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**OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER**

ESSEX COUNTY • ORANGE • EAST ORANGE • ORANGE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
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## "WHY?" BELOVED EAST ORANGE STUDENT SHOT AFTER SCHOOL



By Walter Elliott

**EAST ORANGE** - As an East Orange Campus High School scholar-athlete just off the northeastern corner of Lincoln Street and Park Avenue at about 3:15 p.m. on Oct. 3, a shooter opened up two streams.

The first stream is a torrent of pain and sorrow flowing among the relatives, friends and classmates of Letrell Duncan, 16 and of the city community at large.

The other currently shallow stream, being navigated by the Essex County Prosecutor's Office and the East Orange Police Department, are of questions - especially the perhaps most elusive one: "Why?"

Acting Essex County Prosecutor Theodore "Ted" Stephens II and East Orange Chief

of Police Phyllis Bindi have said that a suspect had approached Duncan on the street, some 50 yards north of the Park Avenue corner and three blocks south of EOCHS, at 3:15 p.m.

The suspect shot Duncan four times and fled. Responding EOPD officers found Duncan at 3:22 p.m. They administered CPR and had Duncan rushed to Newark's University Hospital - where was declared dead at 3:45.

Authorities are looking for a group of people and their car that were in the area 3-3:15.

The ECPO Homicide and Major Crimes Unit and EOPD detectives are seeking an answer to "Why Duncan?"

Duncan was a point guard on the Campus High School's

(Continued on page 6)

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## NEWARK CITIZENS VS. NEWARK COUNCIL - PART II



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## ORANGE HIGH WINS HOMECOMING GAME

Photo By Adri Powell

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Turn To PAGE 16



*Editorial*  
**Dhiren Shah**  
 Editor-In-Chief

**Hello Readers,**

President Biden’s approval rating is the lowest in the history of any sitting president. CNBC published on Wed, Jul 20, 2022: “Just 31% of American adults said they approve of the way Biden is handling his job, while 60% disapproved of it, the Quinnipiac University poll found.”

Biden’s humanitarian act by visiting all the Hurricane Ian disaster areas is a great effort. He will meet Florida governor (Republican) Ron DeSantis to survey the damage done by the storm. As we have read from different media, insurance companies will try to avoid paying for the damages by showing the best possible excuses, as it is

tougher for insurance companies to pay all the damages. The cost for recovery might be about \$40 billion. However, President Biden and first lady Jill Biden’s visit and survey might help Floridians recover from heavy damages with federal help.

Per ABC news: “Ahead of the visit, the White House said Biden will announce that he is doubling the length of time the federal government will cover all the costs associated with search and rescue, debris removal, sheltering and other emergency measures from 30 days to 60 days. Gov. DeSantis had requested the aid extension last week.” It is good that Biden is trying to work with the republican authorities in Florida.

When gas prices were going down President Biden took credit. Now prices are going up again. Biden should take blame as well. OPEC stated that they will cut down the oil production, which might raise the oil prices

and we will see the impact on the gas stations in near future. US has a huge contract with Saudi Arabia and other countries. Gas became important category to drive down world economy, but since decades, we could not find any alternative yet.

In Iran, demonstrators gathered around a burning barricade during a protest for Mahsa Amini, who died after being arrested by the Islamic Republic's "morality police," in Tehran on September 19, 2022. Thousands of protestors were so determined chanting for a regime change despite the threat upon return to their universities.

The first electric bus in NJ is on the road in Camden, out of eight buses declared within a year. A smooth ride and no pollution are the key impacts of the bus. It will expand all over New Jersey slow by slow.

Teenager Letrell Duncan was shot and killed in East Orange near a school. Parents and stu-

dents are worried about their safety. The primary thought has to be finding out how to solve the problem of violence, once and for all. 41-year-old Kenneth Wilkerson, Jr. suffered from multiple stab wounds, police said in another incident. Wilkerson was pronounced dead at the scene at 9:30 a.m.

Former Newark Police Lt. John Formisano was found guilty on Oct. 5 for killing his wife Christie Formisano in a 2019 shooting. Her boyfriend was also wounded in the shooting. When John visited his house in Jefferson, he found an unwanted guest in his house with his wife as per the report.

Only 5 weeks are left until the November 8, 2022 election. Search and vote for the best candidate of your choice. Make sure you do not miss voting this time. It is a very crucial election.

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

**STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS FOR LOCAL TALK WEEKLY NEWSPAPER**

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To serve you in the best manner, we request that you send your comments, community calendar events, news and other information and queries related to advertisements to the editor on e-mail : [localtalknews@gmail.com](mailto:localtalknews@gmail.com)

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**WEATHER FOR THE WEEK**

<u>THURSDAY</u>	<u>FRIDAY</u>	<u>SATURDAY</u>	<u>SUNDAY</u>	<u>MONDAY</u>	<u>TUESDAY</u>	<u>WEDNESDAY</u>
Sunny	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy
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# The Doctor Is In



OP-ED BY DR. ADIL MANZOOR

## Long COVID in Children: Risk Factors

When someone gets COVID, they can expect to feel better within two weeks. Of course, other factors come into play here, like pre-existing health conditions, age, gender, vaccination status, and even race. But, on average, the infected person can go on with their lives as usual after two weeks. Full recovery

from COVID infection can take as much as 12 weeks.

However, some people infected with COVID can experience long-term effects from their COVID infection, which is known as long COVID or post-COVID conditions (PCC). This condition has been well observed in adults, and reports show that children can also have long COVID. This article will examine how hospitalization and multiple symptoms can affect long COVID in children.

For long, health experts did not understand how to diagnose or even define long COVID. This is primarily because it is difficult to determine whether the observed symptoms result from the COVID infection or other health conditions. Notwithstanding, in October 2021, the WHO proposed a definition for long COVID, stating that it generally occurs three months from the onset of COVID, with symptoms that last at least two months and cannot be explained by an alternative definition.

This definition has been modified over time, but the principle remains the same - symp-



toms that persist or develop after COVID infection. People who experience long COVID often report the following symptoms: fatigue, weakness, fever, coughing, difficulty breathing, chest pain, brain fog, headache, change in smell or taste, depression, diarrhea, and muscle pain. The list is not exhaustive, and other symptoms may accompany long COVID.

