door by a child who would say, “Mommy is not here.” Sometimes I would linger a little holding the child at the door, because I was sure I could hear Mommy’s voice, inside the house. Then I would leave.

One of my friends became so exasperated with the children meeting him at the door, that one day when he visited a house to collect his money, and a child met him at the door with the “Mommy ain’t (Is not) here.” As he turned to go, he saw the mother’s feet sticking from under the bed, (the beds in those days were high), he said to the child, “Can you tell your mother,

the next time she is going to take her feet with her.”

The apostle Paul was trying to give instruction as to how to select leadership for the newly forming Christian church when he quotes the famous Cretan Epimenides said that, “Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.” (Titus 1:12) Many other writers concurred with the seventh-century BC poet, prophet, and native Cretan, Epimenides in characterizing the people of Crete as “liars.”

Characterizing Americans today in the way the Epimenides and Paul and all others did in the above is undoubtedly to be considered insulting, although the calculators say that former President Trump told more than 30,000 lies before he left office, and that he brought lying and deception to a new high and has normalized it, to the extent that now lying is accepted across the spectrum of America.

But the question is when lying and deception is still wrong? Without giving an answering with a yes, we simply paraphrase the ninth commandment, which says, “Don’t lie.”

And in conclusion, let me state that it is a tragedy that with the intent to deceive, too many of are carrying “Fake IDs.” Fake Passports. Fake Drivers License. Fake This and Fake That.” Yes, the Bible does describe humanity as “deceivers” (Jeremiah 17:9). But it makes clear that if we are not willing to let God search our hearts and repent of our deception, then we will have to face the condemnation of God and die in our sins.

Yes, deception is evil and we need to attack it at its roots, or it will metastasize in our soul and society.

SPORTS WRAP



By William Hathaway, Jr.

With the local school sports off for the summer, attention now turns to the pros. In MLB, the Subway Series once again took center stage in the Big Apple. The first round came at Yankee Stadium, with the New York Mets winning the first game 8-3 on July 3.

Then came a doubleheader the next day, with the squad from Queens winning 10-5. The Amazins sparked a rally with a Pete Alonso game tying home

run, part of six straight runs in the seventh inning. In the night game, the Yankees avoided a sweep thanks to a 4-2 win. Because of the new doubleheader rules, both games were only played seven innings. The Mets currently sit atop the NL East standings, while the Bronx Bombers are 10.5 games out of first place in the AL East.

This week, the NBA Finals began, with the Milwaukee Bucks playing the Phoenix Suns in a best of seven series. The Suns have made the Finals

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EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY



for the first time since 1993, thanks to guards Chris Paul and Devin Booker. Phoenix won the Western Conference Finals in six games over the Los Angeles

Clippers. Meanwhile, despite missing former MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo, the Bucks won the Eastern Conference in six games over the Atlanta Hawks.

TOWN WATCH

(Continued from page 11)

Badlani, 11, a West Orange Gregory Elementary School student was a passenger in father Sunil's car along South Wyoming when they were struck by a Toyota Prius minivan that had run an eastbound Lenox stop sign.

The impact overturned the Baldani car; a third car was involved. Nikhil later died in a local hospital. An investigation found that the Prius driver was distracted and missed the top sign.

The accident caused Sunil and mother Sangeeta to start the NBF to pass traffic laws and combat "driving while distracted." Their greatest accomplishment was in getting a state law passed in 2015 requiring the NJ Motor Vehicle Commission to ask new drivers on tests about the dangers of disregarding traffic laws. The family and foundation has held concerts, walks and annual moments of silence for Nikhil.

"There's a big stop sign with lights," said Sunil Badlani during the ceremony. "That's for all of the drivers, walkers, runners and school children. Now, it's Mikhil's Way."

MAPLEWOOD - Mayor James McGehee updated the communi-

ty on Moussa Fofana's murder investigation July 2 - some 48 hours after a "Justice for Moussa" march was held and over \$44,000 has been raised for a reward fund.

