

LOCAL TALK 25¢

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OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

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LOCAL TOWNS START 2022 REORGANIZING

File photo



By Walter Elliott

MAPLEWOOD - Two reorganization meetings here - held four days apart - invite comparison and contrast among the 13 held or scheduled in "Local Talk" towns Jan. 1-6.

The Township Committee here, for example, swore in newcomer Jamaine Cripe and third term member Nancy Adams on Zoom and before a limited Municipal Building audience 1 p.m. Jan. 1. It and the East Orange City Council, who started their annual meeting on Noon Sunday, strictly adhere to reorganizing on New Year's Day.

State law requires that municipal-level governing bodies and boards of education who had November General Elections have the elected and/or

re-elected members be sworn in during the first week of the incoming new year.

Maplewood and East Orange, therefore, lead other councils, committees and boards of education in some 20,000 other municipalities across the U.S. in inaugurations and reorganizations.

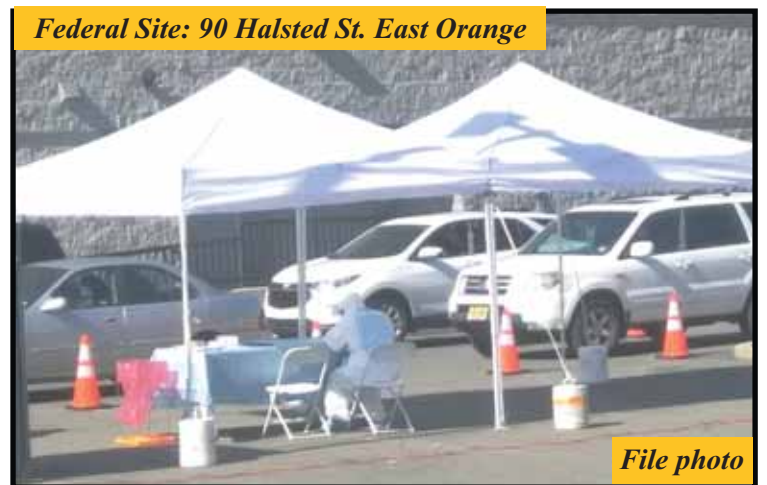
This annual peaceful transfer of political power includes the naming or renaming of individuals to various subcommittees or liaisons. Temporary budgets and official publications, among other housekeeping tasks, are announced.

This week of transitions, however, may mark either a staying of the course by some governing bodies and a change of direction by others.

(Continued on page 11)

EAST ORANGE SERVING AS FEDERAL TESTING SITE FOR NEW JERSEY RESIDENTS

Federal Site: 90 Halsted St. East Orange



File photo

EAST ORANGE - In response to the rapid increase in COVID-19 cases and a surge in access to testing, the City of East Orange and the Department of Health and Human Services, under the direction of Director Dr. Monique S. Griffith, has partnered with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to open a federal testing site in East Orange, operating until January 12, 2022.

The site will be part of the CDC's Increasing Community Access to Testing for COVID-19 Surge Response Effort, which teams up with pharmacies and labs to provide free tests in underserved communities.

The testing site will be located at 90 Halsted Street in the city's Division of Senior Service's Multi-Purpose Room and will offer testing for New Jersey residents up to seven days per week from 7 am - 5 pm. The site will have the capacity to administer up to 1,000 rapid, nasal PCR tests per day with results being provided in approximately 24 hours.

On Wednesday, December 22, a mask mandate was re-implemented for the City of East Orange amid the increase of COVID-19 cases and the emergence of the Omicron variant. To date, East Orange has a total of 10,908 positive cases, with 255 new cases reported this

(Continued on page 14)

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 To
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Editorial

Dhiren Shah
Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

Happy New Year and a healthy and peaceful 2022 to you and your family. I wish that COVID goes away from our lives. If the impact is reduced and we have to deal with it like the seasonal flu, then it's ok. But the fear of thinking about COVID spreading and not living our regular lives becomes problematic for most of us. I wish for all of us to have a normal life in 2022.

According to Fox News: "For months, President Biden has characterized the continued spread of the coronavirus as a 'pandemic of the unvaccinated' and repeatedly claimed that vac-

inated people cannot spread the virus, contradicting what his own Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has been saying since at least April. 'This is a pandemic of the unvaccinated,' the president told Ohio's WHIO TV 7 on Dec. 14. 'The unvaccinated. Not the vaccinated, the unvaccinated. That's the problem. Everybody talks about freedom and not to have a shot or have a test. Well guess what? How about patriotism? How about making sure that you're vaccinated, so you do not spread the disease to anyone else.'

There is talk in the town that the vaccinations and testing are all about money. I do believe that vaccinations and booster shots help to protect you at some level. However, if there is a gimmick for money, we must have an investigating committee to find out the facts about what the CDC and the administration are doing. The House and Senate are sup-

posed to protect us, not grouping together politically and finding legal ways to cheat the people out of their tax dollars.

We have another strong wave of Omicron. On Jan. 4, for the first time ever about one million Omicron cases were registered in the United States of America - in a day. Just one hospital in California registered 50 cases, out of which 50% were vaccinated cases and 12 patients were in the ICU out of 50. Most of the vaccinated persons have mild symptoms as stated by the doctor.

Washington, D.C. and Virginia had about 10 to 12 inches of snow on Jan. 3 thru Jan. 4. Roads, schools and offices were closed, including government offices. Power outages were also a big problem. According to the forecast, there will be another round of snow in the Washington D.C. area on Thursday night.

According to NBC News: "I started my normal 2-hour drive

to DC at 1pm yesterday. 19 hours later, I'm still not near the Capitol," U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., tweeted. One part of I-95 was backed up for hours.

Now the CDC and experts are saying that regular masks are not good enough. N95 and KN95 masks are good enough to protect any individual. As stated by some experts, you must double up regular masks in order to not spread the virus in the air, as well as to protect yourself. Every day, some new variant is coming and every day, there are new instructions We all must keep on watching and listening to the experts. I hope the experts do not become part of the money-making game.

Once again, I wish all of us the best for 2022.

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>
Mostly Sunny	AM Snow & Ice	Sunny	Rain Off & On	Sunny, Few Clouds	Partly Cloudy / Cold	Partly Cloudy
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LO 30	LO 21	LO 26	LO 30	LO 20	LO 17	LO 25

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The Doctor Is In



Dr. Adil Manzoor OP/ED

Omicron: Finally Getting Answers

Whenever any infection hits town, it takes a while for science to get up to speed. It takes even longer when the infection is a novel one, which is simply an infection that has not been recorded before. Such was the case with the coronavirus.

It took us quite a few months

before we could actually figure out enough about the virus to make strong assertions. The same is happening with the variants of the virus. You may think the variants will share similar traits since they all mutated from the same parent virus, but that's far from the case. That's not how mutations work.