Although long COVID is more likely in adults, studies have shown that children and adolescents can develop the condition too. One study showed that one in four children and adolescents have long COVID. The most frequent long-COVID symptoms among children are mood changes, fatigue, sleep

disorders, headache, and respiratory symptoms. The study reached a consensus that it was imperative to conduct more trials to understand the pathophysiology of the condition and implement necessary protective measures.

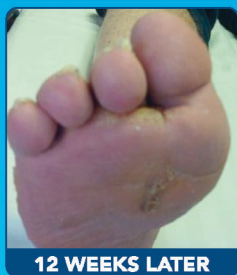
Since then, there have been quite a few studies into long COVID in children. However, one has caught the public eye. In the 3-month study that examined 1,884 children, 5.8 percent of patients, including 9.8 percent of hospitalized children and 4.6 percent of discharged children, reported long COVID symptoms. This implies that long COVID is more likely in chil-

(Continued on page 12)

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# SPORTS WRAP



Photos By Adri Powell

By William Hathaway, Jr.

This past week in New Jersey high school football, there were some lucky victories and some tough losses. The Orange Tornadoes defeated Millburn on home turf in their annual homecoming game before a packed Bell Stadium. Leading Orange was junior Maurice Williams with 251 passing yards and 4 passing touchdowns and 158 rushing yards and one TD on the ground. Other key players who boosted the Tornadoes were KhyRon Hill with 6 receptions for 171 yards and 2 TDs on offense, and 3 interceptions on defense, and Jalen Phillips who scored on a 34 yard TD run late in the 4th quarter to cap off the 40-21 win. Millburn had once cut the lead to 27-21 but Orange never wavered.

In other area games this week, the Irvington Blue Knights lost a tough one on the

road to Union City 19-15. Seton Hall Prep defeated Red Bank 28-20 in a surprise victory on the road, putting the Pirates at 4-1 on the season. East Orange went on the road and beat rival Montclair 20-7. The Jaguars were led to victory by senior Joshua Richards, who caught 5 passes from Kyree Fisher, who himself scored a key touchdown.

In pro football, the Giants defended MetLife Stadium in their throwback blue uniforms 20-12, while the Jets stunned the Steelers on the road 24-20. Jets QB Zach Wilson caught a TD pass, and even busted out a grid-dy dance to celebrate.

Finally, Aaron Judge has broken Roger Maris' AL single season home run record of 61. The Yankee slugger set the new mark at 62 right before the season ended. The Yankees have clinched the AL East and #2 seed, while the Mets have secured a playoff berth.



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### NJ TRANSIT INFORMATIONAL PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

In accordance with Section 5 of P.L. 1984 c.578 of SCDRTAP, NJ TRANSIT is conducting a public hearing in order to gather information and receive comments from interested parties concerning programs developed pursuant to the Senior Citizen & Disabled Residents Transportation Assistance Program (SCDRTAP) Act. We will be offering three (3) virtual informational hearing sessions which will cover the southern, central, and northern regions of New Jersey.

The Senior Citizen & Disabled Residents Transportation Assistance Program funds capital, operating, and/or administrative expenses for locally coordinated community transportation services for senior citizens and people with disabilities. The program also funds accessibility improvements to NJ TRANSIT's fixed route bus and rail system, the provision of technical assistance to the counties, and the administration of the statewide program.

All materials to be reviewed at this hearing are available in accessible formats upon request. Closed captioning is available for hearing impaired individuals. Individuals requesting language support should contact Customer Service at 973-275-5555 at least ten (10) business days prior to the hearing date. **If you plan to speak at one of these virtual hearings, please contact Cecily Derrick at [cderrick@njtransit.com](mailto:cderrick@njtransit.com) or leave your contact information via voicemail at 973-491-7772 by Monday, October 24, 2022.**

The public is invited to the **November 3<sup>rd</sup>** hearings below at which time they will have a full opportunity to express their views regarding the Senior Citizen & Disabled Residents Transportation Assistance Program. In order to assure that all members of the public are given an opportunity to be heard, comments will be limited to three (3) minutes. **Written comments for the record may be sent to Public Hearing Comments 2022, NJ TRANSIT, Local Programs & Community Transportation, One Penn Plaza East, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Newark, New Jersey 07105-2246, or via email at [publichearings@njtransit.com](mailto:publichearings@njtransit.com) by Wednesday, October 26, 2022.**

#### SENIOR CITIZENS & DISABLED RESIDENTS TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INFORMATIONAL PUBLIC HEARING

**DATE: Thursday, November 3, 2022**

**Session 1: 5:00 pm – Southern Region**  
**Session 2: 6:00 pm – Central Region**  
**Session 3: 7:00 pm – Northern Region**

**Join on your computer or mobile app - [Click here to join the meeting](#)**

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For those who **have** access to E-mail, please contact Cecily Derrick at [cderrick@njtransit.com](mailto:cderrick@njtransit.com) by **Monday, October 24, 2022** and you will be emailed the link to join the meeting via video teleconference. For those who do **not** have access to a PC, Laptop, I-pad, Tablet, or Smart Phone with E-mail, please use the telephone number and conference ID access code listed above to call in via telephone.

With this annual notice we also invite the public to review and comment on the State Management Plans (SMPs) for the following Federal grant programs administered by NJ TRANSIT.

- FTA Section 5310 The Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program
- FTA Section 5311 Non-urbanized Area Formula Program for Rural Areas

These are available for review and comment on the S-Rides website at <https://s-rides.njtransit.com>. (Click on the *Documents* link). Copies of the state management plans are also available upon request by calling 973-491-7772 or writing to NJ TRANSIT, Local Programs & Minibus Support Department, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, One Penn Plaza East, Newark, NJ 07105-2246. All comments can be submitted via the address above or by sending an email to [SRIDES@njtransit.com](mailto:SRIDES@njtransit.com).

