

LOCAL TALK

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OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

ESSEX COUNTY • EAST ORANGE • ORANGE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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SENATOR RON L. RICE, LEGEND & TRAILBLAZER, GONE AT 77



NEWARK - One of the greatest African American and Essex County pioneers for true service to the community has left the earth at 77 years of age.

Senator Ronald L. Rice was born December 18, 1945 in Richmond, Va. After growing up under Jim Crow laws in the South, Rice made his way up north to pursue new avenues. From 1966-70, he was enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps, and from 1968-69, he served in the Vietnam War, earning Presidential and Navy Unit Citations. After his tour, he was honorably discharged with the rank of sergeant.

According to a legacy profile on the New Jersey State Democrats website, Rice received an associate's degree in police science at Essex County Community College, a bachelor's degree at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York, in 1976, and his master's degree at the Rut-

(Continued on page 11)

RANKING THE BEST AGENDAS IN ESSEX COUNTY

By Walter Elliott

ESSEX - Those who follow council meetings in Newark and East Orange can be reassured that they can get access to council agendas and their supporting materials.

"Local Talk" had so inquired from the respective East Orange and Newark municipal clerk offices in the wake of a Belleville man's March 1 release of an Excel spreadsheet of agenda access, live broadcasting and regular public meeting start times of 25 municipalities among three counties.

Michael Sheldon, who is a regular Belleville Township Council meeting attendee and public speaker, said he had surveyed all 22 Essex County municipalities plus Hudson County's Kearny and Lyndhurst and North Arlington in Bergen County.

Sheldon had conducted his survey to compare how the other municipalities have furnished agenda materials and broadcasted council meetings with Belleville. This survey was prompted by two incidents before and during Belleville's Feb. 28 council meeting.

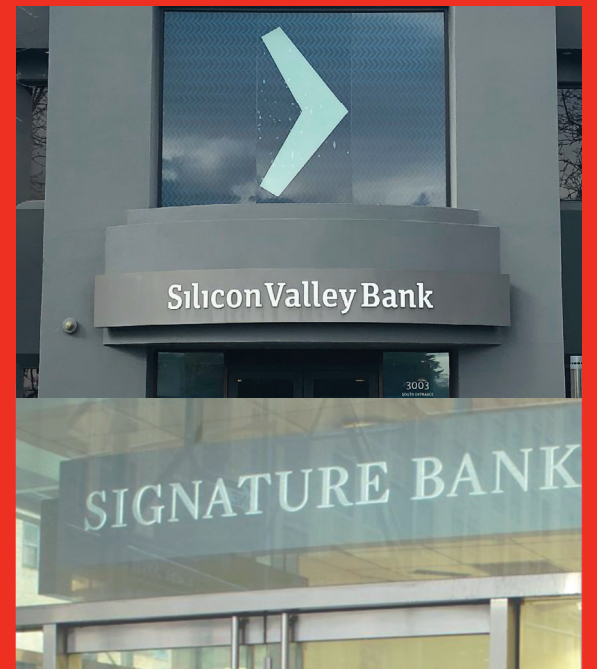
Sheldon and other council chamber gallery attendees found printed copies of that night's meeting on chamber seats before the scheduled 6 p.m. start time.

Municipalities are required to post and publish governing bodies' agendas at least 48 hours in advance on the respective meeting.

If one wanted to see full resolutions, ordinances and supporting materials related to Feb. 28's agenda, however, they were thumbtacked to the bulletin board on the hallway wall next to the chamber's doors. All of the bulletin board's materials were in

(Continued on page 9)

INVESTORS GROW WORRIED AFTER MULTIPLE BANK FAILURES



In just a matter of hours, two prominent banks in the U.S. had operations taken over by the FDIC.

On March 10, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) announced that it had taken over operations at California-based Silicon Valley Bank. This came two days after the bank announced that it sold over \$20 billion in securities and \$2.25 billion in treasury stock, and borrowed \$15 billion. The news caused bank customers to start a bank run, withdrawing over \$40 billion soon after.

Then, on March 12, it was announced that Signature Bank out of New York was also getting taken over by the FDIC. Signature was heavily into cryptocurrency. The bank failures of SVB and Signature came after Silvergate Bank announced that it would be shutting down amid its cryptocurrency failings.

(Continued on page 11)



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Editorial
 Dhiren Shah
 Editor-in-Chief

Hello Readers,

Our beloved Senator Ronald Rice (1945-2023, 77 years old) has passed away and hopefully gone to heaven. His heart for the people and constant work for the people is the key to become close to the people's heart. Local Talk's staff and I will pray for his soul. Local Talk offers condolences to his family, friends, and his followers.

If some legislation was not right for the people, he stood up against his friends, whether local officials or even the governor. The community came first, always. I salute Ronald L. Rice who served the community in the State Senate from 1986 to 2022. He was elected in a special election to serve the 28th

District after the death of John P. Caufield in 1986. Since then, he served as a senator and once as deputy mayor and West Ward councilman of Newark, NJ. He lost two elections for the mayoral election, once against former mayor Sharpe James in 1998 and against Cory Booker in 2006. In my opinion, he was an elected representative who was truly for the people.

President Joseph Biden declared his budget proposal on March 8, 2023. He has promised that he will tax wealthy Americans making over \$400,000 and extend social security benefits for about 25 years. However, in his \$6.8 trillion budget proposal, there is no mention of a social security program which he promised to raise money for. His plan for infrastructure money is mainly for New York and New Jersey projects, the extension of the Second Avenue Subway and a new train tunnel between New York and New Jersey. He has increased spending on military and benefits for the lowest earn-

ing retirees, which is a good point in the budget. Right now, the economy is not looking so good due to high inflation. The open southern border is costing us millions to keep those who illegally entered the USA.

Saudi Arabia and its archrival Iran have signed an agreement by mediator China. Now, they have plans to open their embassies in both countries. They will renew the security pact signed between those two countries 22 years ago. China and Russia are getting closer to each other, and now they are joining hands with Saudi Arabia, Iran, and a few other countries. This is not good for America. We should not be fully trusting our allies, especially European allies who can flip at any time if it is not in their favor.

House Oversight Committee Chairman James Comer (R-Ky) has revealed without name that a Biden family member is involved in Hunter Biden's overseas dealings with China for about \$3 million. Comer declined to reveal the name of the person. Comer

stated that the revelation raises more national security concerns. Also, the Republicans have access to some of the Biden family's financial records, which found this \$3 million dollar payment from the Chinese Community Party, shortly after Biden's tenure as Vice President concluded.

The spring election season in the Local Talk area is around the corner. For Newark and Irvington, the school board election is on April 25, 2023. Municipal elections for non-partisan posts in South Orange is on May 9, 2023. The Primacy election is on June 6, 2023. The General Election will be on November 7, 2023. Belleville, Bloomfield, Orange, Maplewood and West Orange have moved their elections to November. This will save money for those cities on the election cost.

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>
Partly Cloudy	Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Sunny	Partly Cloudy
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The Doctor Is In



OP-ED BY DR. ADIL MANZOOR

Sleep in Hospitals: How Important Is It Really?

Virtually everyone on the planet loves to sleep. Even the ones that claim they don't fully understand how necessary it is to survival. If you even a full day without sleep, you will start to experience different dangerous side effects. But many people don't even need to go a full day before they start to experience

the side effects of insufficient sleep; just missing a few extra hours will do it.

While most people enjoy sleep because it allows their body to recharge and refresh, not many know that sleep is actually necessary to the healing process. This leads us to today's topic – sleep in hospitals. If sleep is necessary for healing, then you would expect that hospitals will allow good and sufficient sleep for patients. That only makes sense, right?