Two variants that mutated from the same parent may be polar opposites, depending on the type of mutation. The variants may also be very similar. It all depends on the mutation.

The period between the discovery of a variant and the time to know enough to properly characterize the virus is typically rife with questions - loads of them. Doctors and health experts often have a hard time answering these questions well, which then makes it seem like false news when more reports break out.

It is not uncommon for people to call out health experts for some of the statements they have made in the past when new information arises. Let me make something clear now. These health experts and doctors are not clairvoyants or psychics. We on-



ly make educated decisions based on the facts we have access to.

Now that I have that out of the way, let's briefly consider some of the facts we have of the Omicron variant.

Severity

Well, although there have been very few studies on this topic, there is no real indication that the Omicron variant is more severe than other variants, particularly Delta.

This is definitely a relief, considering how fast it spreads. However, this is not remotely close to being conclusive proof. More studies need to be carried out before we can conclude that it truly isn't as severe.

Also, there are several factors involved, like the age group predominantly affected, vaccination status, immunity status, pre-existing health conditions, and much more. All of these factors make it difficult to say for sure the severity status of the variant.

The CDC have even said the first few dozen cases of the variant have been mostly mild. While this also isn't conclusive proof, it's also not bad news.

We must still wait for more extensive studies before we can be certain of Omicron's severity. For the meantime, though, no news is good news.

Spread

Omicron's transmissibility seems to be higher than Delta's. This is evident in how fast it overtook Delta to be the dominant variant in many countries.

That's not a good sign.

However, we don't have enough data to make conclusive statements. It's not looking too promising on this front, though.

Remember that transmissibility is always a recipe for increased deaths and even more mutation. The faster and easier the virus spreads, the higher its chances of mutating as it persists longer around us.

Susceptibility to vaccines

One of the most disturbing features of Omicron is its ability to evade vaccines' protective efforts. This was easily seen, as many fully vaccinated people had the virus.

While the risk of severe illnesses or death from the variant remains low in vaccinated people, there is no doubt of its ability to infect them.

There's good news, fortunately. Pfizer and Moderna have claimed that booster doses, even at half-levels in some cases, can effectively prevent Omicron from infecting fully vaccinated people. This, again, follows the central theme of us needing the vaccines if we are to have any chance of beating this virus.



There's even more good news. Researchers have suggested that fully vaccinated people could develop a "super immunity" to other variants of the virus.

Treatment

Recently, antivirals have been developed to provide an easy way of treating infections. Experts suggest these antivirals

(Continued on page 12)

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SPORTS WRAP

By William Hathaway, Jr.

The New Jersey high school football landscape has changed, as two Essex County teams took home state titles. A few weeks ago, the City of East Orange celebrated its 13-0 champions. Now, it's Irvington turn, as the 11-2 Blue Knights will be honored this coming weekend with an event at Irvington High School on Saturday at 11 am, hosted by the Irvington school district.

In a couple of college football national semifinal New Year's Eve contests, top ranked Alabama rolled all over Cincinnati in the Cotton Bowl by the final score of 27-6. Meanwhile, Georgia won the Orange Bowl in a 34-11 mauling of Michigan. Both SEC teams will now play in the National Championship game next week, their second meeting of the season.

In pro football, the Giants went on the road and got pounced by the Bears 29-3, while the Jets once again blew a lead and lost to a Florida team. This time, Tom Brady led Tampa Bay back to win 28-24 at MetLife Stadium. Of course, the comeback and everything else was upstaged by now-former Bucs WR Antonio Brown, who left in the field in a fit around the start of the second half.

While the upcoming weekend is not worth much to the two NFL locals - other than draft position - there is one playoff game of sorts. The Chargers and Raiders will play in a winner take all game, where the winner makes the playoffs, and the loser is out. There is one crazy scenario that exists; if the Colts lose their game, and if the game between the two AFC West teams ends in a tie, then both teams will make the playoffs at 9-7-1.

SOUTH ORANGE PUBLIC LIBRARY TO UNDERGO RENOVATIONS AND ADDITION

Awarded \$6.5 million grant from the State

By Lev D. Zilbermints

SOUTH ORANGE - South Orange Public Library (SOPL) is going to undergo major renovations and addition beginning Fall 2022. The current library building, built in 1968, and the original 19th-century library will be connected with a glass addition that will serve as a circulation core and accessible main entrance.

"Local Talk" used the press release and online research to obtain relevant information for this article.

According to a press release issued by the SOPL, "the South Orange Public Library has been selected to receive \$6.5 million in funding from the State's \$125 million Library Construction

Bond Act (LCBA). Governor Murphy is expected to sign A-6148 - the second and final round of funding from the Bond Act - into law. South Orange's grant is the largest in this round and the fourth largest awarded overall through the Bond Act. The State grant requires a 1:1 match by the Village of South Orange. Additional funds will be raised from the community."

The original library was built in the 19th century. Known as the Connett Building, this library was used until 1968, when the present building was built. The reason for the library's move to the 1968 building was greater space for books, archives and other library materials. The library's new building coincided with the addition of more space to South Orange Junior High

(Continued on page 11)



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PUBLIC NOTICE

In accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, Public Notice is hereby given that the Committee Meeting (5:30 PM) and the Regular Meeting (6:00 PM) of the East Orange City Council scheduled for Monday, January 10, 2022, will be conducted via video conference, streaming on Facebook Live-facebook.com/eocitycouncil. In an effort to protect the safety of the residents and City employees due to the coronavirus pandemic and CDC protocol the City Council finds it necessary to conduct these meetings virtually.

Residents may submit a written public comment or question via email to be read during the "Open Hearing of Citizens" portion of the meeting. Please email your questions/comments to: citycouncil@eastorange-nj.gov (by 5:00 PM for the Committee Meeting and by 5:30 PM for the Regular Meeting).

Formal action will be taken.

Christopher Awe
City Council Chairman

Cynthia S. Brown
City Clerk



ONE YEAR AGO... CAPITOL CHAOS

UNITED STATES

With Jan. 6 as the publication date of this edition, one has to harken back to what happened one year ago to the day.

On Jan. 6, 2021, elected officials on Capitol Hill carried out the business of the nation, particularly confirming Joseph R. Biden as the elected 46th President of the United States. While this was going on, outgoing President Donald J. Trump led a rally against the proceedings, as he and his supporters felt that the election was "stolen." After the rally ended, Trump asked the gathering to head to the Hill to let lawmakers have a piece of their mind. Then, the unthinkable happened.

The gathering then morphed into a riotous mob, who breached the grounds of the Capitol, destroying property and threatening members of Congress, who had to run for their lives. As they rioted for hours, Trump, who was still the legal President in charge, finally told them to go home. The group eventually dispersed, but not before several people were injured.