**An Access Link paratransit update will NOT be provided at this hearing. Access Link holds separate Customer Forums. If you have any questions regarding Access Link forums or service, please email [adaservices@njtransit.com](mailto:adaservices@njtransit.com) or call Access Link at 973-491-4224, choose option #5 for Customer Service, or call TT 1- 800-955-6765.**

**To obtain a translated copy of this notice, contact Customer Service at 973-275-5555.**

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### EAST ORANGE

#### STUDENT SHOT

*(Continued from page 1)*

Jaguars boys basketball team, scoring 180 points in his 2021-22, and last, season. The wearer of the No. 21 jersey helped the Jaguars to a 15-9 win-loss season record.

The 6-ft., 1-in., 186 lbs. sophomore had previously been with the AAU Garden State Bounce traveling youth team as a guard and team captain. He had also played on the Prospect Prep Academy squad for 15-17-year-old players.

"Trell" had been ranked on one scholastic basketball website as among the top 10 guards in New Jersey. His aunt, Marsha Douglas, told a reporter Oct. 4 that Duncan was looking to transfer to a local Roman Catholic high school team.

"Why there?" and "Why then?" are intertwined.

The shooting happened along 186 Lincoln - a fenced, vacant lot between the corner building that includes Family Grocery and the Edward T. Bowser (Elementary) School of Excellence.

EOCHS, Bowser and the Costley/Healy/Truth middle school complex on Hamilton Street had dismissed their students for the day. A released video recording from Family Grocery showed children of various ages entering and exiting the store or standing around - until several began running east on Park Avenue when the gunshots were fired.

"Why - again?" is another question with an all too familiar ring.

Antoine Sanga-Niangara, 16, was found shot dead at Lincoln Street and Park Avenue at 1:45 p.m. Oct. 6, 2020. The EOCHS football player was declared dead at the scene at 1:52 p.m.

Violent crime statistics show, on one hand, that the number of shooting victims have declined nearly 30 percent from 2020. Violent crime overall from 2017 to

*(Continued on page 9)*

# BLACK LIVES, ANIMAL LIVES, ALL LIVES MATTER



By Michelle Lowe  
EST...1996  
Message For You

Hello, Greetings and great day everyone. Wishing you all the best. First thing foremost and surely, it is good to be grateful for life, thankful and blessed to see another day. Appreciate the blessings everyone. Life is short, and as a reminder to all, it's not promised. Always keep that in mind.

Be kind to others and respect each other. Karma comes quicker than you know, and that being said, what goes around comes around. I have always been myself and couldn't change me for no one. I'm strong in my field and I'm not giving up. My plantation has just begun and I am looking forward to my success.

People let's pay attention and focus on life now. Weakness only makes you stronger. We as people will have these types of warning feelings that we overlook, but in the end, there was a reason why that feeling was there. If something isn't right people, handle your business. Times come and can go just like that.

*If you love someone you must be prepared to set them free.*



It's been a while since the last time I had all of your attention. I have still been in mourning. every day goes by and every

day. I think about him. My love will always be forever, and forever will always be us. It isn't easy, but I will keep it as my duty and keep myself together.

I'm sure we are happy this rain has slowed down the passing of hurricanes. I'll tell you all the winds were very strong. I had to secure my motorcycle with the mass flooding and all. Unfortunately, not everyone was lucky like us. Hurricanes have destroyed homes and more; we are to be thankful again.

All this going on, there was something good and I did what I do best - humanitarian work.



Once they are fully able to walk, they will be ready for a new home. My heart runs deep, and the little ones will have suffered in these weather conditions. The mother along with her kittens.

Before I depart you all, let's always keep in mind and remember those people that have vanished, disappeared, or are missing. They can be anywhere, so we must not forget them.



P.S. Until next time everyone, peace and love and have a great week.

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## ESSEX COUNTY WEEKLY COVID-19 CASE TALLY

Municipality	9-28-2022	Deaths	10-5-2022	Deaths
Belleville	12,844	154	12,890	154
Bloomfield	14,249	166	14,329	166
Caldwell	1,960	17	1,966	17
Cedar Grove	4,582	137	4,600	137
City of Orange	9,399	174	9,442	174
East Orange	19,557	387	19,652	387
Essex Fells	590	2	592	2
Fairfield	2,353	39	2,360	39
Glen Ridge	1,504	18	1,509	18
Irvington	13,459	282	13,506	282
Livingston	7,856	108	7,904	108
Maplewood	6,264	49	6,292	49
Millburn	4,450	18	4,475	18
Montclair	8,365	90	8,404	90
Newark	90,306	1,266	90,636	1,266
North Caldwell	1,724	10	1,735	10
Nutley	7,708	86	7,741	86
Roseland	1,663	25	1,670	26
South Orange	4,169	22	4,185	22
Verona	3,940	25	3,952	25
West Caldwell	3,266	67	3,276	67
West Orange	15,582	269	15,647	269
<b>Total</b>	<b>235,790</b>	<b>3,411</b>	<b>236,763</b>	<b>3,412</b>

OTHER COVID-19 TALLIES (As of October 5, 2022)

NJ: 2,331,657 cases / 31,650 deaths (Plus 3,116 probable)

United States (approx.): 96.525 Million / 1.061 Million deaths

Worldwide (approx.): 619.523 Million / 6.551 Million deaths

# Newark Beth Israel Medical Center's **Ray Murphy** **Men's Health Night**

**Thursday, October 27, 2022 • 5:00 p.m.**

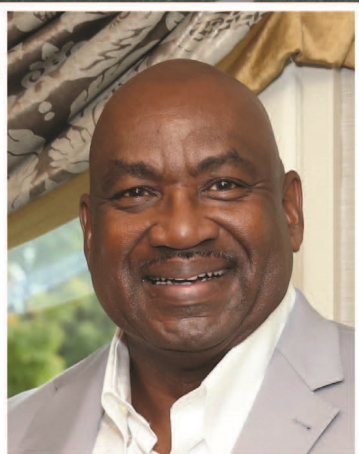
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# LAKELAND BANK SETTLES AFTER HUGE REDLINING ACCUSATIONS

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NEWARK - The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey and Justice Department announced Sept. 28 an agreement to resolve allegations that Lakeland Bank engaged in a pattern or practice of lending discrimination by "redlining" in the Newark metropolitan area, including neighborhoods in Essex, Somerset and Union counties in New Jersey. This resolution is part of the Justice Department's Combatting Redlining Initiative and represents the third-largest redlining settlement in department history.