Well, many hospitals in the United States either don't know this, don't care enough to actually do something, or believe there is nothing they can do. Irrespective of the category the hospital falls into, there is absolutely no justification for poor, insufficient sleep commonly observed in hospitals.

So you can fully understand the gravity of this discourse, let me explain some of the benefits of sleep as it relates to the healing process. For starters, around 90% of growth and healing hormones are released during sleep. And not just any type of sleep

now, but deep sleep. I don't know how familiar you are with the biology of sleep, but there are two phases of sleep – rapid eye movement (REM) and non-rapid eye movement (NREM) sleep. NREM sleep is further subdivided into four stages, known as stages 1 – 4.

Every time you sleep at night, your body alternates between REM and NREM sleep in what is known as the sleep cycle. It lasts around 90 minutes. The last two stages of NREM sleep are known as deep sleep, and you usually get to these stages within one hour of sleep. It is during this deep sleep that the body's healing processes do their work.

Unfortunately, many people in hospitals don't get enough of this deep sleep because of frequent interruptions from either doctors or nurses and bad sleeping conditions. This essentially means the healing process for these individuals is not as smooth.

Also, sleep is important in managing inflammation. I have noticed that many tend to refer to inflammation always in a negative sense, which is far from the truth. Inflammation is actually important for the immune system to ward off foreign invaders and infections. The problem is when inflammatory responses occur unnecessarily and become chronic. However, sleep can help manage inflammation, allowing the body to fight infections.

Then, there is the fact that sleep helps refresh the body. This is even more important for patients that usually go through different medical procedures and processes during the day, making them so stressed by the end of the day. Sleep helps calm their body down and ensures they wake up in a great mood, which is also essential for healing.

I could go on, but you get the point. This is why it is totally unacceptable that patients don't sleep well in hospitals. There are stories of patients that can barely get an hour of sleep before being interrupted by a medical practitioner. There are other cases where the hospital environment is itself uncondusive for sleep. This may be because of bad

lighting, uncomfortable beds, noise, etc.

Whatever the case may be, it is the responsibility of health workers to ensure patients get enough sleep. This may be by combining all medical processes that have to be done at night so patients can sleep for extended periods. Also, hospitals should consider optimizing their rooms and beds to support good sleep. Some hospitals have even taken the initiative and implemented "sleep rooms."

Whatever the case may be, for desired health outcomes and positive patient experience, hospitals must ensure they put patients in the best possible condition to sleep well. Of course, I know some patients don't sleep well for reasons beyond the hospital, but at least the hospital puts them in the best condition to sleep. After which, the reasons for the lack of good sleep can be properly tackled.

This article was written by Dr. Adil Manzoor DO, a Board-Certified Internist & Board-Certified 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 & House call Doctors. He is also currently pursuing an Executive MBA and a Master's of Science in Healthcare Leadership at Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management and the Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences.

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- <https://www.pennmedicine.org/news/news-blog/2021/july/minimizing-disruption-maximizing-sleep-in-the-hospital>
- <https://www.healthline.com/health/deep-sleep#sleepstages>

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SPORTS WRAP



Photos By Marvin Chambers



By William Hathaway, Jr.

March Madness has arrived, and conferences from all over D1 showcased teams for the NCAA tournament. The annual Big East Tournament took place in New York City at Madison Square Garden, with several teams looking to punch a ticket by either winning it outright or impressing the selection committee.

On the opening day in the men's tournament, St. John's beat Butler 76-63 thanks to 19 points and 15 rebounds from Joel Soriano and Posh Alexander's 13 points. Butler was led by Simas Lukosius' 23 points. Seton Hall lost a heartbreaker to DePaul 66-65, after a potential

game winning layup off of goaltending was overturned by the officials. Leading DePaul was Javen Johnson with 19 points and 4 rebounds and Jalen Terry with 14 points. The Hall got a solid performance from Tyrese Samuel with 16 points and 12 rebounds. In the nightcap, Villanova beat up Georgetown 80-48, who fired head coach Patrick Ewing after the loss.

The next day, top seeded Marquette beat St. John's 72-70 in overtime. Leading Marquette was Tyler Kolek with 19 points and 9 rebounds while Kam Jones had 11 points. Connecticut beat a sporty Providence team 73-66. The Friars got a solid effort from Bryce Hopkins, who scored 16 points and



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grabbed 7 rebounds in the loss. Adama Sango netted 10 points and 5 rebounds in UConn's win. Other games saw Creighton stun Villanova 87-74 and DePaul lose to Xavier 89-84.

In the semifinal round, Marquette slipped by Connecticut 70-68. Kolek led Marquette once again, this time with 17 points and 4 rebounds while David Joplin posted 17 points and 3 rebounds. Sanogo gave UConn 19 points and 11 rebounds. Xavier handled Creighton 82-60 thanks to Jack Nunge's 17 points and 9 rebounds and Colby Jones' 14 points and 10 rebounds.

The title game saw Marquette easily beat Xavier 65-51. Kolek was big again, scoring 20 points and grabbing 8 rebounds while Kam Jones had 11 points and 5 rebounds. Adam Kunkel had 14 points and 4 rebounds to lead Xavier. Marquette became the outright Big East Conference champions for the first time ever and won their first ever conference championship. Head coach Shaka Smart earned Big East Coach of the Year while Tyler

Kolek was Big East Player of the Year.

The men's NCAA tourney has slotted Alabama as the overall #1 seed, along with defending champion Kansas, Houston, and Purdue getting the other #1 seeds. Notably, Rutgers got snubbed, and will have to settle for the NIT along with Seton Hall. Fairleigh Dickinson ended up in a #16 play-in game to determine who gets to play Kansas.

As for the women's tournament bracket, undefeated defending champion South Carolina is the obvious overall #1, with Indiana, Virginia Tech, and Stanford as the other #1s. UConn had to settle for a #2 seed this time, while locals St. John's and Monmouth ended up in play-in games. Seton Hall will host Saint Joseph's in the first round of the WNIT.

Finally, Aaron Rodgers announced that he intends to play for the New York Jets next season, pending the team working out a trade with the Green Bay Packers.





UNITED STATES

U.S. VS. RITE AID

On March 13, the Justice Department announced that the United States has filed a complaint in intervention in a whistleblower lawsuit brought under the False Claims Act (FCA) against Rite Aid Corporation and various subsidiaries (collectively Rite Aid) alleging that Rite Aid knowingly filled unlawful prescriptions for controlled substances. In addition to alleging claims under the FCA, the government's complaint also alleges violations of the Controlled Substances Act (CSA). Rite Aid is one of the country's largest pharmacy chains, with over 2,200 pharmacies in 17 states.

The government's complaint alleges that, from May 2014 through June 2019, Rite Aid knowingly filled at least hundreds of thousands of unlawful prescriptions for controlled substances that lacked a legitimate medical purpose, were not for a medically accepted indication, or were not issued in the usual course of professional practice.

These unlawful prescriptions included, for example, prescriptions for the dangerous and highly abused combination of drugs known as "the trinity," prescriptions for excessive quantities of opioids, such as oxycodone and fentanyl, and prescriptions issued by prescribers whom Rite Aid pharmacists had repeatedly identified internally as writing illegitimate prescriptions.

The government alleges that Rite Aid pharmacists filled these prescriptions despite clear "red flags" that were highly indicative that the prescriptions were unlawful. The government further alleges that Rite Aid not only ignored substantial evidence from multiple sources that its stores were dispensing unlawful prescriptions, including from certain pharmacists, its distributor, and its own internal data, but compounded its failure to act by intentionally deleting internal

notes about suspicious prescribers written by Rite Aid pharmacists and directing district managers to tell pharmacists "to be mindful of everything that is put in writing."