Sadly, there were fatalities; most notably, Capitol officer Brian Sicknick who died after trying to defend those he was sworn protect, and Air Force veteran Ashli Bobbitt, one of the rioters who was shot by an official as she tried to climb through a barricaded door. Three others - Rosanne Boyland, Kevin Greeson, and Benjamin Philips - also had their deaths attributed to the riot.

The aftermath was swift: Trump was impeached - for the second time, and removed from all major social media platforms, hundreds of rioters were prosecuted and sentenced, and security at the Capitol was permanently altered. Meanwhile, Facebook, one of the aforementioned platforms, was put under extreme pressure to make changes to its services.

FIRE SCORCHES TREATMENT CENTER

ASIA

A devastating fire has ripped through a COVID-19 treatment center for Myanmar refugees sheltering in Bangladesh, UN migration agency (IOM) said on Jan. 4.

In a tweet, IOM said that no one was hurt at the health facility, part of the vast Cox's Bazar camp complex, after the blaze began suddenly on the evening of Jan. 2.

Parts of the hospital were badly damaged, but health services are expected to "resume soon," the agency said.

Field teams have been working around the clock to save the hospital and restore some normality to camp life. They are also assessing the damage and assist those in need.

Pictures posted on social media show charred metal bed frames and workers clearing away piles of ash at the isolation and treatment center for people with severe acute respiratory infections.

Earlier, IOM teams, Disaster Management Unit volunteers, and Government of Bangladesh response services, rushed to the hospital and worked hard to put out the fire and assist those in need.

The IOM teams are also working to raise awareness amongst refugees about what to do in the case of sudden fire in the camps.

The camp hosts many of the million Rohingya refugees that have fled violence in Myanmar in successive waves of displacement since the early 1990s.

At the peak of the latest crisis, in 2017, thousands were crossing into Bangladesh daily.

Since then, the Kutupalong refugee settlement has grown to become the largest of its kind in the world, with more than 600,000 people living in an area of just 13 square kilometers, stretching infrastructure and services to their limits.

The 2021 Joint Response Plan (JRP) for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis targets almost 1.4 million people in need.

The \$943 million plan seeks to meet the needs of 884,000 Rohingya refugees and 472,000

Bangladeshis in the host communities of Cox's Bazar.

TRAVEL RULES UPDATED

EUROPE

From 4 am on Jan. 9, eligible fully vaccinated travelers and over 5s will be able to take a lateral flow test instead of a PCR on or before day 2 of their arrival in England. Lateral flow tests for travel can be booked from Friday 7 January and taken upon arrival, by the end of day 2.

Eligible fully vaccinated passengers and under 18s will no longer need to take a pre-departure test or self-isolate on arrival in England from 4 am on Jan. 7 but must continue to take their post-arrival tests.

As data shows Omicron is the dominant variant in the UK and spreading widely in the community it is now proportionate to cautiously reduce testing measures at the borders.

Anyone who receives a positive result on their lateral flow test must self-isolate immediately and order a NHS PCR test from gov.uk. Positive PCR tests for arrivals will be sequenced to understand if and where variants are emerging around the globe in order to protect the UK public.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said, "As we learn more about the Omicron variant it is right that we keep our testing and border measures under review to ensure they remain proportionate. The steps we're taking will make travel easier for people while protecting the UK public from the virus. Omicron continues to be a serious threat and it is important that travelers continue to get tested. The most important thing anyone can do if they haven't already is come forward for their vaccine."

Lateral flow tests for international travel must be purchased from a private provider as NHS Test and Trace lateral flow tests cannot be used for international travel. Passengers who have already bought a PCR to use for travel do not need to buy another test as PCRs can still be used.

Unvaccinated passengers must continue to take a pre-departure test, PCR test on or before Day 2 and on or after Day

8 and self-isolate for 10 days. "Test to release" remains an option for unvaccinated people to shorten their self-isolation period.

Proof of vaccination from over 15 further countries and territories will be accepted for entry into England from 4 am on Jan. 10: Bhutan, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Fiji, Iraq, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, north of Cyprus, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Solomon Islands, The Gambia and Uzbekistan.

The World Health Organization has recently granted WHO Emergency Use List (EUL) authorization to the two versions of the 'Novavax' vaccine named Covovax and Nuvaxovid. Therefore, eligible travelers who have received either version of this vaccine will be recognized for international travel into England from 4 am on Jan. 10.

No countries have been added to the UK travel red list, which remains on standby. A further review of all travel measures will be carried out later in the month, and our long-term goal remains to return to safe, restriction-free travel as soon as it's safe to do so.

ALLEGED SMUGGLER ARRESTED

AFRICA

Kenyan Police have arrested a man wanted by INTERPOL for allegedly smuggling dozens of men, women and children to Europe.

Wanted by The Netherlands since 2017, 53-year-old John Habeta was taken into custody at Schiphol International airport in Amsterdam on Dec. 25 after his arrest in Kenya.

Kenyan Police arrested John Habeta in Nairobi on Dec. 16 as part of a sting operation coordinated between authorities in the Netherlands and Kenya with the support of INTERPOL's General Secretariat headquarters.

Acting on globally sourced INTERPOL intelligence leads, the INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB) in The Hague alerted the Kenyan NCB to the fugitive's presence in Nairobi on Dec. 10.

An INTERPOL Red Notice - or international fugitive alert -

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AN INTERVIEW WITH CELEBRITY BODYGUARD BUBBA ALMONY



Bubba Almony is a career multi-award winning Celebrity Bodyguard for Dr. Khalilah Camacho-Ali, the former wife to boxing royalty and the greatest of all time, Muhammad Ali. He is also the founder of Bubba's Celebrity Basketball Game that hosts the top names in the world bringing awareness to bullying prevention and mental health. He is also a martial artist of 15 years and was a 3-time national champion. He is a resident of Essex County, NJ.

Dhiren Shah: Welcome to this interview, Mr. Almony? Why did you choose to become a bodyguard for celebrities?

Bubba Almony: God chose me and placed the gift in me to be a protector! God showed me that it was my passion, purpose and true divine calling in life! I'm able to make a difference in people's lives and help keep them safe at the same time!

DS: Are you able to give names as to which celebrities you guarded?

BA: Yes, absolutely! I have body-guarded for Kendra Lust, Tony Sunshine from Terror Squad, Tru Life Future's artist, Grant Cardone and Elena Cardone. Joslyn James, Neon Hitch, Demarjay Smith, Samaya Clark-Gabriel, Liz Gaspari, numerous billionaires, world leaders, top attorneys, Muhammad Ali's former wife Dr. Khalilah Camacho-Ali, Muhammad Ali Jr, Corey Woods, SwiftOnDemand, Vinny

Guadagnino from MTV's Jersey Shore, Kaash Paige and many others!