"Redlining" is an illegal practice in which lenders avoid providing credit services to individuals living in communities of color because of the race, color, or national origin of the residents in those communities. The complaint filed in federal court alleges that, from at least 2015 to 2021, Lakeland failed to provide mortgage lending services to Black and Hispanic neighborhoods in the Newark metropolitan area, that all its branches were located in majority-white neighborhoods, and that its loan officers did not serve the credit needs of Black and Hispanic neighborhoods in and around Newark.

Under the proposed consent order, which is subject to court approval and was filed in the

U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey along with a complaint, Lakeland has agreed to do the following:

- Invest at least \$12 million in a loan subsidy fund for residents of Black and Hispanic neighborhoods in the Newark area; \$750,000 for advertising, outreach and consumer education; and \$400,000 for development of community partnerships to provide services that increase access to residential mortgage credit.
- Open two new branches in neighborhoods of color, including at least one in the city of Newark; ensure at least four mortgage loan officers are dedicated to serving all neighborhoods in and around Newark; and employ a full-time Community Development Officer who will oversee the continued development of lending in neighborhoods of color in the Newark area.
- Maintain an expanded Community Reinvestment Act Assessment Area that includes Essex, Somerset and Union counties.

Lakeland has agreed to settle this matter without contested litigation and worked cooperatively with the department to remedy

the redlining concerns that were identified.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael E. Campion, Chief of the U.S. Attorney's Civil Rights Division, Assistant U.S. Attorney Susan Millenky of the

U.S. Attorney's Office's Civil Rights Division, and Trial Attorney Jennifer Slagle Peck, U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Housing and Civil Enforcement Section.

### EAST ORANGE STUDENT SHOT

(Continued from page 6)

2021.

There have been eight reported murders through September this year, one more than this time last year.

Mayor Theodore "Ted" Green publicly mentioned Duncan's name in his Tuesday statement.

"A young man's life was brazenly cut short by a senseless act of violence that we will never normalize in our city. 16-year-old Letrell Duncan deserves more," said Green. "Our young people are hurting - and so am I. This shooting has shaken our community to our core and, collectively, we must come together to prioritize and protect our

young people."

Green, on Bindi's behalf, said that the city's police is working closely with ECPO detectives. EOPD patrols in school corridors have increased.

Parents, children and other adults at 8 a.m. Oct. 5 were quietly or perhaps somberly, entering and leaving the Bowser School.

East Orange School District Superintendent AbdulSaleem Hasan, in his Oct. 3 open letter, said that crisis counselors were in his schools to talk with students and adults Oct. 4-7.

"There has been a growing concern about the spread of violence, not only in our community but also across our nation," said Hasan. "Violence creates trauma for the people directly involved as well as those in sur-

rounding neighborhoods and communities."

First Ward Councilwoman Amy Lewis, who also heads the City Council Public Safety Committee, said that the EOPD and the East Orange Board of Education were working "to do everything they can to maintain safe corridors for our children.

"Our children have to start looking at each other as peers and friends and not enemies," said Lewis Oct. 4. "We're all a part of one another in the sense that, if you hurt one, you hurt all."

One early report has a "black male wearing dreads" approaching Duncan and firing shots.

Douglas was told by Duncan's friends that he was walking with another friend when they "had words" with two young

men. The men left but two people wearing ski masks, one of whom carrying a gun, confronted Duncan and his friend.

GSB's Jason Coleman has organized a GoFundMe.com fundraising page for Duncan's funeral and memorial arrangements.

Essex County Sheriff Armando Fontoura, on Oct. 5, has posted a \$10,000 CrimeStoppers award to anyone with information that leads to the arrest to the person(s) responsible for Duncan's murder.

Anyone with information is to call the following tip lines: ECPO's 1(877) 847-7432 (TIPS-4EC) and/or EOPD's (973) 266-5041. Calls will be kept confidential.

# TOWN WATCH

**DISCLAIMER:** The following items are primarily drawn from first responders. Responders' accounts may not be their full activity range. Grand juries hand down indictments when evidence presented them warrant a trial. Named suspects/defendants are innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

**NEWARK** - The Newark Public Schools have until Nov. 1 - All Saints Day - to get into the New Jersey Department of Education's good graces when it comes to serving its handicapped or special needs students.

NPS, under the NJDOE's Corrective Action Plan issued on Aug. 25, is to provide new training for child study team members and have created an "oversight mechanism" to comply with the requirements that the state agency has set.

State education administrators, in a June report, determined that New Jersey's largest public school district had failed to meet six requirements under the U.S. Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Those areas include failing to report Individual Education Plans and missing meetings with parents and students - if they had notified them of the meetings to begin with.

IEPs, by state law, are to detail what services students with disabilities are to have and in what classrooms they are to be in. The IEP program is funded with federal IDEA and Every Student Succeeds Act. NJDOE, after a February visit to NPS, found that the child study team had failed to write and/or revise IEPs.

Problems with IDEA and ESSA compliance have been a long-standing issue. NJDOE had found that Newark Public Schools had failed in four areas in 2019 - before the COVID pandemic. Parents and teachers have told of lost IEPs and related horror stories during the 2014-17 "One Newark Plan," which closed and/or consolidated some of NPS' then-73 schools.

NPS Superintendent of Schools Roger Leon, in a 2021

school budget hearing, said that the district would partner with Rutgers' ABA Center, STAR Autism and other local groups to provide more services. The NPS Board of Education had allocated more funds and resources to the IEP program.

**IRVINGTON** - The travels in and around the "Local Talk" area of township native Dr. Donald A. Merachnik, 93, have ended with a Sept. 2 graveside service at Woodbridge-Iselin's Mt. Lebanon Cemetery. The psychologist and teacher who became a high school superintendent had died Sept. 1.

Merachnik, who was born in Newark July 27, 1929, was a Frank H. Morrell High School Class of 1947 graduate whose Army enlistment postponed his career. He became a medical technician in the 34th Combat Engineer Battalion during the Korean Conflict.

Merachnik returned here by way of the G.I. Bill and Upsala College. The 1951 graduate in education was hired by Irvington Public Schools as a school psychologist and mathematics teacher. He would attain a masters from City College of New York in 1952 and a doctorate in philosophy from NYU in 1961.