By knowingly filling unlawful prescriptions for controlled substances, the government alleges that Rite Aid violated the CSA and, where Rite Aid sought reimbursement from federal healthcare programs, also violated the FCA.

Along with Rite Aid Corporation, the government's complaint names as defendants the following Rite Aid subsidiaries: Rite Aid Hdqtrs, Corp.; Rite Aid of Connecticut, Inc.; Rite Aid of Delaware, Inc.; Rite Aid of Maryland; Rite Aid of Michigan; Rite Aid of New Hampshire; Rite Aid of New Jersey; Rite Aid of Ohio; Rite Aid of Pennsylvania; and Rite Aid of Virginia.

Whistleblowers Andrew White, Mark Rosenberg, and Ann Wegelin, who all previously worked for Rite Aid at various pharmacies, filed an action in October 2019 under the qui tam provisions of the FCA. Those provisions authorize private parties to sue on behalf of the United States for false claims and share in any recovery. The Act permits the United States to intervene and take over the lawsuit, as it has done here in part. Those who violate the Act are subject to treble damages and applicable penalties. The case is captioned United States ex rel. White et al. v. Rite Aid Corp., et al., No. 1:21-cv-1239 (N.D. Ohio).

The United States' intervention in this matter illustrates the government's emphasis on combating health care fraud. One of the most powerful tools in this effort is the FCA. Tips and complaints from all sources about potential fraud, waste, abuse and mismanagement can be reported to the Department of Health and Human Services, at 800-HHS-TIPS (800-447-8477).

This matter is being handled by the Civil Division's Commercial Litigation Branch (Fraud Section) and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Ohio. The DEA Cleveland Field Division, FBI Cleveland Field Office, and HHS-OIG provided substantial assistance in

the investigation.

The United States is represented in this matter by Senior Trial Counsel Christopher Wilson of the Civil Division's Fraud Section and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Patricia Fitzgerald and Elizabeth Berry for the Northern District of Ohio.

Claims asserted against defendants are allegations only and there has been no determination of liability.

WORLD

HOLD THE SALT

A first-of-its-kind World Health Organization (WHO) Global report on sodium intake reduction shows that the world is off-track to achieve its global target of reducing sodium intake by 30% by 2025.

Sodium, an essential nutrient, increases the risk of heart disease, stroke and premature death when eaten in excess. The main source of sodium is table salt (sodium chloride), but it is also contained in other condiments such as sodium glutamate. The report shows that only 5% of WHO Member States are protected by mandatory and comprehensive sodium reduction policies and 73% of WHO Member States lack full range of implementation of such policies.

Implementing highly cost-effective sodium reduction policies could save an estimated 7 million lives globally by 2030. It is an important component of action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal target of reducing deaths from noncommunicable diseases. But today, only nine countries (Brazil, Chile, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Spain and Uruguay) have a comprehensive package of recommended policies to reduce sodium intake.

"Unhealthy diets are a leading cause of death and disease globally, and excessive sodium intake is one of the main culprits," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. "This report shows that most countries are yet to adopt any mandatory sodium reduction policies, leaving their people at risk of heart attack, stroke, and other health problems. WHO calls on all countries to imple-

ment the 'Best Buys' for sodium reduction, and on manufacturers to implement the WHO benchmarks for sodium content in food."

A comprehensive approach to sodium reduction includes adopting mandatory policies and WHO's four "best buy" interventions related with sodium which greatly contribute to preventing noncommunicable diseases. These include:

- Reformulating foods to contain less salt, and setting targets for the amount of sodium in foods and meals
- Establishing public food procurement policies to limit salt or sodium rich foods in public institutions such as hospitals, schools, workplaces and nursing homes
- Front-of-package labelling that helps consumers select products lower in sodium
- Behavior change communication and mass media campaigns to reduce salt/sodium consumption

Countries are encouraged to establish sodium content targets for processed foods, in line with the WHO Global Sodium Benchmarks and enforce them through these policies.

Mandatory sodium reduction policies are more effective, as they achieve broader coverage and safeguard against commercial interests, while providing a level playing field for food manufacturers. As part of the report, WHO developed a Sodium country score card for Member States based on the type and number of sodium reduction policies they have in place.

"This important report demonstrates that countries must work urgently to implement ambitious, mandatory, government-led sodium reduction policies to meet the global target of reducing salt consumption by 2025," said Dr Tom Frieden, President and CEO of Resolve to Save Lives, a not-for-profit organization working with countries to prevent 100 million deaths from cardiovascular disease over 30 years.

"There are proven measures that governments can implement and important innovations, such as low sodium salts. The world

(Continued on page 12)

BLACK LIVES, ANIMAL LIVES, ALL LIVES MATTER



By Michelle Lowe

EST...1996

Message For You

Hello everyone, I'm back again with you all. Hope everyone has been staying focused.

This weather passing through empowered me. How about it everyone. Snow finally falls during this season. but it will be all over soon. The last of the cold days are almost gone. I love all seasons.

Rising every day for me is a blessing; I cannot complain. Cherishing life is a wonderful thing and you have to very well accept it, whether you want it or not. Folks, don't wake up on the wrong side of the bed, taking frustration out on others. You never know when that might be the last time with them. My life can always use more improvement. I think of the odds and evens in life. The power to be in control, to voice your own opinion, utilizing skills in life.

Be your own leader, everyone. Take a chance, step out of your shell. So many things are possible to achieve in life. Remember, life is not going to



wait. If you had a bad day, make the next day clearer; have no negativity around, only positive things. Some of us don't listen, but listening is important. A lot of structure and instruction comes out of listening and improving anything in your life. You have to follow directions in order to succeed. You talk to people, you ask; do you hear me? Or either they say yes, but in reality, it went in one ear and out the other. Listening to one another makes a better understanding. Don't forget that paying attention will help get the task done correctly.

Well, we all know one thing foremost to promote a great life is to be healthy, especially for the function of the brain, mentally, physically, socially. Maintain what goes into your body, knowing what's good for you or not. Take your vitamins, take care of your body, maintain a strict diet. Exercising is important too, don't be lazy. For a longer lasting, healthy life, take care of your body everyone, balancing out certain nutrition in your daily routine, making healthier food choices. Health plays a major role in life.

P.S. Everyone, let do something, starting today, and that is learn, live, and love. 'Til next time. ...

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Bloomfield	15,893	178	15,901	178
Caldwell	2,138	20	2,143	20
Cedar Grove	5,048	145	5,057	145
City of Orange	9,947	179	9,947	179
East Orange	21,699	409	21,725	409
Essex Fells	635	2	637	2
Fairfield	2,574	44	2,580	44
Glen Ridge	1,675	20	1,677	20
Irvington	14,780	288	14,809	288
Livingston	8,748	115	8,754	115
Maplewood	6,819	53	6,836	53
Millburn	4,776	18	4,779	18
Montclair	9,297	93	9,307	93
Newark	98,355	1,301	98,451	1,302
North Caldwell	1,877	10	1,883	10
Nutley	8,514	91	8,532	92
Roseland	1,820	27	1,824	27
South Orange	4,558	25	4,567	25
Verona	4,339	26	4,343	26
West Caldwell	3,339	68	3,339	70
West Orange	17,173	282	17,199	282
Total	258,850	3,558	259,185	3,562

OTHER COVID-19 TALLIES (As of March 15, 2023)

NJ: 2,552,746 cases / 32,917 deaths (Plus 3,116 probable)

Final report: United States (approx.): 104 Million / 1.125 Million deaths

Final report: Worldwide (approx.): 676.606 Million / 6.882 Million deaths

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- Bookmarks
- Flyers
- Door Hangers
- Greeting Cards
- Labels
- Postcards
- Posters
- Table Tents
- Complete Printing

PRINTING

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(2 parts / 3 parts)
- 2/3 Part Booklets
- TICKETS
(with stub)
(Numbered)
- LARGE FORMAT**
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AGENDAS (Continued from page 1)

a locked glass case.