DS: How do you handle it when there is suddenly a mass rush to meet the celebrity?

BA: When a client is mass rushed, I refer to a term called flight or fight. I get my client and myself to safety while monitoring for any eminent immediate dangers. Prayer and faith are the most important and powerful resources a bodyguard has! God is my bodyguard and yours too!

DS: When and why did you choose to help bullied people and how to prevent bullying?

BA: I have always stood against abuse, bullying and harassment. A few years back, I really dove heavily into educating others about personal safety and trying my best to be the best anti-bullying leader I can be. It's very important that people have access to this information that could save their lives and to know people are fighting to one day eradicate bullying. Bullying is really abuse. Believe it or not, even as a bodyguard and an anti-bullying leader I have faced my own experiences with abuse and bullying. When your strength comes from God you can't be broken!

DS: Did you have any education on the prevention of bullying?

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Bloomfield	6692	127	9111	128
Caldwell	805	16	1138	16
Cedar Grove	2035	121	2846	123
East Orange	9252	340	13787	341
Essex Fells	250	2	356	2
Fairfield	1174	33	1480	33
Glen Ridge	518	14	832	15
Irvington	6382	245	9428	247
Livingston	2538	91	4087	91
Maplewood	1900	42	3355	41
Millburn	1236	11	1977	11
Montclair	3084	78	4672	78
Newark	46594	1077	64752	1083
North Caldwell	674	8	900	8
Nutley	3882	69	4841	70
Orange	4356	144	6301	146
Roseland	627	18	933	18
South Orange	1407	18	2235	18
Verona	1410	19	2247	20
West Caldwell	1370	54	1937	55
West Orange	5969	238	9518	240
Total	108891	2888	155144	2910

OTHER COVID-19 TALLIES (As of January 5, 2022)
NJ: 1,474,871 cases / 26,354 deaths (Plus 2,855 probable)
United States (approx.): 57.435 Million / 831,300 deaths
Worldwide (approx.): 297.05 Million / 5.463 Million deaths

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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 public memorial for Earl "The Street Doctor" Best is being set for mid-January at Irvington's Transcend Worship Center. Other last rites, arranged by Plinton-Curry Funeral Home of Somerset, have not been publicly detailed as of Jan. 3.

Best, who spent this century championing and advocating youth, the downtrodden and the re-entering incarcerated, died in a local extended care center Dec. 27 - the day after his 74th birthday. He was admitted there in October after struggling against cancer for several years.

Best, who co-founded The Street Warriors in 2003, could easily be spotted in and around City Hall and among the five wards. Sharply dressed in a suit-and-tie or a doctor's coat or in military fatigues, Best would deliver meals and blankets, organize recreational teams and mentoring groups, take children out to the Shore or a water park, raising funds and, as a motivational speaker, call out against poverty, crime and gang life.

Born in the South Ward Dec. 26, 1947, Best returned to Newark in 2000. He had served a 17-year sentence for a 1983 bank robbery - 10 of those in solitary confinement. He used his time in solitary studying law and philosophy and reading spiritual books.

When The Street Warriors had a storefront office at 12 Linden St., Best laid out concrete blocks on the floor to outline the size of a solitary cell. Best's moving Street Warriors from that office into a donated van was depicted in the 2009-10 Sundance Channel "Brick City"

documentary series.

Mayor Ras Baraka and employment and training deputy mayor Rahaman Muhammad hired Best as a special events coordinator in 2015. Best had shared a speakers' stage with the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet during Newark's 2011 Peace Education Summit. He and Muhammad were arrested during a nonviolent protest of Mayor Cory Booker's 2010 partial privatization of the city's sanitation division.

Best, who co-founded the Newark and Essex County Anti-Violence Coalitions, is survived by a son and several sisters, among other relatives.

IRVINGTON - Riders and NJTransit bus drivers will have to go elsewhere than the Valley Mall Plaza Outlet lot fronting 468-480 Chancellor Ave. to start or end their trips here as of Jan. 15.

A sign posted by NJTransit by the passenger bus shelter since Dec. 27 reads: Due to Valley Fair Management, This Bus Stop Will Be Eliminated. Please Go to Chancellor Avenue Eastbound at Woolsley St. A photo of this sign was posted on the New Jersey Bus, Rail & Light Rail History Facebook page.

"Local Talk" found, on Jan. 4, that NJTransit's two bus shelters have been removed. There are some 20 large concrete blocks redirecting most traffic downhill to the mall building.

Valley Fair Outlet's decision to remove the stop west of Wendy's restaurant ends decades-long use by Public Service, Transport of New Jersey and NJT. Their buses have been stopping, laying over and turning around on the lot since the former Gould & Eberhardt World War Two tank factory became a Great Eastern Mills department store in 1959.

The dislocation will affect the 13V, 90 and 96 bus routes' southern end point and their connection with the 39 route. Calls to NJTransit and Valley Mall Plaza Outlet early Jan. 4 were not immediately returned.

It is not known whether Valley Mall management has submitted site plans to redevelop the bus terminal site before Irvington's planning or zoning boards.

Valley Mall management has

attracted seven retailers since renovating and reopening the building in 2017. It had been the Valley Fair Discount Center 1975-2008.

UPDATE: NJTransit sent "Local Talk" the following statement: "NJ TRANSIT is in the process of developing new service alternatives for these bus routes which will be announced soon. The agreement between Valley Fair management and NJ TRANSIT has concluded."

EAST ORANGE - Demolition of the 1987-built Brick Church Shopping Plaza and adjacent buildings, which began in stages last month, is to continue through this winter.

"Local Talk," while getting groceries at the plaza's Shop-Rite flagship 7 a.m. Dec. 22, noticed workmen setting up temporary fencing and anchoring sandbags around the plaza's southwestern building. Employees from Sky Construction, of Wayne, were on the former Rainbow clothing-anchored building's roof by 1:30 p.m.

Sky, after three weeks' hollering out, had leveled Halsted Commons, at 33 Halsted St. on Dec. 24. The two-story building, which once housed Wuensch's surgical appliance and children's shoe store since the 1940s, had more recently been a Social Security office and a pop-up store until 2018.

The Imported Jewelry Outlet at 505 King Blvd. and the Liberty Tax franchise at 507 King vacated there in anticipation of their buildings' fencing and demolition. The PNC Bank branch at King and South Harrison Street has moved two blocks west to Orange last summer. The shopping plaza, which once held 19 stores, is now down to the Shop-Rite and a donut shop.

The store-by-store vacating of the plaza has been going on since the Brick Church Opportunity Zone Fund 1 LLC first made its 820-housing unit The Crossings at Brick Church application before the East Orange Planning Board in 2019.

The planning board, on January 2020, approved replacing the plaza's block with another three structures: a five-story and nine-story residential buildings with 197,650-square-feet of street-level retail space plus a seven-

story parking garage.