The practicing psychologist found his niche in the Springfield-headquartered Union County Regional High School District, first as a teacher in 1955. He was promoted to Assistant Superintendent of Pupil and Personnel Services in 1969 and as its superintendent in 1971. Merachnik was the district's last superintendent when its six towns gained local control of the four high schools June 30, 1996.

Merachnik became a familiar face in several cameo roles. He was Interim Assistant Superintendent for the South Orange-Maplewood and Paterson school districts after being the superintendent in the West Essex Regional District and in Bound Brook. The SHU, Kean and Jersey City State College adjunct professor was consulting psychologist for the East Orange School District for the last 18 years.

The Berkeley Heights practitioner and resident is survived by son Richard, daughters Beth and Kathy and four grandchildren. His wife Sondra predeceased

him.

Memorial donations may be made to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, 1275 York Ave., New York, NY 10065.

**EAST ORANGE** - Owners and administrators of what the New Jersey Department of Health calls a Long Term Care center are hoping that whatever improvements they have made in the last quarter will prompt state officials to give them a higher rating by Nov. 1.

State DOH inspectors are to visit Grove Park Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center this month - if they have not yet visited already. Grove Park, formerly known as New Grove Manor, has received one-star scores from the state every quarter since July 2021.

The 185-bed former East Orange Hotel building at 101 North Grove St. had received scores of one star in nine of the last 36 quarters going back to January 2013. It had received scores of two stars 22 times - largely between January 2013 and January 2019.

Grove Park had scored zero April 2019-April 2020 while it was on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Special Focus Facility program.

The LTC is the only one in the "Local Talk" area among the "15 Lowest Rated LTCs Participating in New Jersey's Medicaid Program" in a Feb. 2, 2022 Office of the State Comptroller report. "The Lowest 15" have continued to receive Medicaid funding despite "failing to improve the safety and quality of their care." The OSC has recommended cutting the \$100 million of Medicaid funding to those nursing homes who have long failed to improve.

Allaire Health Services, of Freehold, recently bought New Grove/Park Grove and has been renovating the five-story building in stages. Allaire owns and operates eight LTCs in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Vermont.

**ORANGE** - "Local Talk" had received a statement from the Orange Public Library Board of Trustees Sept. 28 that they are negotiating with city elders in increasing this year's library budget.

"The OPL Board of Trustees are working with the Orange City Council President (North Ward Councilwoman Tency Eason) to increase funding to the library," said Trustee President Janet Mateo in an undated press release. "Mayor Dwayne D. Warren has been instrumental in bringing both entities together for a resolution that will benefit the residents."

Calendar Year 2022's Municipal Budget has the minimum \$531,000 municipal allocation for OPL. That minimum is based on a state formula calculation. The minimal line item is down from about \$750,000 allocated in 2021 and nearly \$950,000 from 2020.

The minimum comes after Library Director Stephanie Flood had presented OPL's proposed budget before the City Council June 9. Flood, since coming aboard from Morris County's Lincoln Park Public Library, had been righting the library after a decade of mishaps, neglect and malfeasance.

The improvements range from a new phone number and mostly working rest rooms to hiring a new children's librarian and visiting the Park Avenue Elementary School on September's Library Card Sign Up Month.

Flood recently told "Local Talk" that she would have to "make some hard decisions" should the \$531,000 minimum stand. Those decisions will likely involve acquiring new lending materials and maybe limiting staff employment.

Any increase to OPL's funding minimum would mean the City Council amending the 2022 municipal budget. Some may recall that Mayor Warren received a State Legislature special allocation of \$2.5 million to purchase the Orange YWCA at 395 Main St. in 2015. (Half of the amount was used for the actual purchase with the remaining for renovation or replacement as the Orange REC Center.)

**WEST ORANGE** - County and township detectives are looking for two armed suspects who assaulted and shot two men, one of whom later died, in what they called an ambush on a Watchung Heights street corner Sept. 27.

Acting Essex County Prosecutor  
(Continued on page 14)

# CITIZENS VS. COUNCIL PT. II COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS BANNED

By Lev D. Zilbermints

**NEWARK** - Community activists are alleging that the Newark Municipal Council is engaged in suppression of free speech.

“Local Talk” interviewed and contacted several activists who frequently speak at Municipal Council meetings. In interviews with the activists, the common allegation is that the Municipal Council is abusing its power. However, Municipal Council members counter that they are trying to follow the rules that they have established for meetings.

Munirah Bomani, a community activist, has been excluded by Newark Municipal Council President LaMonica McIver from the September 21 Council meeting. The reason for the exclusion is that according to Ms. McIver, Ms. Bomani was “disruptive” at the September 20 Pre-Meeting on the Municipal Council.

“Local Talk” made a thorough investigation of the matter. The results show that the Municipal Council has cracked down hard on activists who attend Council meetings. Typically, this occurs when a Council member says something, and an audience member attempts to respond. The audience member is then warned by the Council President to cease and desist from interrupting the speaker. If the audience member continues interrupting, police officers are called to escort the audience from the Council chambers.

Following the expulsion, an email is sent by the City Clerk to the person who was ejected from the meeting. The email tells the person that he or she have been banned from attending Municipal Council meetings for a certain period of time and explains why.

A March 20, 2019 video posted on TapInto website

clearly shows two police officers stepping up to tell Ms. Bomani, who is speaking at the microphone, to sit down. The video and article seemingly corroborate the Municipal Council’s perception that Ms. Bomani was disruptive. Moreover, the video corroborates Ms. Parker’s claim that it was former Council President Mildred Crump who started removing people from Council meetings.

## Previous Municipal Council Removals, Bans and Ejections. Council video edited

The Municipal Council has a long history of removing and ejecting speakers that it considers disruptive or simply does not like. According to a March 11, 2019 letter from Alexander Shalom, senior supervising attorney of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) there were two incidents in 2019 when the Municipal Council had removed speakers. In one case, “the speaker was told that she would be banned from attending council meetings for a year.”

The first incident occurred on January 23, 2019; the second occurred on March 6, 2019.