McGehee, in his Friday open letter, asserted that hunting for Fofana's shooter or shooters is "a top priority for the ECPO and the Maplewood Police Department.

"This is very much an active investigation," continued the mayor. "There has not been a stoppage, slow down or delay in any efforts to find the actor(s) responsible for this horrific and senseless act."

McGehee added that he has had "frequent contact" with Acting Prosecutor Theodore "Ted" Stephens II, "daily contact" with Maplewood Police Chief Jim DeVaul and "near-daily contact" with mother Hawa Fofana. It is not known, however, how often Stephens and his officed have kept in touch with the Fofana family.

The mayor's briefing may be seen as a response to calls for justice that came from Hawa, Moussa friend Zebrai Nakyah Carlisle and Imam Sheick Swaray of Newark's Masjid Falahee during June 30's rally at Columbia High School's Ritzer Field. Former Mayor Fred Profeta announced that the reward fund had reached \$44,237 before

most marched to Underhill Field - where Moussa was shot June 6.

"It makes no sense that some people here know what happened and aren't talking," said Carlisle. "If this is you, shame on you."

BLOOMFIELD - Mayor Michael Venezia and the Township Council may take a final vote on allowing Cannabis-Based Businesses within its limits as early as their July 19 meeting.

Bloomfield's elders had passed Resolution 9436, limiting allowed CBBs, on its introduction at their June 28 meeting. That session had scheduled at least a July 19 public hearing on the pending legislation.

R-9436 will allow what state law classifies as Class 5 retailers: sellers of cannabis products and related items. Those businesses would be limited to the Central Business District and "the B-2 Neighborhood Business District."

The State Legislature, responding to the Nov. 2 passage of a voter referendum allowing recreational marijuana and CBBs, created six classes of farming, wholesaling, retailing and transportation.

Gov. Phil Murphy, on signing the state law Feb. 22, gave municipalities until Aug. 22 to allow all, some or no CBBs for an initial five-year period.

(Continued on page 15)

FORMER EMPLOYEE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER INDICTED

NEWARK - A former pharmacy procurement technician was indicted July 6 for stealing prescription HIV medications from the pharmacy of the Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) in East Orange, Acting U.S. Attorney Rachael A. Honig announced.

Lisa M. Hoffman, 48, of Orange, is charged by indictment with one count each of conspiracy, theft of government property, and theft of medical products.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court: From October 2015 through November 2019, Hoffman was a procurement officer at the VAMC, who used her authority to order large quantities of HIV prescription medications so that she could steal the excess. After the medications arrived, Hoffman waited until co-

workers were out of sight and then removed them from the VAMC.

Once Hoffman stole the medications, she met her associate, Wagner Checonolasco, aka "Wanny," generally at Hoffman's residence, so that Hoffman could provide the stolen HIV medications to Checonolasco in exchange for cash. Hoffman and Checonolasco used an encrypted messaging application to plan and execute their thefts and sales of the stolen HIV medications, including arranging for the medications-for-cash exchanges. After obtaining the stolen HIV medications from Hoffman, Checonolasco sold them. Hoffman and Checonolasco stole approximately \$10 million worth of HIV medications belonging to the VAMC during the conspiracy.

Checonolasco, 33, of Lyndhurst, was previously charged with conspiracy to steal government property, and those charges remain pending.

The conspiracy charge is punishable by a maximum penalty of five years in prison. The theft of government property charge is punishable by a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. The charge of theft of medical products is punishable by a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. Each charge also is punishable by a maximum fine of \$250,000, or twice the gross pecuniary gain derived from the offense, or twice the gross pecuniary loss sustained by any victims of the offense, whichever is greatest. The theft of medical products charge also carries a civil penalty of \$1 million, or three times the economic loss

attributable to the offense.

Acting U.S. Attorney Honig credited special agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge George M. Crouch Jr. in Newark, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General, Northeast Field Office, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Christopher F. Algieri, with the ongoing investigation leading to the charges.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Nicole F. Mastropieri of the Health Care Fraud Unit.