At present, the current thinking is that the supermarket will move to either the nine-story or the five-story building, whichever is the first completed. The Shop-Rite will remain open until then; NJTransit Brick Church Station operations will also be unaffected.

ORANGE - Mayor Dwayne D. Warren's Dec. 24 executive order to close all city public buildings "to employees and the public" remains in effect until Jan. 10, "safety permitting."

Warren, citing "a significant uptick in positive COVID-19 cases in our area," has closed public access to The Brook Alley Public Works Facility, City Hall, the DeMarzo Memorial Fire Headquarters, the Pohill Law and Justice Complex (the municipal court and police station) and the Orange Public Library.

Those who tried visiting the public library since Dec. 9, however, may have been doing double-takes with the mayor's directive. OPL, on its front door and in sent e-mail messages, has been closed, "due to lack of heat; we're currently working on the heat issue."

It is not known, as of press time, whether "the heat issue" is technical or bureaucratic or both.

Library Director Stephanie Flood, in a Nov. 10 interview, explained that the checks she signs also have to be signed by the library trustees board president. Flood, since her Sept. 10 hiring, had also been smoothing relations with vendors who had gone months without being paid.

"Local Talk" knew of one exception to Warren's order at 234 Lincoln Ave. Dec. 29. The Central Avenue Park Field House was open, as previously scheduled, by the Health Department 10 a.m.-2 p.m. that Tuesday to offer COVID vaccinations or booster shots. Another part of the field house was open at 9 a.m. for a scheduled "drive-through" food distribution.

WEST ORANGE - A police officer who was shot while walking into an altercation at a Valley section store Dec. 27 may have come home before New Year's Day. The man suspected

(Continued on page 15)

LIBRARY (Continued from page 5)

School in 1968.

According to a Patch.com article dated June 23, 2011, the Connett Building directly served the needs of the community as the South Orange Public Library. It has since been used for various meetings, events and as home to EIES, a non-profit organization. Patch.com reported that "plans are now underway to integrate its regular use back into a "Library Campus" concept to better serve the people of South Orange."

According to the press release, New Jersey State Senator Richard J. Codey said, "I was lucky to grow up being encouraged to use the library, and I'm happy to be able to help make sure that South Orange has a modern facility to meet the needs of the community. Public Libraries go far beyond just books and are amazing resources for residents no matter their age or interests."

New Jersey State Assemblywoman Mila Jasey said, "I am thrilled that the South Orange Public Library has been selected for funding, and so proud of the library's board for putting together such a strong capital project and proposal. Once the bill

is approved by the legislature, it will go to the Governor's desk for him to sign."

South Orange Village President Sheena Collum expressed gratitude to the legislature and the governor for helping allocate funds for the library's renovation.

"We are grateful for the Legislature's and Governor Murphy's visionary support for libraries across the state. On behalf of the entire South Orange community, I thank them for supporting our transformative project. The South Orange Public Library is central to our community's vitality. Investing in it now will generate significant benefits for decades to come," Collum said.

According to the press release, the project will increase the library's square footage by 44% and dramatically improve accessibility and overall user experience. Meeting and study space, which is currently limited to one multipurpose room, will grow by 400% and include small study rooms, reading rooms and conference rooms. The ground floor of the 1968 building will be reconfigured to significantly expand children's services, which are in high demand but limited by lack of space.

Assemblyman John McKeon, who formerly represented South Orange, said, "The South Orange Public Library is a vital part of our community, and we in the Legislature are proud to have secured the necessary funding to ensure the library meets the needs of the residents for the 21st century. This will ensure that for generations to come they are able to enjoy the public library," McKeon said.

South Orange Village Trustee Karen Hilton said that this day was a long time in coming. She appreciated the support of the State with helping to fund renovations.

"So many of us have been hoping, working and planning for this day for a long time. Securing the State's support is a game-changer that will enable us to create a truly 21st century library while returning the historic Connett Building to community use," Trustee Hilton said. Hilton is also a Foundation for the South Orange Public Library trustee.

According to the press release, planning and design will begin shortly after the contract is issued by the State of New Jersey. Groundbreaking is anticipated for late fall 2022. Exterior preservation work has already

begun on the Connett building with separate funding from Essex County and the NJ Historic Trust that was matched by the Village.

Library officials expressed their gratitude to everyone involved in helping the renovations become reality.

"We could not have secured this grant without the support of the South Orange Village trustees and administration, who have been behind the project from the start. Library staff, the library boards, and volunteers have all worked so hard to make this happen. It's incredibly rewarding," said South Orange Public Library board president Hildy Karp.

"I'm looking forward to creating a dynamic and welcoming community center that will serve and inspire generations of lifelong learners. I am so thankful to the citizens and Village of South Orange, and the State, for providing this opportunity to transform our library to better meet our mission. The new and reconfigured space will provide an accessible and appealing informational, educational, and cultural hub to all residents," said South Orange Public Library Director Jill Faherty.

REORGANIZING

(Continued from page 1)

Maplewood's Township Committee's reorganization proceeded Saturday with mostly clear sailing.

The newly assembled committee selected Deputy Mayor Dean Dafis as Mayor and returned longtime Committeeman and former mayor Vic de Luca as Deputy Mayor. Dafis becomes the first self-identified LGBTQ mayor.

The committee thanked the outgoing two-term Committeeman Greg Lembrich - and named him onto the South Mountain Regional Fire Department Board of Commissioners.

SOUTH ORANGE-MAPLEWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION's 6:30 p.m. Jan. 5. reorganization may signal that body's change of course.

The two-town board's members are to name their next board president plus first and second vice presidents after first-termers Qawi Telesford, Arun Vadlamani - both of South Orange - and Maledwoodian Kaitlin M. Wittleder are sworn-in.

A majority of participating voters chose "Excellence, Action, Accountability" teammates Telesford and Vadlamani and "Student Voices Matter" soloist Wittleder from a nonpartisan field of five, Nov. 2.

Village and township voters, in the process, bumped out first-term incumbent Shannon Cuttle and filled the outgoing Ann Marie Maini and temporary panelist Chris Sabin's seats.

The new SOMSD board will then take a retreat on Jan. 10. The retreat will orient the incoming trio, have all nine members get acquainted with each other - and perhaps reach a consensus

on some of the internal and external matters facing the district.

Those issues include the district's negotiations impasse with the South Orange Maplewood Education Association, a response to a parents group petition to keep the schools open this month and closing an achievement gap between white students and students of color.

The board seat that Sabin was appointed to for a year was the third occupant in as many years. Kamaljit "Kamal" Zubieta, citing the board as consisting of an exclusive inner circle and a marginalized minority of independents, resigned May 31. Zubieta was first appointed to succeed the resigned Xavier Farfan in March 2020 and was elected to another one-year term in 2020.