He or she who wanted that information would have to ask for a copy in Belleville Town Hall's Municipal Clerk's office during business hours.

Sheldon, a former Belleville Board of Education Trustee, later took exception to Mayor Michael Melham's on-air comment that the Belleville council meeting is the only one in the area that is livestreamed.

By "livestream," Sheldon included meetings carried live on Facebook, YouTube or Zoom. They are carried on the said social media channels plus on cable television public access channels.

Sheldon's survey is timely in the wake of local governing bodies returning to live in-person meetings since the global COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic.

The Maplewood Township Committee, as of March 7, has reopened its chamber gallery to the public. The meetings will continue being livestreamed.

Viewers and attendees in other towns, including West Orange and Montclair, are asking their elected elders to ask questions during Zoom or other livestreamed channels.

Irvington's Township Council meetings - among other municipal board and commission panels like zoning boards and housing authorities - remain "on Zoom only."

Sheldon's survey spreadsheet, concerning the 12 "Local Talk Towns," found Newark and East Orange joining Belleville in not having full agenda materials available. Belleville was listed as "Never," East Orange and Irvington as "Partial" and Newark as "Almost."

"Local Talk" visited the East Orange Clerk's Office March 14 to pick up a physical copy of the previous night's 6 p.m. City Council Agenda. A copy was duly furnished - and could have asked for the same night's 5:30 Committee Meeting Agenda.

A copy of each, along with agenda and meeting calendar notices of other East Orange and Essex County Commissioner panels, were tacked up on the Clerk's Office bulletin board.

"Local Talk" did not venture into the Council Chamber to see if agendas - and a set of proposed resolutions and ordinances - were on the Gerry Branch Memorial Bulletin Board.

Both the committee and regular council agendas are reproduced hardcopies posted on East Orange's city website. It appears that copies for proposed legislation are for in-person asking.

Irvington follows a similar rack to East Orange. "Proposed" Township

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Council agendas are posted on Irvington.net Physical copies thereof, because of its current by Zoom-only status, are posed in the Municipal Building and are available at the Township Clerk's Office.

One has to call or visit the clerk's office, however, to get a copy of a proposed resolution or ordinance.

By rating Newark "Almost," Sheldon explained that he happened to visit the Municipal Clerk's office "while they were still composing a full agenda packet" for the 12:30 p.m. March 1 meeting.

Newark.legistar.com, on the city website, lists both the March 1 and the 6:30 p.m. March 15 agenda. They are reproductions of the physical copies found on a table outside of the City Hall Council Chamber and on the clerk's public table inside the chamber. (It was at the latter table where one, in pre-pandemic times, can

obtain addendums to the already posted agenda.)

All 37 pages of the March 15 agenda and March 1's 36 pages remain unchanged in format from pre-pandemic. Individual proposed legislation are listed under their pertaining city department. Each legislation has an extensive summary, including purpose, price amount, funding source, term length, vendor name, etc. It is more extensive than most other LT area agendas.

One can click on the reproduction's serial number on online - and one gets linked back to Legistar's summary. One still has to backtrack to the clerk's office for a particular hard copy.

East Orange's City Council meetings are livecasted at facebook.com/eocitycouncil. The said address is printed on the 2023 City Council Calendar and at the Clerk's Office.

(Continued on page 13)



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 - There are one to four reasons why the Newark Public Schools Board of Education approved four outside attorney service contracts at their Feb. 23 meeting.

Each of the four contracts to pay \$285 an hour plus expenses are for the said lawyers to represent members before the New Jersey State Department of Education School Ethics Commission.

Neither NPS' administrators nor any of the nine board members would identify which of the four members are facing ethics charges. The NJDOE ethics commissioners, by state law, cannot discuss a complaint before them until they have heard the matter or if the matter has been withdrawn, dismissed or settled.

There was at least one abstention recorded on each attorney contract vote roll call. Board Member Hasani Council had abstained on all four votes. Board President Dawn Haynes and members A'Dorian Murray-Thomas and Crystal Williams abstained once on the other three contract resolutions.

Abstentions, according to "Robert's Rules of Order," are neither for nor against matters put before the governing body. They are used by members who cannot legally vote on a matter due to a conflict of interest.

Souder, Shabazz and Woolridge, of Newark, are to represent two of the board members in question. The other two members are to be represented by Janelle Edwards-Stewart of Morristown's Porzio, Bromberg & Newman PC.

No party has come forth as

the complainant or about the complaint's nature.

IRVINGTON - Township Council, on Feb. 27, joined the growing roster of New Jersey municipalities who are banning the use of dirt bikes, ATVs and similar "off road vehicles" on their public streets.

The council's resolution bans the said vehicles from using or being parked on township streets. These vehicles are also not to be parked or stored in public view on driveways and front lawns.

Irvington's measure is to curb the "12 O'clock Boys" runs and stunts on township streets. Freelance youths have been seen and heard driving in packs on streets here and beyond the "Local Talk" area for the last decade.

Many of the said riders operate without wearing helmets and on vehicles that do not have license plates. It is presumed that none of the riders carry insurance should they run into something or someone else.

"12 O'clock Boys" is also the name of a 2013 documentary covering packs who plied Baltimore streets - as "Local Talk" witnessed while on way to the 2011-13 Baltimore Indycar GP by the Inner Harbor. The term also refers to the stunt where a rider runs while in a near-vertical position.

Irvington's resolution, going by the Feb. 27 council agenda resolution summary, also bans those off-road vehicles that are insured and registered with the state MVC and wear license plates.

EAST ORANGE - Some of those who are planning to attend the East Orange School District Board of Education meeting here March 21 may be wondering about three related questions:

- Will Unite Here Local 100 school cafeteria workers continue to bring up their state of negotiations with food vendor SodexoMagic, like they had here on March 6?
- Will Local 100 and SodexoMagic announce a new labor contract?
- Will Local 100 make good on their March 6 strike

threat?

Local 100 President Jose Maldonado and some of the unionized cafeteria workers came to the March 6 board meeting to announce that they have just voted to authorize a strike. Maldonado added that talks with Sodexo have bogged down over wage increases and the potential subcontracting of some food services.

SodexoMagic and the EOSD, with the school board's approval, had entered a food service partnership Sept. 1, 2022 - Aug. 31, 2027. The nationally known Sodexo, Inc. and Magic Johnson Enterprises have since been providing nutritious food for district staff and students with Local 100 labor.

Sodexo, Inc., one of the country's largest food service providers, reported a 21.2 percent increase of revenue in 2021-22 compared to the previous fiscal year, according to their Oct. 25 board of directors meeting.

A Sodexo spokesperson said that they and Local 100 are returning to the bargaining table on March 17 to complete NY-NJ area contracts.

ORANGE - There are those in and around the Orange Valley who are wondering if mass transit will keep up with the new housing going up in the neighborhood.

The Orange Planning Board unanimously approved Scotland Ventures' plans on Dec. 21 for a 65-unit six-story apartment building to go up at 611-17 Scotland Rd. The building will replace the two houses at 611 and 613 Scotland and go up on the Fine Finishes auto body site. Fine Finishes was destroyed in a Feb. 22, 2022 two-alarm fire.