According to a March 25, 2019 article by tapinto.net/towns/Newark/sections/governme nt/articles Newark resident Louis Shockley shouted about the lead water crisis in Newark when he used the word “damn” during a January 23, 2019 meeting. According to the article, Council President Mildred Crump told Mr. Shockley that “you may not curse.”

At this point, states the March 25, 2019 article, Shockley responded that he has freedom of speech and could even use a racial slur if he wanted to. At this point Crump cut his microphone. After that, the

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Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr., Essex County Executive, The Essex County Board of Commissioners and the Essex County Utilities Authority

Council President ordered police to escort Shockley out of the chambers. Per article, two police officers walked Shockley back to his seat, but not out of the chambers.

The second incident occurred on March 6, 2019. Per the article, “at that meeting, two police officers stood behind resident Lisa Parker as she and Mildred Crump began to exchange words about a deal with the city’s parking authority. Parker questioned whether the council president could vote on the issue since her son is an attorney for the authority.

“How dare you,” Crump said. “How dare you suggest that my son would manipulate my vote. How dare you.”

According to the March 25, 2019 article, TAPInto Newark observed the incident. It is not mentioned in the letter sent by ACLU to then-Council President Crump. TapInto Newark reported that large portions of the meeting are excluded from the video.

Following Ms. Parker’s argument with Council President Mildred Crump, Munirah Bomani was not to speak. Bomani referred to the police officers standing behind her as “police dogs” and called it “government terrorism.” Eventually, the council president ordered Bomani removed for being disruptive. Police escorted Bomani out of the council chambers, but she returned later.

(Continued on page 13)



## From The Pastor's Heart

OP-ED BY DR. ROBERT KENNEDY

### Breaking The Curse Through Obedience

Maybe you can remember it, and I hope you do. When you were a child, your parents would constantly remind you not to put those hair pins or other tiny pieces of wire you found on the floor in the electrical sockets. Then, when they discovered that you would not listen and insisted on doing what they told you not to do, they went out and bought those plastic socket covers and covered the plug holes. Or, if you lived in a house that had stairs, your parents would install protective gates at the top and sometimes the bottom of the stairs because they knew no matter how many times they told you not to go down or up, your curiosity would push you to try that which they told you not to do.

But do you remember the consequences? And when you were "smart enough" to remove

the covers and stick a pin in the socket, you would scream from the electric shock. Or when you opened the gates and went tumbling down the stairs, your parents would come running to pick (you) up a frightened or hurt child and rush you to the emergency room at a hospital.

What I have just described is not just what happens to children but what happens to adults who fail to obey what God tells us not to do. Remember Cain? His story is recorded in Genesis 4. His brother's name was Abel. He was the first son of Adam and Eve, and Abel was the second. Cain was a farmer; Abel was a skilled shepherd who cared for the family's animals.

One day, Cain and Abel were offering sacrifices to the Lord. And Cain brought some of the produce from the field, while Abel brought the firstborn of his sheep. God accepted the sacrifice of Abel because it was the required offering. However, God rejected Cain's sacrifice. This made Cain so angry and jealous that later he lured Abel into the field and killed him with a rock. The Lord called to Cain, asking him what happened to his Abel. Cain became angrier and asked God the most arrogant question any mortal could ask, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The end of the

story is that God cursed Cain and his generation. God promised Cain that no one would be allowed to kill him but that he would be made a "vagabond" roaming the earth.

The story is packed with multiple lessons, but I am concentrating on Cain and the consequences of his rebellion. I invite you to reflect on my list of twelve points since space does not allow for extensive comments.

1. Disobedience has some profound consequences.
2. Disobedience causes division between God and our fellow human beings.
3. Disobedience leads to the growth of sin and envy, which leads to jealousy and jealousy to murder.
4. Disobedience leads to loss of love for one another.
5. Disobedience leads to loss of joy and peace - it makes us miserable.
6. Disobedience leads to the deadly fruit of hatred.
7. Disobedience leads to idolatry - it turns us away from God to serve idols.
8. Disobedience leads to hiding, lying, and making excuses to cover our tracks.

9. Disobedience often breaks our opportunity for reconciliation
10. Disobedience leads to defiance - which makes us fly in the face of any legitimately constituted authority, even that of God.
11. Disobedience makes us irresponsible and causes us to neglect our duty. Listen to Cain's question to God, "Am I my brother's keeper?"
12. Disobedience issues from a loss of faith and trust in God.

What was it about Cain's sacrifice that made God reject it?

1. He wanted to do his own thing rather than what God told him to do.
2. He wanted to create his system of sacrifice rather than follow God's way.
3. He followed his desires instead of God's will.

Let's remind ourselves that we can be cursed like Cain if we seek to follow our way and offer our sacrifices instead of the sacrifice God requires. Or put another way, let us not forget the great question for any who wants to break the curse of disobedience, "What does the Lord require of me?" Not, "What do I want to do for God?"

### THE DOCTOR IS IN

(Continued from page 4)

dren requiring hospitalization for their infection than in those treated in an emergency room and discharged.

The result of the study is consistent with the long COVID research in adults, also showing that people with more severe COVID illness are more likely to develop long COVID symptoms. Aside from long COVID, severe COVID illness can also affect multiple organs, which can increase the risk of new health conditions, like diabetes and heart conditions.

The study also showed that 4.7 percent of hospitalized children and adolescents with no more than three initial COVID symptoms eventually had long COVID. For those with four to six initial symptoms, that figure is 7.4 percent. However, the figure catapults to 23 percent among children with over seven COVID symptoms. Therefore, the more COVID symptoms children and adolescents have initially, the greater the risk of developing long COVID.

While the study did not focus on the vaccination status of the participants, the CDC states that people who did not get the COVID vaccine might be at more risk for developing post-COVID conditions.

This study underlines the concerns of many health experts: recovering from COVID does not mean the end of COVID. In fact, there will likely be no end to COVID in the literal sense. However, we are responsible for preventing the spread and severity of the condition however we can. Since it has been highlighted that hospitalizations increase the risk of long COVID, and it has also been proven that vaccination reduces the risk of hospitalization, logic informs us that vaccination can help prevent long COVID.