SOMSD's reorganization, Jan. 5's Essex County Commissioners and Glen Ridge's Bor-

ough Council Board of Education and Jan. 6's West Orange Board of Education reorganizations are scheduled past Local Talk's filing deadline.

EAST ORANGE's MUNICIPAL Reorganization Meeting Noon Jan. 1 represented both continuity and change.

Theodore "Ted" Green was sworn into his second term in the virtual City Hall ceremony. The "Green Team's" council running mates - Christopher James (First Ward), Christopher Awe (Second), Bergson Leneus (Third), Tamika Garrett-Ward (Fourth) and Alicia Holman (Fifth) were also re-inaugurated.

The full 10-member council, however, decided to name Awe as their new council president. The second term councilman succeeds James, who had held that chair in 2020-21. Awe, as president, is honorary chairman

(Continued on page 13)



From The Pastor's Heart

OP-ED BY DR. ROBERT KENNEDY

The Legacy Of The Curse

I do not know that I need to remind you of a sermon Pastor Dr. Jeremiah Wright preached in 2003, for it engendered so much controversy in the election that followed that you might prefer to forget it.

However, I see a good reason to make a note of it now because of how much it fits our contemporary situation in which we are truly "Confusing God and Government." Furthermore, that sermon can help us frame the violence being memorialized as the January 6th Riot / Insurrection that is being analyzed by a Congregational Investigation Committee.

Yes, Pastor Jeremiah Wright's sermon seems to me, at least, to have struck a prophetic note upon our present situation. The sermon caused the then-presidential candidate Barack Obama to denounce his pastor and resign his membership in the Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago. Wright, in his sermon focusing on "The Fall of Jerusalem," picked up several themes, including "Confusing God and Government." In that stream, he pointed out that if the American Government is complicit in any violence - since "Violence begets violence, hatred begets hatred, and terrorism begets terrorism"- then, it is to be understood that whereas

we like to say, "God bless America," we need to say also, at times, "God D-mn America."

The opposing candidates in the election with Obama picked up the one phrase from Wright's sermon and had "a field day" with it. As the critics continued and media gave their opinion on the contents of the sermon, Obama denounced the statements in question. In a further response, he gave a speech titled "A More Perfect Union" and sought to place Wright's comments in a historical and sociological context.

In the speech, Obama again denounced Wright's remarks but did not disown him as a person. The controversy began to fade but was renewed in late April of that year when Wright made a series of media appearances, including an interview on Bill Moyers Journal, a speech at the NAACP, and a speech at the National Press Club. After the last speeches, Obama spoke more forcefully against his former pastor, saying that he was "outraged" and "saddened" by his behavior. In May, he resigned his membership in the church.

The storm is over concerning Pastor Wright's sermon and Barack Obama's two terms as president. And maybe we can state that neither Wright nor Obama left the chaos we are now experiencing with the highlight of the January 6th insurrection. Yes, I have taken a moment to reread Pastor Wright's sermon, and I do not know that I can convince anyone to read it carefully, but I need to state again that it was truly prophetic (if I am reading it correctly).

What was the pastor trying to say, I have asked myself. Was he predicting the resentment, revenge, rage, riot, and violence seen on January 6th? Was he commenting on the possible failure of the government as is seen in many quarters today? Did he know of the many in government that would be complicitous in the effort "to steal" an election and have a coup? Did he see the lack of capacity for the police to handle the rioters on the Capitol on January 6th? Was he speaking to the failure of the moral character of the leadership in the land, from which many who were complicitous have now written books and bragging about their behaviors without taking responsibility? What did Pastor Wright know? What was he saying?

I cannot speak to the prophetic knowledge that Pastor Wright had, and I cannot say that I agree with all of the phrasings of his sermon, but when I read the New Testament and think of the words of Jesus in His prediction about the fall of Jerusalem, I have to agree that the blessings upon a nation, and its people can be turned into a curse, as Pastor Wright sought to argue.

Or let me be direct, that our proclamation of "God bless America" can truly be "God d-mn America" if we continue to follow the path of the demons we are now serving. The fact is not that the words of Pastor Wright will bring the damnation; that is the curse. But it is any, and all of us together, that will bring the curse if we allow ourselves to be dominated by demons.

Let me be even more precise than what I stated above. As I

read Proverbs 26:2, I noted that final phrase in the verse which says, "The curse shall not come without a cause." The point I gather is that the seeds of resentment, rage, and violence that are thrown about in the way that a sparrow flies will lead to insurrections and rebellion like that of January 6, 2021.

Let me put that another way, namely that the legacy of bringing a curse on America or in our lives, is not an adventurous, fantasy, mystery, or clean romantic novel, as is claimed in *The Legacy of the Curse*, by author Deborah Grace White. It is not a game, as displayed in some legacy games. On the contrary, it is as deadly and serious as was declared by God when Adam and Eve fell in the Garden of Eden (cf. Genesis 3:14-17). If we listen to "the serpent" we will fall.

I will return to *The Curse of the Fall*, in a near reflection, but for now, what I am making clear is that if America or any one of us stands outside the laws of the divine, if we are willing to declare false freedoms so that we can do anything without restraint, the blessings we hope for will be turned into a curse. Under the pretense of freedom, we are sowing some seeds of evil today that our children are about to reap. It is significant that what we do is not only for us but also for our children. What we see as the brokenness in our American culture and families has been built over time. Some of it is called the legacy of the curse.

So let me make a final appeal. I beg that we be careful in what we are doing now because we do not want to leave a cursed legacy to generations beyond.

THE DOCTOR IS IN (Continued from page 4)

will also be effective for Omicron. This, in addition to booster doses, should be sufficient to resist the variant. Stay safe.

This article was written by Dr. Adil Manzoor DO, a Board Certified Internist & Board Eligible Pediatrician, who works as a Hospitalist, and Emergency Room Physician. He is also the current President of Garden

State Street Medicine, a non-profit organization whose sole purpose is to provide free preventive and acute urgent care services for the homeless. He is also the co-founder of his own unique medical practice Mobile Medicine NJ.

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REORGANIZING

(Continued from page 11)

of the council's eight committees.

The council member who would be Council Vice President, and first stand-in for Awe, was not named Jan. 1. That naming, and which council members will be on which committee, is to be determined at their Jan. 10 regular meeting

ORANGE's new BOARD OF EDUCATION President, Shawneque Johnson, received a virtual gavel from Board Administrator/Secretary Jason Ballard 44 minutes into their reorganization meeting Jan. 4.

Johnson, now three years into her first term, was unanimously nominated and approved by her eight peers during the Zoom meeting. Her first act was to propose keeping the board's 2021 committee member makeup "unless someone wants to withdraw from a position."

The board endorsed keeping last year's committees as-is - except for its Policy Committee.