611-17 Scotland is the latest of four apartment buildings going up or have been completed within Highland Avenue train station's half-mile Transit Village Zone radius. Construction is about to start on a seven-story Scotland Holdings' building at 448-452 Scotland. Harvard Printing, I and II, at 550 Central Ave., Orange and 22 Central, West Orange, and Hat City Lofts, at 475 So. Jefferson Ave. here, had respectively opened in 2019 and 2018.

New Jersey Transit's Highland Avenue Station service, however, remains largely unchanged since the carrier cut Morris & Essex Line off-peak rush hour service to 60-minute intervals in May 2010.

Just over a third of the 145-weekday eastbound and westbound M&E trains, going by its Nov. 13, 2022 timetable, stop at Highland Avenue (51), South Orange's Mountain Station (52) and East Orange Station (52) NJTransit's 2017 weekly ridership data has East Orange being used by 455 weekly riders, followed by Mountain's 333 and Highland's 233.

While all 37 weekend and major holiday M&E trains stop at East Orange Station, Highland Avenue is served 19 times and Mountain 18. The 37 hourly trains alternate between Highland Avenue and Mountain, making riders wait up to two hours at their respective stops between trains.

Orange DPW Director Marty Mayes, when he was also the city's planning and economic director in 2018, said that NJTransit cannot increase Highland Avenue service due to capacity limits in the New York Penn Station Hudson River tunnels. (The city had recently hired Laquana Best as Planning and Economic Director.)

Capacity relief and more Highland Avenue-New York Penn service may be a decade away once the two new Hudson River tunnels are built. Off peak M&E service to Hoboken Terminal, since 2010, is every two hours.

While NJT upgrade the No. 92 night and weekend bus service from 90 minutes to 60 minutes in the early 2000s, CoachUSA reduced its No. 44 Tremont Ave service to hourly in 2017. Neither West Orange or South Orange's community shuttle minibuses are known to stop at Highland Avenue or Mountain stations.

WEST ORANGE - Although moving the West Orange Library's move to 10 Rooney Circle from 46 Mt. Pleasant Ave. is proceeding, the Supreme Court of New Jersey's March 13 ruling may put a speed bump, if not a
(Continued on page 14)

RON L. RICE (1945-2023)

(Continued from page 1)

gers University Graduate School of Criminal Justice in 1979. He also attended Rutgers University School of Law.

Rice joined the Newark Police Department in 1972, and became a detective in 1974. He left the Police Department in 1980 to join the Public Service Electric & Gas Company as a member of the management team in the safety and security department. In 1982, Mr. Rice transferred to the Public Service community affairs management team.

In 1982, he won the West Ward council election to earn a seat on the Newark City Council, and was re-elected in 1986, 1990 and 1994. In July 2002, he was appointed deputy mayor of Newark. In 1998, he lost a bid for mayor of Newark to incumbent Sharpe James. Rice would run again in 2006 after James decided not to run, but lost to Cory A. Booker.

Rice won his Senate seat in a special election Nov. 18, 1986, for the unexpired term of the late John P. Caufield, who died on Aug. 24. Mr. Rice was sworn and took his seat Dec. 4, 1986. He was elected to a full term in 1987, and re-elected nine times. His service of 36 years is a record for an African American legislator in New Jersey.

After his election to the Senate, he resigned his position with the utility company, to devote full time to his legislative and municipal offices.

Senator Rice sponsored legislation in the areas of criminal justice, healthcare, affordable housing, tenant rights, employee rights and education.

“Senator Rice was famous for not going along with the wishes of the establishment, choosing to instead advocate for his constituents, regardless of whoever he ticked off,” said “Local Talk” Content Editor Kristopher Seals. “He was also an elected servant who you would actually see in the community. We actually went to the same pizza joint, and he was always cordial, and never one of those ‘superiority complex’ elected officials who assume they tell you what to do, rather than the other way around. Rest in peace, Ron.”

Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka made a statement on the passing of former State Senator Ronald L. Rice:

“All of Newark is saddened to learn of the passing of former State Senator, Deputy Mayor, and Municipal Council Member Ronald L. Rice today.

“Ronald Rice wore many hats with distinction in a career of public service that lasted more than four decades - Newark Police Detective, first African-American to hold a West Ward Council seat, Deputy Mayor, first African-American to hold elected office in both state and local government. Known as the ‘Lion of the Legislature,’ he served as State Senator for 36 years, 18 of them as chair of the New Jersey Legislative Black Caucus. He was one of my great advisers and mentors.

“In Trenton, he was both warrior and diplomat - fervent in his fight for the needs of our residents, and their quality of life. He was unwavering in his conviction that America will attain its highest ideals of liberty and justice and his sights were laser-focused on the long game of racial equality. He championed the discarded and disenfranchised and uplifted women, seniors, and children. He

offered leadership and guidance to colleagues and constituents, and mentored many active and aspiring leaders throughout the state.

“Ron Rice was always there for Newark when we needed him, and we thank him for his immense commitment to public service and hard work. I know that all of Newark joins me in gratitude for his life, mourning his loss, and extending our prayers and condolences to the Rice family.”

Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr. released the following statement about the passing of Senator Ron Rice:

“I am saddened by the passing of Senator Ron Rice. Ron was a tireless worker for Newark and its residents. He was a trailblazer and icon who never compromised his ideals or principles. I am glad that we were able to recognize Ron by dedicating the new sports complex in Essex County Vailsburg Park when he was able to experience it. My heart and thoughts are with his family.”

Senate Majority Leader M. Teresa Ruiz issued the following statement on the passing of former Senator Ronald L. Rice:

“Today we lost a giant, a man who lived his commitment to public service over a lifetime of hard work, sacrifice and dedication to the residents of Newark, his legislative district and the State of New Jersey. As we remember Senator Rice, it is my hope that his loved ones can take comfort in the legacy he leaves behind as a trailblazer, a fierce advocate and above all else, a friend.”

In 2022, Rice resigned from his post as State Senator in the wake of his wife Shirley’s passing and declining health due to cancer. He is survived by daughter Yuki, son Ronald C. Rice, a former West Ward councilman, and grandchildren.

BANKS *(Continued from page 1)*

There is concern that these failures could lead to a domino effect, as many banks employed a similar strategy since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The strategy in question was to take advantage of tech sector growth as people were forced online instead of going to shuttered stores. With deposits made by tech businesses, banks purchased long-term bonds and borrowed freely, because there was a glut of tech money with people staying home, like with Zoom. Unfortunately, thanks to the Federal Reserve going hard on interest rate hikes, the value of the bonds dropped and the rate of borrowing increased, leading to the collapse of the banks.

To prevent a panic, President Biden spoke the morning of March 13 to explain what was happening.

“First, all customers who had

deposits in these banks can rest assured they’ll be protected, and they’ll have access to their money as of today. That includes small businesses across the country that banked there and need to make payroll, pay their bills, and stay open for business.

“No losses will be - this is an important point - no losses will be borne by the taxpayers. Let me repeat that: No losses will be borne by the taxpayers. Instead, the money will come from the fees that banks pay into the Deposit Insurance Fund.

“Because of the that our regulators have already taken, every American should feel confident that their deposits will be there if and when they need them.

“Second, the management of these banks will be fired. If the bank is taken over by FDIC, the people running the bank should not work there anymore.

“Third, investors in the banks will not be protected.

They knowingly took a risk and when the risk didn’t pay off, investors lose their money. That’s how capitalism works.

“And fourth, there are important questions of how these banks got into these circumstances in the first place. We must get the full accounting of what happened and why those responsible can be held accountable. In my administration, no one, in my view - no one is above the law.

