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

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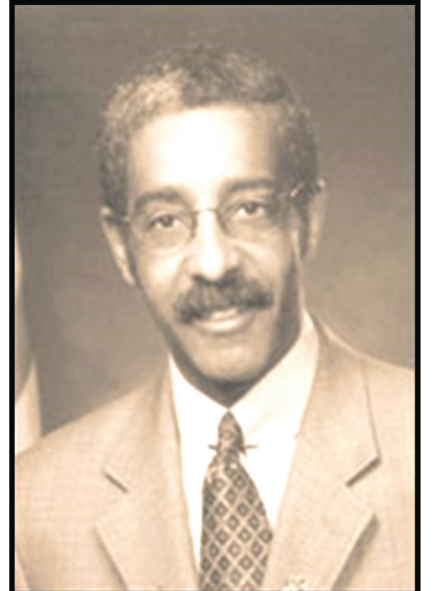
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SENATOR RICE REMEMBERED

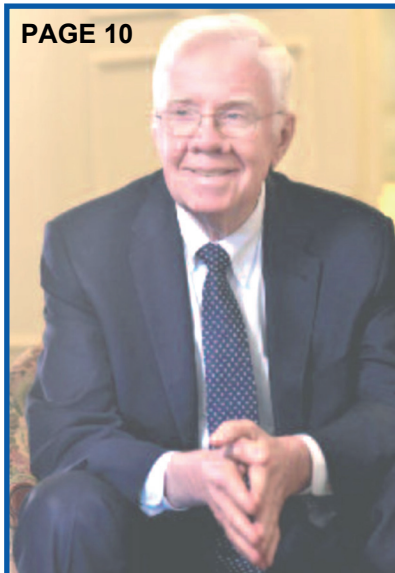
By Walter Elliott

"As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on, there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day; and not only to me but also to all who have longed for His reappearing. - II Timothy 4:6-8.



LOCAL LEGEND TOM GIBLIN SET TO RETIRE FROM ASSEMBLY

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NEWARK - If parking was scarcer and traffic more crowded than usual around the Perry Funeral Home here March 24-25, it was because of the volume of mourners who paid tribute to State Sen. Ronald L. Rice.

Perry, at 34 Mercer St., was where a "walk-through" visitation was held Friday night and his funeral service was conducted Saturday morning. It was similar in format to the August 2020 last rites for his late wife Shirley.

Many of those who gave their last measures of respect and honor to the former state legislator, deputy mayor, councilman, police officer, community organizer, marine and student followed Rice's remains to its last resting place Saturday afternoon - Union's Hollywood Cemetery.

The procession, led by the

Newark Police Division motorcycle unit, temporarily halted traffic while on its way through Newark and Hillside into Union. They passed U.S. and state flags that have been lowered to half-staff by Gov. Phil Murphy's March 16th's statewide proclamation.

Rice, 77, who had lost his battle against cancer March 15, was a Newark Vailsburg-based state General Assemblyman and State Senator for 34 years - Dec. 4, 1986 - Aug. 31, 2022. Becoming the longest-serving African American New Jersey state senator - he never received less than 66 percent of the vote - was largely thanks to the voters of the-now "Old" 28th Legislative District.

That Rice's public service was rewarded with continued

(Continued on page 11)

ANOTHER MASS SCHOOL SHOOTING

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Turn To PAGE 16



Editorial
 Dhiren Shah
 Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

Ronald L. Rice has gone from us, but he will be remembered for a long time. His commitment to helping people and handling politics is not an easy task. However, he managed very well between those tough tasks. He was thinking about the people over politics and that is the reason he was popular amongst the people.

Another respected local politician, Assemblyman Thomas Giblin, has announced that he will not run again. He has been in public service since 1977, first as a freeholder (commissioner), then member of the real estate commission, then as Essex County Surrogate, and since 2006 as an Assemblyman. As an assemblyman, he has proposed many bills, and about 37

bills have been passed according to his website. He understands the people's needs, as well as being present in the community. His likeable personality won the people's heart and he was voted back as an Assemblyman for over 15 years.

The Nashville, Tennessee school shooting is another mishap in our country. A 28-year-old woman who was a former student of the same Covenant Church school (up to 6th grade) with some mental problems came to the school with two assaulted rifles and a pistol with the intention to shoot and go to another place to shoot as well. She shot three children, all 9 years old, and 3 adults, all 60 years and up. In Tennessee, Governor Bill Lee signed a one-of-a-kind law in 2021 that anyone over 21 years of age can carry a handgun without a permit but cannot speak foul language or have adult oriented entertainment on public property. What a shameful display of priorities. We must find a solution for gun control and gun distribution in the streets.