The charges and allegations against the defendants are merely accusations, and they are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.



Darrell K. Terry, Sr., President and CEO Newark Beth Israel Medical Center and Children's Hospital of New Jersey at the sodded turf soccer field kick-off ceremony at Marquis "Bo" Porter Sports Complex, with Mayor Ras J. Baraka, Mayor of Newark and Atiya Jaha Rashidi



Bo Porter Summer Enrichment Campers join Patrick Council, Newark Director of Recreation, Cultural Affairs and Senior Services, Atiya Jaha Rashidi, NBIMC, Newark Mayor Ras Baraka and Darrell K. Terry, Sr., President & CEO, NBIMC, to officially open the new field.

SOCCER FIELD

(Continued from page 9)

field for upper-middle-class players," said McKeon. "Although there's less equipment than in other sports, most of the youth and traveling clubs charge tuition. We want to expose the sport to children who may not otherwise get it."

PDA's Urban Initiative, modifying a page from Major League Baseball's Urban Youth Academy, targeted Newark among their first four fields to open. New Brunswick, Elizabeth and Paterson had their ribbons cut earlier this spring and summer.

"We were sitting around during the pandemic, figuring out how best to bring soccer to urban areas," added McKeon. "We came up with the field design and a construction contractor. The field is built in 10 days; the leadup, depending on the bureaucracy, can be three to six months."

PDA Urban Initiative's field is a 70-by-40-foot rectangular fenced field with two fenced goal cages at opposite ends. The non-regulation field is designed to give children a taste of what the rest of the world calls football.

The fence has clean lines except for banners from RWJ Beth

Israel and Nike - the latter a PDA sponsor.

The field's size also explains why the original idea of having 50 enrichment campers kicking as many balls was pared down to nine.

Although neither Melham nor Cline stepped up to Baraka's podium, they told inquiring media members that they are planning two PDA Urban Initiative fields in their township.

"I was watching what Newark Beth Israel, PDA and Newark were doing," said Cline. "I provided the mayor (Melham) clippings of the other fields."

"I looked at the clips and did some more homework," added

Melham. "We have a place for two fields. There will be legislation before the (township) council next week that would authorize the fields."

Long Branch will be getting the last of PDA's first set of Urban Initiative soccer fields. Other Urban Initiative field sites may be considered in the near future.

The former St. Peter's baseball diamonds were first renamed after the former MLB Atlanta Braves player and Houston Astros manager Porter in 2016. The entire complex was eventually renamed after the Newark native.

WORLD NEWS

(Continued from page 6)

tries to step up and ensure that vaccines are shared, manufacturing is increased, and that the funds are in places to purchase the tools needed," he urged.

Although there is some vaccine-sharing happening now, it is still 'only a trickle', and being outpaced by variants.

"In those countries whose hospitals are filling up, they need vaccines and other health tools right now," he underscored.

EUROPE

Drug Smugglers Nabbed

In a major operation, coordinated via Eurojust, 38 suspects belonging to a large-scale drug smuggling network have been arrested by the authorities in Italy, Albania, Montenegro and Spain. Amongst the arrested persons are representatives of the Albanian law enforcement and judiciary, suspected of corruption and money laundering.

The operation is the culmination of an Italian-Albanian joint investigation team (JIT), which in 2018 had been set up and

funded with the support of the Agency. In June 2020, 37 arrests took place regarding members of the same organized crime groups (OCGs), and most of them have already received sentences in Italy of up to 20 years.

During the most recent action against the criminal networks, several million EUR worth of cash, 11 properties, four companies in the hotel and tourism sector, and a large plot of land in a seaside resort were seized. The arrested persons are formally suspected of corruption, abuse of office, money laundering and international trafficking of huge quantities of drugs.