“And finally, we must reduce the risks of this happening again. During the Obama-Biden administration, we put in place tough requirements on banks like Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank, including the Dodd-Frank Law, to make sure the crisis we saw in 2008 would not happen again.

“Unfortunately, the last administration rolled back some of these requirements. I’m going to ask Congress and the banking

regulators to strengthen the rules for banks to make it less likely that this kind of bank failure will happen again and to protect American jobs and small businesses.

“Look, the bottom line is this: Americans can rest assured that our banking system is safe. Your deposits are safe.”

Because shareholders in SVB were not protected, they have already begun proceedings for a class action lawsuit against the bank. Also, the federal government is looking into SVB for any illegal activity such as insider trading.

Meanwhile, stocks tumbled after reports that Europe-based Credit Suisse has encountered some “problems,” making investors fear that a contagion of banking failures is imminent. The Saudi National Bank, which owns nearly a 10% stake in Credit Suisse, has said it would not provide any bail out.



*From
The
Pastor's
Heart*

OP-ED BY DR. ROBERT KENNEDY

The End of Satan's Power

Many people are mystified by the unleashing of the demonic forces seen in today's world. It is as if there is no restraint. Satan seems to be let loose everywhere, stirring up nature with horrific storms, floods, tornadoes, earthquakes other natural disasters. And unfortunately, he is also creating conditions in the world so that people are killing one another over the lack of natural resources. Nature, it seems, is in rebellion; everything seems to be turned upside down.

In the sociopolitical world, there also seems to be no restraint. Many leaders seem to have no regard for those whom they lead. Some are using their authority without any sense of accountability. Others are leading by propping up their power, sacrificing the lives of their people. Someone said, "It seems God has left the world in Satan's hands."

And sometimes, it seems that Satan is dominating the spiritual world and the churches in the same way that he has dominated the natural and sociopolitical

world (John 8:44; Colossians 1:13). His work of destruction is seen everywhere, as he allows those who call themselves spiritual and religious to prostitute themselves at every altar, by invoking the name of God. I will not comment here on my observation; it seems obvious enough. If you are observant, you have seen what is taking place among the religious who are casting aside the truths of God and accepting the satanic lies, even denying the existence of Satan.

Yes, I want you to know that, as you are, I am as anxious for the putting down of Satan as well. I want to know how soon God will "bind" Satan in the abyss (abussos) and declare his final destruction (cf Revelation 20:4-6). Just as some of you might be, I, too, am tired of the news of death and destruction that Satan is bringing upon the world.

Although anxious, I rest my case in God with my four great declarations.

1. That the power of God supersedes Satan's power.
2. That Jesus Christ has already declared Satan a defeated foe at the cross and through the resurrection.
3. That God has already put all things under the feet of Jesus Christ - who is the Victor.
4. That the God who has begun a good work in me and will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

What other certainties do I need today? It is imperative to understand that Satan does not have the last word because God's power supersedes Satan's. And when God says, "It is finished," that is it; "It is finished." God will bring to complete fulfillment that which he has declared. Therefore, we must be careful not to attribute to Satan the mighty power that belongs to God and God alone. Satan is powerful; there is no question about it. But God is all-powerful.

The Bible says the following about the limitations of Satan.

Luke 10:18, 19 - I saw Satan falling from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.

Romans 16:20 - The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

Job 1:12 - Then the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him." So Satan departed from the presence of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 10:13 - No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

Revelation 12:12 - For this

reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time.

James 4:7 - Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

The lyrics of a song from my boyhood days fill my heart with assurance. I quote here one stanza that is truly meaningful.

One sat alone beside the highway begging,

His eyes were blind, the light he could not see.

He clutched his rags and shivered in the shadows

Then Jesus came and bade his darkness flee.

Chorus

When Jesus comes, the tempter's power is broken;

When Jesus comes, the tears are wiped away,

He takes the gloom and fills the life with glory,

For all is changed when Jesus comes to stay.

What assurance? One day Satan will be bound and destroyed. After that, he will not be around to tempt and destroy anymore. That will be a day of rejoicing.

WORLD NEWS FLASH

(Continued from page 6)

needs action, and now, or many more people will experience disabling or deadly - but preventable - heart attacks and strokes."

The global average salt intake is estimated to be 10.8 grams per day, more than double the WHO recommendation of less than 5 grams of salt per day (one teaspoon). Eating too much salt makes it the top risk factor for diet and nutrition-related deaths. More evidence is emerging documenting links between high sodium intake and increased risk of other health conditions such as gastric cancer, obesity, osteoporosis and kidney disease.

WHO calls on Member States to implement sodium intake reduction policies without delay and to mitigate the harmful effects of excessive salt consumption. WHO also calls on food manufacturers to set ambitious sodium reduction targets in their products.

To read the report, visit: <https://>

www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240069985.

WORLD

MORE HELP NEEDED IN TURKEY& SYRIA

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, on March 13 underlined the need for greater and urgent international support for survivors of the recent deadly earthquakes in Syria and Türkiye following a five-day visit to the two countries.

Mr. Grandi met with people who have been affected by the catastrophe, as well as aid workers on the ground. He also reviewed and discussed the immediate humanitarian response with the authorities.

The first of the earthquakes struck on Feb. 6, killing some 54,000 people across the region, according to the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, which he heads.

They also caused massive destruction in

an area where more than 23 million people live, including millions who have been displaced inside Syria, or forced to cross the border, due to the war, now in its 12th year.

"The level of destruction and devastation is shocking and in many places it is apocalyptic," he said. "Millions have suffered loss, injury and trauma, and many others have been displaced by this tragic and terrible event."

Mr. Grandi visited Ankara, Hatay and Gaziantep in Türkiye. In Syria, he travelled to Latakia, Hama, and Damascus, and undertook a cross-border visit to earthquake-affected and other displaced people in the northwest.

UN convoys have been transporting aid into northwest Syria - the last opposition stronghold - since 2014, and via a single crossing point. More than four million people were already in need prior to the earthquakes.

Aid deliveries were temporarily halted in the aftermath, due to damage along key

(Continued on page 13)

NEWARK POLICE OFFICER CONVICTED OF OFFICIAL MISCONDUCT



rick J. Arre, J.S.C.
An investigation by the Essex County Prosecutor's Office Professional Standards Bureau, which investigates criminal allegations against police officers, found that Gibson took sick leave from the Newark Police Division from March 6, 2018, through November 2, 2018. During that period, he received his full pay and benefits from the City of Newark.

At the same time, Gibson worked a private security job at a local hospital on 32 days between March 20, 2018, and September 22, 2018. On 31 of those days, he worked during the same hours he was scheduled to work for the Newark Police. He was paid more than \$46,000 from the City of Newark and \$4,700 from

the local hospital for the security job. He was suspended without pay in November of 2018.

After the verdict, Assistant Prosecutor George Gay, who tried the case, said, "The conduct that was proved in a fair and open trial was egregious and far below the high standards we demand of police officers. The people of Essex County should feel assured that there is one standard of justice and that their Prosecutor's Office will not tolerate public officials who put their personal gain ahead of their duty to the public."

Gay thanked detectives at the Essex County Prosecutor's Office Professional Standards Bureau and the Newark Police Division Office of Professional Standards. He said their work

proved that allegations of misconduct by police officers "will be thoroughly and independently investigated until the truth is discovered and that their work will withstand the test of a criminal trial."

Gibson is scheduled to be sentenced on April 28, 2023. The Official Misconduct conviction requires a mandatory five-year prison sentence. He was remanded into the Essex County Correctional Facility.