On a rare occasion, lawmakers on both sides of Congress combined together to grill TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew. Many of the answers he had ended with a promise to get back to them. No one is convinced that TikTok will protect the vital information of TikTok users. The platform has not convinced lawmakers that they would not pass the information to the Chinese Communist Party. Mr. Chew stated that TikTok will send information to their Chinese owner counterpart secretly decoded and will not pass it to anyone else. However, TikTok is not releasing the information about the salary of their CEO like other US registered companies are doing.

So how can we trust them? TikTok failed to hold kids under 16 to a maximum one hour a day screen usage. Also, they have not given any clarification as to how they know if a user is under 16. Anyone can lie and give their birthdate as 21 years old, TikTok has no solution. So, it seems like Congress will ban TikTok from operating in the U.S., which is the right idea in my opinion. The

China-based app has 150 million users in the U.S., which is about half the nation's population, and the majority of their users are youngsters.

A Grand Jury indicted Wildwood Mayor Pete Byron, Former Mayor Ernest Troiano, Jr., and City Commissioner Steve Mikulski over alleged fraudulent participation in the State Health Insurance Program. They all are charged with tampering with public records, theft by unlawful taking and falsifying or tampering with records. Second-degree charges carry a sentence of five to 10 years in state prison and a fine of up to \$150,000, while third-degree charges carry a sentence of three to five years in prison and a fine of up to \$15,000. Fourth-degree offenses could lead to up to 18 months in state prison and a fine of up to \$10,000. The temptation makes people abuse their power, and this kind of investigation may stop corruption in the long run.

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>
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The Doctor Is In



OP-ED BY DR. ADIL MANZOOR

The Medical Debt Problem in the United States

News flash - there is a medical debt problem in the United States. Well, to be fair, this shouldn't be all that surprising, considering we have a debt problem in virtually all sectors of our economy. While all types of debt problems are certainly concerning, the medical debt problem is even more disturbing and worry-

ing. Here's why.

A survey from the Urban Institute of close to ten thousand people between the ages of 18 and 64 found that low-income people were affected to a greater extent by overdue medical debts. From the survey data, individuals with incomes at or below the federal poverty threshold had the most debt. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the number of people with overdue medical debts fell as income increased.

Another key aspect of the survey is the race of the people entrenched in this medical debt problem. As you may expect, people of color - particularly Blacks and Hispanics - were more affected than their white counterparts. In fact, the number of black individuals affected by medical debts was more than double that of white people with the same problem.

One last statistic that will interest you from the report is that most of the medical debts owed were owed to hospitals. And forgive me, but I have another interesting statistic from the report: people who owed hospitals had

significantly more debt than those who owed non-hospital providers. To be exact, 71.5 percent of individuals in the survey who owed hospital providers owed more than \$1000, while that figure stood at 32.6 percent for respondents that owed non-hospital providers.

What exactly do these figures mean? Well, for starters, the survey report establishes that we indeed have a medical debt problem in the United States. That scares me, considering just how increasingly difficult it is for Americans to survive on their income. Then, it gets even worse.

Most of the people who are affected by this medical debt problem are people who aren't financially comfortable to start with. So, the medical debts do nothing but compound their already complicated financial problems. Take a moment to consider how dangerous this can be. People with the most medical debts don't earn much to begin with, which means many of them may have to work multiple jobs to support themselves. This leads to them stressing themselves even more, further increasing the risk of getting more medical issues. It's a vicious cycle.

Again, people of color are even more affected than white Americans. I don't want to bore you with figures and numbers, but people of color in the United States usually bear more of the brunt of economic challenges in the country. So, these people of color aren't in the best position economically to begin with, and then the fact that they suffer more from the medical debt problem only compounds their economic problems.

Aside from working other jobs, people with medical debt problems also have to cut spending on food, clothing, and other basics, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation Health Care Debt Survey. Also, these individuals have used up all or most of their savings, they have delayed purchasing a home or furthering their education, sought aid from charity, and even declared bankruptcy and lost their homes.

Of course, we can spend all day pointing fingers and trying

to figure out whose fault the medical debt problem actually is. But that will change nothing unless it is backed up by action. Actual action from the government, the management of hospitals, insurance companies, and other stakeholders in the health sector. My hopes are not high, though, considering just how capitalistic the United States is.

There seems to be a passion among the very people who can implement a change to suck every last penny in the medical health industry. I am trying my best to restrain from a rant about the medical industry. I can say is this, though - if the medical debt problem in the United States is not addressed soon, we risk entering a full-blown crisis in an already over-inflated medical health industry.