Further, the vaccine has been approved for virtually all children and adolescent age groups, meaning you have a responsibility to get your children vaccinated for their safety. Please do. 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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**CITIZENS VS. COUNCIL PT. 2**

*(Continued from page 11)*

**2022 Council meetings**

Ms. Bomani says that she was thrown out of the September 20, 2022 meeting for responding to Council President LaMonica McIver's comment. In text messages and emails sent to "Local Talk," Ms. Bomani wrote, "Council member McIver responds to speakers' comments in a sarcastic way, refuses to put her response in writing. When the speaker responds back, using their equal airtime rights, she (McIver) ejects speakers from meeting, accusing them of being disorderly and disruptive."

Late Sunday evening, September 25, 2022 current Council President LaMonica McIver responded to some of "Local Talk's" questions. According to McIver, Munirah Bomani was removed because she became

disruptive and would not follow rules for decorum established by the Municipal Council.

In her email, Council President LaMonica McIver wrote, "Thank you for contacting us. Please note that Ms. Bomani was removed from the chambers because she was being disruptive and interrupting others while they were speaking. Please note that we follow Council Rules for all Council Meetings and ask that all appearing in the Chambers do the same."

Currently each speaker is allowed five minutes to address the Municipal Council. Whenever a Council member responds, there are often shouted questions from the public. Unlike some other places, Newark does not have a response period for the public to reply to the Municipal Council.

According to a letter emailed to Ms. Bomani by Acting City Clerk Kecia Daniels on Septem-

ber 20, the exclusion from the Sept. 21 meeting is "due to your (Bomani's) violation of the Municipal Council's Code of Conduct at the Municipal Council's Pre-Meeting on Tuesday, September 20, 2022. During the Pre-Meeting, you continued to call out from the audience after repeated warnings, from Council President McIver, regarding same."

The letter goes on to cite Municipal Council Rules, specifically Rule XIX: Decorum, Section B, "No person shall by noisy or disorderly conduct disturb or interfere with the quiet good order of a meeting of the Municipal Council. Any person who has been declared out of order by the Presiding Officer and has been asked to cease speaking and sit down, shall comply immediately or he/she shall forthwith be removed from the meeting, unless permission to continue or again address the

Municipal Council is granted by majority vote of the Municipal Council."

This is not the first time Ms. Bomani has been ejected and excluded from Municipal Council meetings. Two years ago, on Sept. 17, 2019, Ms. Bomani was escorted from a Pre-Meeting of the Municipal Council for allegedly being disrespectful. "Local Talk" reported at the time that Business Administrator Eric Pennington did not explain what happened but started calling Ms. Bomani a liar. Mr. Pennington stated at the time that Ms. Bomani was giving out false information. Ms. Bomani responded back, saying, "You talking about me? I have the evidence. Don't address or speak about me without expecting a response."

At this point, Luis Quintana, the Vice Chair and presiding officer of the Municipal Council, called police to escort Ms. Bomani out of the building.

The Observation Booth



OP-ED By Andrea Dialect

MOVIE PASS



An EISHADDA Production  
Screenplay by Sidney Ramey

For those of you that didn't catch my error in last week's article submission "Fire Extinguisher," I stand corrected. I have been informed that our es-

sential firefighter's correct schedule is 24 hours on and 72 off. Meaning I was a bit off when citing 24 hours on 24 hours off, so my apologies.

This week's submission plays more so with the rules meaning I am not off topic as usual because our focus is entertainment. I am very excited and will be utilizing that movie pass on the 13th for the Destiny 70x7 Release Date and Red Carpet event. I suspect that it's going to be pretty surreal seeing people that I have come to know on a personal level on that big screen.

I wish them and everyone that participated in its development all the best. This is a spiritual / drama faith-based film but I'll hush for now. Let's just tiptoe in and get a sneak peek of the makings of Destny70x7... Shhhhhhhhhhh!

DIRECTOR'S CUT

Apostle: "Destiny 70x7 is our fourth project but, the first to be on the big screen. Originally it was supposed to be 'Kingdom Freedom' (Won't He Do It) but we weren't able to because the pandemic happened.

"We couldn't do it in the theater, so we did it in a cathedral in Newark. But the time has come for our debut in theater and our Release date & Red Carpet Event for Destiny 70 X 7 will be on Thursday, October 13th @ Newark Cityplex-12 Theater. There will be two showings one at 4:30 pm and the other at 6:30 pm. You'll want to experience this one.

"I kinda think in contrary ways to the average preacher.

witnesses meanwhile called 911.

Responding WOPD officers soon found the shot victims by 3:23 p.m. The unidentified man was taken by a private car to RWJBarnabas Health's Cooperman-Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston for his wounds. He was listed in stable condition Sept. 28.

Corington Valentin, 21, of Newark, was also rushed to Cooperman-Barnabas - where he was declared dead at 11:37 p.m. Valentin's funeral arrangements have not been announced as of Oct. 5.

One report stated that the suspects' getaway car was soon



Executive Producers Phyllis Ramey & Sidney Ramey  
AKA Pastor P & Apostle

Most are surprised by my being an Apostle and our other Executive Producer as well, of these films my wife who is a Pastor.

"Why gangsta movies one might ask. Let's just say my walk with God, our walk with him, it's uncommon because we live with a free mind. We walk in the spirit, and we walk in freedom and liberty. We are not confined to the rules and regulations of organizations that have these do's and don'ts to go by. We are moved by the spirit, and we are free to do things as God tells us to do things and bring them to the minds of people that are in the dark. Many of them are down and it is an escape route. So I take it to reality to help them experience deliverance.

"In real life, my background as a drug user and stick-up kid plays a part. That was the kind of stuff that I was doing in my

early twenties, but God brought me through it, and he saw my heart as I began to change. Then He said, 'okay I can give you a wife now. You don't have to take anything off the streets like you've been doing.'

"We have been together in marriage and working together all these years. August 12th makes 27. This is a faith-based film like all the others. Ironically in our gangsta movies, there is no profanity...."

Read this article in its entirety at [www.localtalkweekly.com](http://www.localtalkweekly.com) and type The Observation Booth, Andrea Dialect and/or Entertainment Section in the search bar. If you are interested in participating in a challenge, project sharing a topic, news or if you have any questions, comments or concerns, send them to [localtalkandrea@gmail.com](mailto:localtalkandrea@gmail.com).