In addition, Gibson has two open indictments, which include charges of Distribution of Controlled Dangerous Substances, Conspiracy, and Official Misconduct. He has pleaded not guilty to these charges and remains innocent until proven guilty.

NEWARK - Acting Essex County Prosecutor Theodore N. Stephens, II has announced that Newark Police Officer Anthony Gibson was convicted of one count of Official Misconduct and one count of Theft after a trial before the Honorable Pat-

AGENDAS (Continued from page 9)

East Orange joins the other 11 Local Talk Towns that broadcast or livestream their council meetings.

Sheldon had faulted the Belleville Township Council meetings for starting at 6 p.m. A later start time, he reasons, will allow peo-

ple to personally attend and participate.

"Local Talk" ranks Belleville as third or fourth earliest among its 12 towns. Many of the council's start times have been traditional and long set.

Newark, for example, holds its first monthly meeting at 12:30 p.m. and its second at 5:30 p.m. Newark's 5:30 start is tied

with East Orange's 5:30 p.m.

West Orange, at 6:30 p.m., is the next latest council public start. Montclair and Nutley start at 7 p.m. and the rest at 7:30.

The public start times should be listed as advisories. Prolonged executive sessions and/or inclement weather may delay posted start times.

WORLD NEWS FLASH

(Continued from page 12)

roads, but resumed within days. Syria subsequently agreed to the opening of two more aid corridors.

UNHCR and humanitarian partners, especially national and local responders, continue to step up assistance in the two countries. Since the earthquake, UNHCR has delivered tens of thousands of tents, beds, mattresses, thermal blankets and other desperately needed support.

Mr. Grandi said needs on the ground are enormous, underscoring that more funding is crucial.

"While it is critical to think about and support longer-term efforts, much more humanitarian aid and early recovery resources are needed so that people can begin to rebuild their lives and livelihoods," he added.

The UN is seeking \$1 billion for the humanitarian response in Türkiye and nearly \$400 million for Syria. UNHCR's part of the response plans totals just over \$200 million.

EUROPE

ENERGY AID CONTINUING

On March 15, the Chancellor of His Majesty's Treasury announce that the Energy Price Guarantee, which is protecting households by capping typical energy bills at

£2,500, will be maintained at the same level for a further three months over April, May, and June, worth £160 in total for a typical household.

The Chancellor announcing the extension as part of his Spring Budget, which focuses on easing the impact of rising prices, delivering on our promise to halve inflation, and growing the economy by supporting more people into work.

Government support has already cut the typical family energy bill by over £1,300 since October, stopping the average household energy bill hitting £4,279 a year this winter.

The Chancellor's three-month extension of the Energy Price Guarantee at £2,500 means households won't feel the full force of Ofgem's Price Cap between April and June - which stands at £3,280 - helping to bridge consumers into the summer.

Lower wholesale gas prices are expected to feed through to lower household energy bills from July, where Cornwall Insight data suggests the Ofgem Price Cap will reach an estimated £2,100 a year for a typical household.

From April, more support is coming online with 8 million low income and vulnerable households set to receive at least £900 in cash payments over the next year, benefits and pensions set to rise by over 10 percent, and the National Living Wage increasing to a record £10.42 an hour, so that it always pays to work.

The Spring Budget will go even further, providing hundreds of pounds more in help with childcare costs for parents on Universal Credit and ending the energy premium paid by households who use prepayment meters, which will save four million families £45 a year from July.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said, "We know people are worried about their bills rising in April, so to give people some peace of mind, we're keeping the Energy Price Guarantee at its current level until the summer when gas prices are expected to fall."

"Continuing to hold down energy bills is part of our plan to help hardworking families with the cost of living and halve inflation this year."

Chancellor Jeremy Hunt said, "High energy bills are one of the biggest worries for families, which is why we're maintaining the Energy Price Guarantee at its current level. With energy bills set to fall from July onwards, this temporary change will bridge the gap and ease the pressure on families, while also helping to lower inflation too."

Energy Secretary, Grant Shapps said, "Putin's illegal war has cost British families, which is why we've stepped in to pay around half of the typical household energy bill."

"With wholesale prices falling families will start to benefit, but in the meantime we're stepping back in with the Energy Price Guarantee to prevent the typical electricity and gas bill exceeding £2,500. It's just part of our plan to help families this winter."

The Observation Booth



OP-ED By Andrea Dialect

establish connections. As a journalist, I do that often. Still, when it comes to friends and coffee, many show up who are already friends. Logically, I do that, too, lol.

The Inner City Cafe is a beautiful idea. Not to mention the amazing atmosphere; it is an extraordinary place to work on that to-do list. The staff is well-trained, and the coffee and other things are very nice for the price. Dr. Turner is a beautiful soul and an excellent conversationalist. Check out that resume. It's quite impressive. ICC ... I like. - Andrea Dialect

COFFEE & CONVO (PT. 1)

many ups and downs, but one thing was constant. Completing those required papers or prepping for those tests while sitting in Starbucks the entire time. That's where my thoughts of Inner City Cafe were born!"



Fatimah Turner - Owner / Operator of Inner City Café / Therapist / Professor / Published Author / School Board Member / Social Justice Advocate

"As a kid, I was always a dreamer. I had so much trauma; my mother would never let me go outside. So I used to watch a lot of movies. I am a movie fanatic. I know so many movies with or without music. If I had gone to college after high school, I would have been a theater major. I love theater. My favorite movies were things like Lady Sings the Blues and Sparkle. I just love culture and movies, theater, and things like that.

"Now fast forward, I'm getting my Doctorate, and I knew that I couldn't get a degree doing something I loved because now I'm a single mom, and I need a

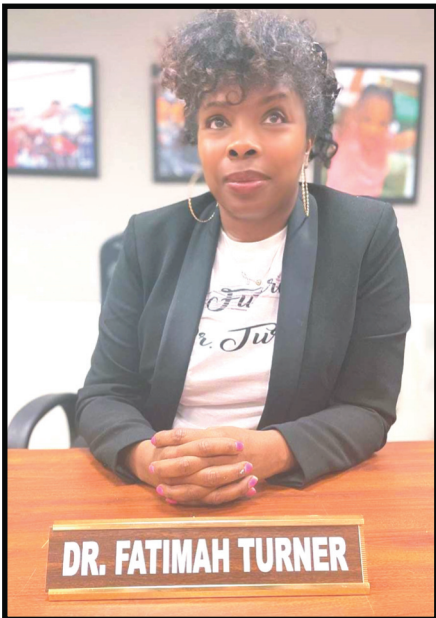
degree that's going to make me make money. I couldn't do what I wanted to do because I always had to do what I had to do. To take care of everybody else, so as I was getting my degrees, I could never go to the library. I always went to Starbucks, and I would work, and I got all of my degrees at Starbucks.

"I just remember sitting in there and feeling like it wasn't the place where I wanted to be. I always imagined having a spot similar to places like The Cotton Club and a place that's on Love Jones. Every time I would go places, I would visit these cute little coffee shops and things like that.....

Read this article in its entirety at 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.



INNER CITY CAFÉ



Fatimah Turner, PhD, LCSW, MEd

"I had been trying to get my degrees throughout the years, but stuff kept happening. I questioned my staying in that space; did I want my children to see mommy as that woman or a woman of strength? The other driving force was when my daughter came home from school one day, and she needed paperwork from my college; at the time, I had dropped out; I felt like a failure, so I went back to school. It feels like I've been in school all my life. I got my associate's in 2011, my bachelor's in 2012, my master's in 2015, another Master's in 2016, and then my Doctorate in 2022. So from 2011 to 2022, I got all those degrees. I obtained five of them in eleven years, so my brain has been pushed. Those were challenging times with

A coffee chat is an informal meeting, typically between two people. The primary purpose of one is networking to help you

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 10)

road block, to the township's plans to replace the library's old building.