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.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/02/14/fact-sheet-new-data-show-8-2-million-fewer-americans-struggling-with-medical-debt-under-the-biden-harris-administration/>

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SPORTS WRAP



Photos By William Hathaway, Jr.

By William Hathaway, Jr.

The 2023 NCAA men's basketball tournament is heading to a great finish. This past week, the regional semifinals and the regional finals took place in different cities to determine the Final Four. The East Regional had the best games of the college basketball season taking place in New York at Madison Square Garden.

In one contest, Michigan State lost to a razzle dazzle Kansas State team 98-93 in overtime. K-State was led by New York City native Markquis Nowell with 20 points, 3 rebounds and 19 assists. Teammate Keyontae Johnson had 22 points and 6 rebounds and Cam Carter had 12 points. MSU got 18 points from Joey Hauser and AJ Hoggard had 25 points and 6 assists.

In another game, #9 Florida Atlantic stunned #4 Tennessee 62-55. The FAU Owls advanced to the Regional Title game and beat #3 Kansas State 79-73. New Jersey native Nick Boyd, who played at Rutherford High School, had 4 points while teammate Bryan Greenlee had 16 points and Vadislav Goldin had 14 points and 16 rebounds. This marks the first ever Final Four appearance for Florida Atlantic.

In the South Region, San Diego State is headed to its first Final Four after stunning #1 Alabama and then coming back from 13 points down to defeat Creighton 57-56 on a controversial foul call. This gave SDSU the Midwest crown.

Also, Miami came back to beat #2 Texas 88-81 to claim the Midwest Region, while Big East Conference powerhouse Connecticut destroyed Gonzaga 82-54 to take the West. The Final Four matchups will have UConn play Miami and Florida Atlantic play San Diego State.

As for the women, #1 South Carolina got to the Final Four easily, and will play Iowa and star guard Caitlin Clark in one matchup, while LSU will face Virginia Tech.



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NJ ATTORNEY GENERAL TAKES OVER CONTROL OF PATERSON POLICE DEPT.

TRENTON - Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin announced March 27 that his Office is superseding the Paterson Police Department, and assuming control of all police functions, including internal affairs investigations, effective immediately.

Isa Abbassi, a twenty-five-year veteran of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and its current Chief of Strategic Initiatives, will become the Officer-in-Charge of the Paterson Police Department in May, having been appointed to that position by Attorney General Platkin. In the interim, command of the department will be assumed by key members of the Attorney General's staff and leaders from within the New Jersey State Police (NJSP).

As the current Chief of Strategic Initiatives for the NYPD, Isa Abbassi oversees policy reforms for the entire NYPD police force. He has served in the NYPD since 1997, and has suc-

cessfully managed command of more than 30,000 members of the force as the Deputy Chief of Police. In the wake of the death in police custody of Eric Garner in Staten Island in 2014, Chief Abbassi was selected by the New York City Police Commissioner to build community relationships with the police in Staten Island. Not only were his efforts effective in rebuilding community trust with the police, he enhanced public safety and police morale while implementing reforms. Chief Abbassi was awarded NYPD's most prestigious command recognition, the Unit Citation, for crime and violence reduction in Staten Island in 2019.

Chief Abbassi will assume his role at the Paterson Police Department in May. In the interim, the Department will be overseen by Major Fred Fife of the NJSP, as the Interim Officer-in-Charge. Major Fife will be

(Continued on page 9)



UNITED STATES

ANOTHER MASS SCHOOL SHOOTING

Despite not reaching 90 days into the year 2023 at this point, there have been over 190 mass shootings in the U.S. - and one of them is yet another mass school shooting.

The shooter in this case was 28-year-old Audrey Elizabeth Hale, a former student of her target, the Covenant School, a private Christian school in Nashville, TN. Hale used three of seven legally purchased firearms, one being an AR-15 like weapon, in gunning down three 9-year-old students - Evelyn Dieckhaus, William Kinney, and Hallie Scruggs - and three adults: substitute teacher Cynthia Peak, 61; custodian Mike Hill, 61; and head of school Katherine Koonce, 60.

Hale, who is reportedly transgender under a female to male transition, was confronted by authorities into the melee, and according to Police Chief John Drake, Officer Rex Englebert and Officer Michael Colazo delivered the fatal shots to Hale at around 10:27 a.m. local time, 14 minutes after the shooting began.

"Chief John Drake and the men and women of the MNPD join all of Nashville in mourning today's deaths of six innocent persons, three nine-year-olds and three adults, at the hands of an active shooter at Covenant Church/School on Burton Hills Drive," the MNPD said in a statement.