Second-year member Samantha Crockett was chosen to succeed Sueann Gravesande, who had asked to step down, as that committee's chairwoman.

Former board president Jeffrey Wingfield was elected Board Vice President on a 7-1-1 split vote. Panelist Guadalupe Cabida dissented and Gravesande abstained.

Incumbents David Keer Anderson, Siaka Sherif and Derrick Henry were first sworn by Ballard into their new terms.

The board, Ballard and Superintendent Dr. Gerald Fitzhugh II were among those who participated from their homes or offices. What would have been an in-person ceremony at the Orange Preparatory Academy Auditorium was moved to Zoom as a COVID-curbing precaution.

WEST ORANGE - Council Member Susan McCartney was formally returned as Township Council President here at the annual reorganization meeting Jan. 4. The five-member council had McCartney succeed Cindy Matute-Brown for 2022 at their

preceding Dec. 14 meeting.

West Orange council members, like their Maplewood and Nutley counterparts, select a president for the calendar during their last meeting in December.

BLOOMFIELD - BOARD OF EDUCATION Incumbent Shane Berger was more than reinaugurated here in a 6:30 p.m. remote ceremony in the Bloomfield High School Auditorium Jan. 4. His colleagues minutes later named him their board's vice president.

Berger will serve as deputy or substitute for Jill Fischman, who was returned as Board President. Incumbent Michael Heller and newcomer Monica Charris-Tabares were also sworn into their seats.

BELLEVILLE - The just-reassembled BOARD OF EDUCATION TRUSTEES named Luis Muniz and Gabrielle Bennett-Meany as their respective president and vice president at the Belleville High School Auditorium Jan. 3.

Newcomers Nicole "Nikki" Coviello-Daddis, Tracy Wil-

liams and Lissa Missaggia were inaugurated minutes before. A majority of participating voters had unseated BOET President Christine Lamparello and member Nelson Berra.

The in-person officials and audience opened the ceremony with a moment of silence for Lamparello's husband. Michael J. Lamparello, 53, died Jan. 2.

NUTLEY - Essex County Clerk Christopher Durkin made making Jan. 4's BOARD OF EDUCATION reorganization meeting here at the James H. Walker Middle School Auditorium a priority.

Durkin swore in returning incumbent Kenneth J. Reilly, first-termer Joe Battaglia and, in particular, newcomer Nicholas Scotti. Scotti, 19, is the youngest NBOE member elected and currently the youngest elected official in New Jersey.

The reconfigured board later unanimously selected Danny Carcinella and Salvatore Ferraro as their respective president and vice president.

ONCE AGAIN ... AN ENTERTAINMENT SECTION COMING TO LOCAL TALK



By **Andrea Dialect**

Happy New Year's everyone. My name is Andrea Dialect, and I am a Writer/Journalist/Photojournalist. I believe it is

safe to say that "Local Talk" played a large part in my being all of the above, when I embarked upon doing the Women's Section way back when.

I didn't have any formal training as a journalist, but I am a creative person in my own right and as such I owe my Photojournalism and Photography career to "Local Talk." Oftentimes, a photographer would not be available for what every reason, and it forced me to do it myself, exposing me to my love for the craft. It has been quite some time, but it is a pleasure being here again. I am looking forward to this new and exciting journey.

For my first submission, I have chosen to take a glimpse back into 2021 kicking off this

section of Entertainment with a Life Review of sorts. The person who comes to mind is the late Kam Williams, the person who used to handle the Entertainment Section. Admittedly, I was quite impressed by his extensive body of works and his level of commitment as a Writer. Nearly 10,000 interviews and review submissions. He was a very prolific critic, contributing works to many very impressive industry giants, and a highly educated man clearly, as a Writer of Business Law etc.

It would have been an honor to have met his acquaintance. I was also impressed by the similarities of our humble beginnings. Both of our kickstarts had come off of friendly recommendations. With his passing, the

world has truly lost a man of greatness. Mr. Williams was definitely an erudite, and although I am a bit of a novice when it comes to Entertainment Journalism, Mr. Williams has left an amazing blueprint. For that, I am both grateful and confident, and I am looking forwards to an exciting year.

Welcome to... I'll let you in on a little "secret" - I haven't decided on a name for the Entertainment Section as of yet. So, I am conducting a survey, and have come up with three options. If you are interested in participating, you can contact me at localtalkandreadialect@gmail.com.

Here's a chance to be a little hands-on as part of this exciting journey!

WORLD NEWS

(Continued from page 6)

was published the same day for people smuggling and use of fake identity documents to carry out transcontinental smuggling operations, triggering the suspect's surveillance and arrest on the outskirts of the Kenyan capital.

The Dutch national remains in custody in The Netherlands until trial where, if convicted, he faces a sentence of up to eight years in prison.

Using INTERPOL's secure global police

communications network – I-24/7, INTERPOL coordinated global efforts to disrupt the network by enabling countries to share criminal intelligence and analysis about Habeta and how he organized transcontinental smuggling operations.

Habeta was allegedly involved in at least four different operations to smuggle groups of Eritrean nationals into Europe using routes from Asia.

INTERPOL's specialized unit on migrant smuggling and human trafficking identified Habeta as a high priority target in October 2020 when member countries alerted INTERPOL to new leads about the fugitive's

global smuggling activities, which were immediately shared with the NCB in The Hague.

The subsequent issue of the INTERPOL Red Notice played a central role in the location and arrest of the fugitive.

People smuggling syndicates are run like businesses with high profit margins and links to a wide range of serious and often violent crimes including illicit money flows, corruption, terrorism, trafficking in illicit goods and human trafficking.

They focus on profit margins, facilitating the passage of migrants with little or no regard for their safety and well-being.

TESTING (Continued from page 1)

week, and one new death. The city is only second in Essex County behind the City of Newark in its number of positive cases.

"The new Omicron variant is spreading more easily, and our

numbers of positive cases are rising rapidly," said Dr. Griffith. "The last two years have impacted us all greatly, but with the recent increase in positive cases, as well as hospitalizations, we cannot get tired or minimize what is occurring. The pandemic is real and we have to remain

diligent in our efforts to engage all resources and partners to stop the spread. We've come too far to not see this through."

Free parking will be available at a main lot at Freeway Drive and Halsted Street with overflow parking available in two additional adjacent lots.

EOPD and other partnering agencies will direct traffic control to keep the flow moving as efficiently and safely as possible.

For questions, more information about the federal COVID-19 testing site, or to schedule an appointment, please visit www.eovaccine.org.

INTERVIEW WITH CELEBRITY

BODYGUARD BUBBA ALMONY

(Continued from page 7)

BA: I have trained in martial arts for 15 years and learned a lot about respect, personal safety and bullying prevention. As a bodyguard, I also have extensive training in situational awareness, threat assessments and how to avoid danger! My encouragement to anyone being bullied would be to allow God to raise you up and get you out of that environment!