It appears, as of press time, that the Township Council's recent directive to redeveloper Joe Alpert to start demolishing WOPL's 1959 building and 1979 annex by April 1 may be on hold, given the SCONJ's ruling on "An Area in Need of Redevelopment."

The state's high court, in the opinion of Chief Justice Stuart Rabner, has invalidated the township's AINOR criteria under the Local Housing and Redevelopment Law. Rabner, in the 18-page ruling released Monday, said that the Township Council and its planning consultant had falsely determined that the 64-year-old building and 44-year-old annex were "obsolete."

"Like many older buildings, the library needed improvements in a number of areas,"

said Rabner for the court. "But the record didn't establish that it didn't suffer from obsolescence, faulty arrangement or obsolete layout in a way that harmed the welfare of the community. To designate property for redevelopment under the LHRL, a municipality must demonstrate that certain specified problems exist and that they cause actual detriment or harm."

The ruling, which was based on the 105-page Heyer, Greul consultant's study of 46 Mt. Pleasant Ave. and resulting Township Council AINOR designation from 2019.

The ruling may have at least paused plans to build a five-story senior citizens apartment building at 46 Mt. Pleasant Ave. Such construction, said Township Attorney Richard Trenk, would help West Orange meet its Coalition for Affordable Housing quota. (NOTE: Trenk's name was misspelled in the March 9 TW entry.)

The ruling came after the high court had

heard arguments from lawyers representing the township and, until recently, Kevin Malanga on Oct. 24. Malanga, who took West Orange to court over its library AINOR, appealed to SCONJ after losing in state superior and appellate court.

SOUTH ORANGE / MAPLEWOOD - A committee of South Orange-Maplewood School District administrators is examining applications for who will succeed Board of Education Member Susan Bergin.

The school board has meanwhile kept Bergin's seat vacant until the committee makes an appointee recommendation.

Bergin, of Maplewood, tendered her resignation with immediate effect on Feb. 20. The New York City lawyer said that her firm had given her a promotion that would present a conflict of interest.

The 13-year Maplewoodian and mother
(Continued on page 15)

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 14)

of three was more than halfway through her first term. She and Courtney Winkfield, of South Orange, ran together in 2020.

A majority of registered two-town voters selected her, Winkfield and current board First Vice President Elissa Malespina, of South Orange, were elected to their first terms Nov. 3, 2020. Malespina and Wakefield's terms are to expire on Dec. 31.

Whoever is appointed to succeed Bergin may have the option to run for a full three-year 2024-26 elected term.

Bergin meanwhile left behind an open letter urging for greater public involvement. instead of "joking about popcorn-watching meetings," "pot-stirring" and "lively entertainment."

BLOOMFIELD - A township man, as the result of a Nov. 22 conviction for a 2019 car hire carjacking, has been serving an up to 29-year sentence in state prison since March 3.

N.J. Superior Court Judge Thomas Isenhour, from his Elizabeth bench that Friday, sentenced Farrakhan Howard to 24 years on the first-degree carjacking count - including a concurrent 18-year sentence for the first-degree attempted murder of its Lyft driver.

Judge Isenhour also placed a consecutive five-year sentence for the third-degree aggravated assault of its passenger. Howard must serve at least 85 percent of his overall sentence before being considered for parole or early release.

The Union County Prosecutor's Office had tied Howard, 30, to the stabbing of the 47-year-old driver in Clark and the stabbing of the 20-year-old woman passenger.

Clark police found the driver along Westfield Avenue just after 1 a.m. April 24, 2019. The driver had stab wounds to his head, face and neck. Rahway police found the passenger with stab wounds to her head and scratch wounds to her neck.

The driver and passenger said that fellow passenger Howard began scratching and stabbing the woman. The driver stopped the car to assist the woman - only for Howard to assault him. Both bailed out and Howard stole the car. The vehicle was found in Woodbridge.

The Superior Court-Elizabeth jury, on Nov. 22, also found Howard guilty on a pair of third- and fourth-degree weapons possession charges.

MONTCLAIR - Councilman-at-Large Peter Yacobellis, as of March 13, has filed a defamation suit against two township residents over their accusations

against him in the Feb. 21 Township Council meeting.

Yacobellis, in his State Superior Court -Newark filing, charged that David Herron and Martin Schwartz had conducted "a self-interested defamatory smear campaign designed specifically, as threatened, to damage Yacobellis' reputation."

Herron and Schwartz, during the Feb. 21 public comment segment, claimed that Yacobellis' Out Montclair advocacy group had received donations from current Lackawanna Plaza owner David Placek. Placek currently has his plan to redevelop the historic Montclair train terminal and the former Pathmark supermarket before the township's council and planning board.

Herron and Schwartz, on Feb. 21, urged Yacobellis to recuse himself, including all communication, over the Lackawanna Plaza plan. The first-term councilman founded Out Montclair in late 2021, roughly a year after his 2020 election.

The councilman claims that he is suffering damage to his reputation plus material damage in the form of "the loss of email subscribers and financial support." He remains as Out Montclair's paid executive director.

Yacobellis has also named just-resigned Out Montclair advisors Anson Pope and Cathy Renna as "co-conspirators." He calls their wanting a private meeting in January an "extortion" attempt to "reveal information damaging to his reputation" should the meeting not take place.

BELLEVILLE - There is a reason one might have seen more Belleville police patrols around its public schools since late March 7.

Police officers said that a student was robbed of a cell phone while walking to school that Tuesday morning on a SoHo section street.

The child told responding BPD officers that, while walking along Rocco Street at 8 a.m. a car with Four occupants pulled up. One of the male passengers then got out, grabbed the phone and got back in. The car then sped south into Newark.

"Police immediately identified the vehicle after the incident," continued the BPD report. "These same individuals had allegedly committed similar incidents in at least one other jurisdiction Surrounding towns were notified."

The car, recovered from the Garden State Parkway, was earlier reported as stolen.

"Several males were detained," added the March 8 report. "(Belleville) detectives are investigating their role in our incident."

NUTLEY - Any memories of "The Three Little Hillbillies" performing here and nearby in the early 1930s may have died with actor Robert Blake's March 9 death in Los Angeles.

Blake, 89, was the last of the "Three Hillbillies." He, older brother James and sister Joan, under the watch of their father James, would sing and dance for spare change in Nutley and nearby town parks 1936-38.

"I was a child laborer, not a child actor," recalled Blake in a 1990s interview. "It was either that or stealing bottles of milk off front porches."

Blake was born here Sept. 18, 1933 as Michael James Vincent (or Vijencio) Gubitosi. He, James and Joan lived with father Giacomo (or James) Gubitosi and mother Elizabeth Cafone Gubitosi at 28 Humbert St.

James and Elizabeth moved to Hollywood in 1938, so their children can get hired as movie extras and vie for auditions. Michael Gubitosi, who changed his name to Robert Blake, was a cast member in the last 40 of the "Our Gang / Little Rascals" serial series.

Blake would be cast in 200 feature films and 41 television series 1938-97, except for a three-year tour with the U.S. Army. He received two Oscar nominations, a Golden Globe award - and an Emmy for his title performance in the 1977-78 television series "Baretta."

Blake was acquitted in the 2005 murder trial of wife Bonnie Lee Bakley but was found liable for her death in a later civil trial. His two other wives, a son and two daughters are among his survivors.

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