The suspects are linked to four OCGs, with connections to organized crime in and around Bari. As of 2014, they transported large quantities of various illicit drugs from Albanian ports to the Puglia region in Italy, using powerful inflatable small boats. Investigations into the OCG started in 2016 and have since led to the seizure of approximately six tons of marijuana, cocaine and hashish, with an estimated revenue of more than EUR 55 million and about 14 million individual doses of illicit drugs.

Eurojust enabled close cooperation be-

tween the Anti-Mafia District Directorate (DDA) of Bari and the Special Anti-Corruption and Organized Crime Prosecutor's Office (SPAK) of Tirana, which led to the setting up of the JIT. The investigations were facilitated by the Albanian Liaison Prosecutor at Eurojust, who took up duties in January this year.

Liaison Prosecutor for Albania Ms. Fatjona Memcaj said: "This joint investigation team and its success is a demonstration of the efficiency and synergy between EU Member States and Western Balkan countries in the fight against complex and sophisticated criminal organizations. Albanian judicial authorities are willing to enhance the operational and strategic cooperation, not only with neighboring countries but also with any other country interested in the fight against transnational crime."

National Member for Italy at Eurojust Mr. Filippo Spiezia stated: "The setting up of the joint investigation team and collaboration, in this case, is a flagship model for cross-border judicial cooperation. If we can enable this more at EU level, this will speed up the fight against organized crime and money laundering."

TOWN WATCH

(Continued from page 13)

July 1 so that engineers could check the stability of the Towers' standing wing. The second halt was for the 10:30 p.m. July 4 implosion of the remaining 12-story building.

The seaside section of Champlain Towers South, a 40-year-old condominium partially collapsed at 1:25 a.m. June 24, killing at least (32) people, as of July x, and injuring 11 others. First responders have been searching for another (117) people who were reported as missing.

BELLEVILLE - Naomi DePena made history by taking an oath of office before Mayor Michael Melham, the Township Council, her family, Assemblyman Jamal Holley and North Arlington Mayor Dan Pronti just after 12:20 p.m. July 1.

Holley (D-Roselle) swore in DePena as Belleville's latest Deputy Mayor - and the first while as a Latina American.

Melham and the Township Council, just minutes before in Town Hall's Council Chamber, unanimously approved DePena's one-year appointment. DePena also remains an at-large councilwoman, which she was sworn into three years to the day. DePena ran on Melham's A Better Belleville ticket.

The former Naomi Fernandez, whose parents are of Puerto Rican and Domini-

can heritage, used to spend her childhood summers with extended family here until Rev. Luis and Teresa Fernandez moved to Belleville for good.

DePena and her husband own and operate Zentai Martial Arts and After School Program here in the Valley section and in North Arlington The Soho mother of two and former teacher is an ordained minister and serves as a mentor for at-risk youth.

"For the children that look like me or are minorities that are saying, 'What could I accomplish when I grow up?' they seek representation," said DePena. "They can look at me and see someone who's like them who is in this leadership role."

NUTLEY - Municipal property owners here can go back some two weeks to find out why their July 1 Third Quarter 2021 tax rate has risen five percent to \$3.851 per \$100,000 of an average house's assessed value.

The Township Commissioners unanimously approved \$3.851 as the Third Quarter's estimated tax rate at their June 15 meeting.

Revenue and Finance Commissioner Thomas J. Evans had explained that Nutley was among other New Jersey municipalities who had applied to the state for transitional aid. That aid is usually announced and released with the latest state budget.

Although the State Legislature ap-

proved and Gov. Phil Murphy signed the state's 2021-22 budget before the June 30 deadline, the Essex County Board of Taxation reported that there was a delay in the transitional aid's release. That delay prevented the county taxation board to certify 2021-22 tax rates - which spilled back to Nutley and other municipalities.

Nutley's \$3.851 estimated rate is based on an estimated 2021 \$125.3 million tax levy. The levy is almost \$6 million more than last year. This estimated rate does not apply to the Nutley Board of Education and Essex County's parts of the quarterly tax bill.



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