DS: How much money have you spent so far for your program and how much money would you like to raise?

BA: I have spent a big amount of time, money and effort into anti-bullying. I hope to raise as much funds and awareness as I can! It takes a collective effort to one day eradicate bullying in all its forms.

DS: Are you helping mainly the African American community or other communities as well?

BA: I am helping everyone that I can! I'm a voice and a pro-tector for all!

DS: In your opinion, has the quality of life in African American communities improved over the past 25 years?

BA: I believe some would say that there has been some improvement in places, but many would agree there is still a lot more to be done! I stand in support of the African American community, and I am also a NAACP member!

DS: Do you have any message for our "Local Talk" readers?

BA: My message to the "Local Talk" readers is that whatever your dream is in life, hold onto it, protect it, and never let it go! Every day, you should have the mindset that it's the best day of your life because it is! Always keep God first in your life!

TOWN WATCH

(Continued from page 10)

of shooting him, however, spent the holiday while detained in Newark's Essex County Correctional Facility.

Acting Essex County Prosecutor Theodore "Ted" Stephens II and West Orange Police Chief James Abbot said, late that Monday, that the off-duty officer had walked into the Krauser's / Blimpies at 18 So. Valley Rd at about 3 p.m. that day. The officer had also walked into an altercation between two men - and decided to intervene.

The suspect switched his engagement from the other civilian - who then fled the scene - to the officer. He struck the officer with his gun then shot at him, grazing his head. The suspect then sped away from the CVS Plaza in a grey SUV.

Township police and Essex County Sheriff's officers promptly swarmed the plaza to transport the officer to a local hospital and obtain evidence. An all-points bulletin was put out on the suspect and the SUV.

Newark Police responded to the APB, saying they have the vehicle and the suspect at the Exxon station, 226 South Orange Ave., some 15 minutes later. Although the gasoline station and the convenience store are 4.2 miles apart, the suspect most likely had gone 5.7 miles by going east on Route 280 and south on Bergen Street.

Shaahid T. Forshee, 36, of East Orange has had a central justice processing hearing on Dec. 28 He has been on a count each of aggressive assault with intent for serious bodily injury, unlawful possession of a handgun without a permit, possession thereof for an unlawful purpose and attempted felony murder.

CVS Plaza, abutting the Orange border, started life as the Grand Union supermarket shopping center in the 1950s.

MAPLEWOOD / SOUTH ORANGE

The family of Columbia High School and Seton Hall University graduate Stephen N. Maskaleris, Esq., 94, held a private funeral here at the Jacob A. Holle's Maplewood funeral home after his Dec. 9 death - so it is not known if "Taps" was played for him on his tuba or bass.

That send-off would have been appropriate since Maskaleris played bass and tuba while with the US Army Air Force in World War II. Maskaleris was part of the Air Force Replacement band formed after the Dec. 15, 1944 disappearance of bandleader Glenn Miller over the English Channel.

The 1927-born Newark native continued playing jazz whenever his legal practice allowed. He had appeared with the Clooney Sisters and with the bands of

Sammy Kaye, Bobby Byrne and Tommy Tucker. He and musician daughter Sue used to appear together in New York nightclubs.

Maskaleris, who received his Juris Doctorate at Newark's Rutgers Law School, hung out his Maskaleris & Assoc. shingle there for 61 years. He defended John William Butenko, an accused USSP spy, in the 1960s.

Maskaleris helped form the Office of the Public Defender in 1962. The Continuing Legal Education instructor strove to keep his clients from receiving capital punishment.

An active CHS alumni association member, Maskaleris last played jazz in the Millburn Public Library. Wife Corinne, daughter Carol Ball and grandchildren Frank and Madeline Ball are among his survivors.

Memorial donations may be made to his Ila Foundation for legal defense and appeals for the underrepresented, PO Box 92, Millburn 07041.

BLOOMFIELD - Six of "Bloomfield's finest" quickly found the cause of "a man with a gun" call they received here Dec. 30.

The officers said they had found a man matching the given description in the area of 542 Bloomfield Ave. - less than a block southwest of police headquarters. A search recovered "a handgun along with an extended high capacity magazine and hollow-point bullets.

"Further details from the Bloomfield Department of Public Safety release - including the arrested suspect's charges and identification - were not given.

Public Schools Offer Remote Option

Bloomfield Public Schools Superintendent Salvatore Goncalves, after consultation with the just-reorganized Board of Education Jan. 3, is offering "a voluntary remote instruction model through Jan. 14."

Goncalves is giving BPS students and parents a choice between remote and in-person instruction "after having given careful consideration to the local, state and national trends in light of the new COVID-19 variant."

Parents who choose to go remote are to meet with their school's principal to pick up a virtual instruction program and other pertinent materials as an in-service day for staff only.

MONTCLAIR - Whoever Mayor Sean Spillar names as the late Dr. Albert Davis' successor onto the Montclair Public Schools Board of Education has two considerations to make between now and a Feb. 5 deadline.

Both of those considerations have to

do with the district's transition from a Type I mayor-appointed board to a Type II voter-elected panel.

Should Spillar fail to appoint Dr. Davis' successor on Feb. 5. That vacancy will be added to the anticipated three MBOE seats up on the Nov. 8 General Election ballot. It will then be used to fill an unexpired term.

Davis died on Dec. 2 - the day after board members made March 8 as a special election day. March 8 is when participating registered township voters will add two people onto the current seven-member panel. Both seats will have terms shorter than the usual three years to bring them into synch with the November election cycles.

Should Spillar make his choice on or before Feb. 5, that person would be serving until Jan. 1, 2023 - making it available for the Nov. 8, 2022 election anyway.

Board President Latifah Jannah revealed the Feb. 5 appointment deadline at the Dec. 1 meeting. Jannah and Priscilla Church's seats will be up for three-year terms on Nov. 8.

GLEN RIDGE - The Glen Ridge Public Library, when it comes out of its COVID-cautionary Dec. 27-Jan. 2 holiday Jan. 3, will be headed by interim Library Director Cindy Czesak.

Czesak may be more familiar to Paterson and Clifton public library patrons, having been a director there for a respective 17 and 14 years. Since her official 2017 retirement, Czesak has been the interim director for the Demarest, Parsippany and Washington libraries and the BCCLS interlibrary network.

The GRPL Board of Trustees appointed Czesak, and bade farewell to Jennifer Breuer, at their Dec. 18 special meeting. Breuer, after 11 years as director, left on Dec. 23 to become director of the Johnson City, Tenn.-based Holsten River Region library district.

It is not immediately known whether GRPL Trustees will conduct a director's search on their own or through a hired consultant or search firm.



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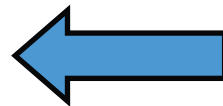
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