TOWN WATCH

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cutor Theodore "Ted" Stephens II and West Orange Chief of Police James Abbott said that the suspects, who were driving a car in the neighborhood, saw two other men walk into 48 Watson St., at the northwest corner of Chestnut Street, that Tuesday.

The suspects got out of their car once the victims left Watson Grocery & Deli. The victims were aggravatedly assaulted, one account included a pistol-whipping, before both were shot at about 3:20 p.m. Residents and

found abandoned in Newark. The shooter and the driver remain at large.

**SOUTH ORANGE / MAPLEWOOD** - An arm of the two-town public school district has scheduled an Oct. 6 meeting to see whether re-establishing courtesy school busing later in 2022-23 will be better than having none all this school year.

The South Orange-Maplewood Board of School Estimate is to convene a public session to "preliminary discuss Courtesy Transportation" 6 p.m. Thursday 5:30 p.m. at the district's Administration Building at

525 Academy St., Maplewood. The Oct. 4 announcement includes, "Action may be taken."

BSE, made of Maplewood and South Orange board members and elected officials, normally develops and approves an annual school budget for the two-town district. This special panel is reconvening because a prospective restart of courtesy busing would require an amendment to the 2022-23 budget.

The South Orange-Maplewood School District had ended courtesy school busing at the Sept. 1 start of the school year. By "courtesy," students  
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**TOWN WATCH**

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who live between a mile and two miles of their schools or two miles would be allowed onboard for their daily commute. The state requires school bus transportation to students who live beyond the two mile radius of their schools.

The SOMSD Board of Education waived its re-entry into the 2022-23 school budget Aug. 1. Board President Thair Joshua said there was "not enough time or resources" for its restoration. (Joshua has since declined seeking board member re-election on Nov. 8.)

Critics have since said that the lack of courtesy busing inconveniences parents who have to drive their children or find other means to get them to school and back. The lack of a courtesy busing program, they further reason, may affect SOMSD's plans to further integrate its school children.

The BSE session is scheduled to be carried live on SomaTV, SOMSD YouTube Livestream and SOMSD's Webex Platform. Check these sources for the meeting's later livestreaming or broadcasting.

**BLOOMFIELD** - A Brookdale section elementary school was evacuated before its scheduled dismissal time here Oct. 4 as the result of a called-in bomb threat.

"At approximately 2:21 p.m., I received information that a potential bomb threat directed towards Demarest School," said Principal Mike Sullivan later that Tuesday. "Immediately upon receiving this threat, I called the Bloomfield Police Department and evacuated the building out of an abundance of caution."

Responding BPD officers simultaneously searched the school building for any explosive devices and for the threat caller.

Sullivan, in his open letter to the Demarest community, said that BPD had "identified the suspected caller." Neither the principal or the police have disclosed who the caller was and whether that suspect is facing criminal charges.

Demarest administrators and teachers returned to the building once BPD officers gave the "all clear" signal. Demarest and the other Bloomfield Public Schools remained closed until Oct. 7 to observe Yom Kippur as scheduled.

"Students and staff returned to the building and took part in dismissal," said Sullivan. "I want to thank the teachers and the students. I'm proud that they did an incredible job of evacuating the building quickly and safely while staying calm under stressful circumstances."

**GLEN RIDGE** - Relatives, friends and classmates of Jordan Ali Mayrant, 21, gathered at Bloomfield's Van Tassel Fu-

neral Home Oct. 5 - some of whom have left a makeshift memorial here on Bloomfield Avenue and Hill Street's northwest wall since Sept. 27.

Authorities have been looking for the cause of the collision between Mayrant's motorcycle and an SUV at that intersection at about 4 p.m. that Tuesday. Mayrant and his Yamaha YZF were going west on the avenue when they and the Audi Q5 met.

Responding GRPD officers promptly closed the avenue between Hillside and Ridgewood avenues. Traffic, including NJTransit and Decamp buses, were detoured via Belleville Avenue.

Mayrant was rushed to University Hospital - where was declared dead at 4:45 p.m. The Q5 driver, said an ECPO spokesman, was not facing charges.

Mayrant, a Bloomfield High School Class of 2019 graduate, held an engineering associate's degree from Bergen Community College. Cars, car repair, motorcycles and go-karts were among his many passions.

Parents Violetta Kasprzak and Robert A. Mayrant, Jr., stepparents Edgardo Mendoza and Tranaya Harris, sisters Sajada and Nina Mayrant, half-sister Laila Mayrant, half-brothers Ryan and Mason Mayrant and Christian Stewart, grandfather Robert Mayrant, Sr. and grandmother Marianna Kasprzak are among his survivors.

**MONTCLAIR** - The Township Council, after four hours' deliberation before a capacity council chamber gallery of 150, approved its fire service contract with Glen Ridge, 4-3 here Sept. 28.

At-large councilmen Robert Russo and Peter Yacobellis and Deputy Mayor William Hurlock, who attempted tabling the approval, said that a contract analysis by the township CFO's office was not included. They also questioned whether or how Bloomfield's non-bidding was communicated to them.

Mayor Sean Spillar and respective second, third and fourth ward council members Robin Schlager, Lori Price Abrams and David Cummings approved the 10-year contract. Schlager said that the threat of Glen Ridge possibly suing Montclair should the latter withdraw from the pact was a factor.

**Katon Washington (1994-2022)**

Montclair High School Wrestling Champion Katon Donte Washington, who was killed in Orange Sept. 22, was laid to rest here at Rosedale Cemetery, after a memorial at O'Boyle's Funeral Home, Oct. 4.

Katon, who was born Feb. 4, 1994 at RWJBarnabas Health Clara Maass Medical Center, was a MHS 2012 graduate by way of Hillside Elementary and Glenfield

Middle schools. His entrepreneurial spirit and experience led him to start a trucking company this year.

Parents Katon, Sr., and Amber Quince, grandmother Jacqueline D'Arco and siblings Alana Quince, Karon, Sr., Quaizon, Keionte Washington and Zhanera Mumford Washington are among his survivors. His Sept. 22 homicide at Orange's Cleveland and Alden streets remains under ECPO investigation.

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