Upon speaking to reporters on the tragedy, President Biden said, "I have gone the full extent of my executive authority to do, on my own, anything about

guns... The Congress has to act. The majority of the American people think having assault weapons is bizarre; it's a crazy idea. They're against that. And so, I think the Congress should be passing the assault weapons ban...

"...I want to remind you, the last time we passed the assault weapons ban, violent shootings went down, mass shootings went down for 10 or however many years it was - 9 years. So I can't do anything except plead with the Congress to act reasonably."

WORLD

CONCERNS GROW OVER PANDEMIC MISINFORMATION

The head of the UN World Health Organization on March 23 spoke out forcefully against "misinformation on social media and in the mainstream media" which has falsely alleged that a new global pandemic accord being negotiated, would allow the WHO to override national sovereignty relating to a future outbreak.

Briefing correspondents in Geneva at his regular weekly press conference, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that "the claim that the accord will cede power to WHO is quite simply false. It's fake news."

He made clear that countries themselves will decide the wording and scope of any global agreement on how to tackle the next pandemic, "and countries alone."

"No country will cede any sovereignty to WHO," the Director-General emphasized.

News reports have highlighted several instances of online news sources and commentators in recent weeks, falsely claiming that the Biden administration in the United States, was negotiating a deal to allow WHO to "control" emergency laws in the event of another pandemic, such as COVID-19.

Earlier this month, Member

States of the WHO began negotiations on a draft global accord on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, working from an agreed "zero draft," designed to protect countries and communities from future pandemic emergencies.

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) which is drafting and negotiating the hoped for WHO agreement, is due to meet again early next month, with a view to producing a first draft.

INB Co-Chair, Ms. Precious Matsoso of South Africa, said at the March meeting, that the meeting was "a critical step in ensuring that we do not repeat the mistakes of the COVID-19 response, including in sharing life-saving vaccines, provision of information, and development of local capacities."

Tedros said that if any politician, business leader, "or anyone at all is confused about what the pandemic accord is and isn't, we would be more than happy to discuss it and explain it."

ASIA

INDIA URGED TO LAY OFF ACTIVISTS

India must immediately halt its crackdown on Kashmiri activists, the independent UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Mary Lawlor, said on March 24, calling for greater accountability.

Her appeal follows the latest arrest of prominent rights defender Khurram Parvez, who has been in detention for more than a year on charges related to conspiracy and terrorism.

"Indian authorities appear to be intensifying the long-standing repression of Kashmiri civil society," Ms. Lawlor said. "The State must respect its human rights obligations and be held accountable where it violates them."

Mr. Parvez has documented serious human rights violations in Indian-administered Jammu

and Kashmir and has been detained since November 2021.

He was arrested in a second case after two days' interrogation by India's main counter-terrorism body, the National Investigation Agency.

He was charged with financing terrorism under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, through his work with the Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS). The non-governmental organization (NGO) is based in the city of Srinagar.

Prior to his arrest, former JKCCS associate Irfan Mehraj, a journalist and human rights activist, was arrested as part of the same case on Monday in Srinagar. He was immediately transferred to India's capital, New Delhi.

Ms. Lawlor said JKCCS associates and volunteers are facing coercion and intimidation from the authorities, noting that the NGO carries out essential work monitoring human rights.

"Their research and analysis of human rights violations are of huge value, including to international organizations seeking to ensure accountability and non-repetition of abuses," she said.

She recalled that UN human rights experts have repeatedly highlighted grave concerns regarding the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, which allows the designation of any individual as a "terrorist", bypassing the requirement to establish membership of, or association with, banned groups.

She said the Act is applied as a means of coercion against civil society, the media, and human rights defenders in Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr. Lawlor called for Kashmiri human rights defenders to be released and for investigations against them to be closed. Her statement was endorsed by Clément Nyaletsossi Voule, the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of peaceful assembly and of association.

INTERVIEW WITH STATE SENATE CANDIDATE BRITNEE TIMBERLAKE

Dhiren Shah: Welcome to this interview. Why have you decided to run for State Senate?

Britnee Timberlake: I have decided to run for senate so that I can be at a higher playing field, to be able to voice the concerns of the citizens from that higher playing field. I want to have a bigger platform for people, so we can continue to pass the good legislation to make life easier for everyone, creating equity, and reversing the systemic issues deeply rooted within our systems, that unfortunately keep a lot of people out of opportunities and upward mobility throughout their lives.

DS: What is the difference workwise between the Assembly and Senate as far as your work is concerned?

BT: You have something call senatorial courtesy, which you do not get in assembly, and I am told with senatorial courtesy you are able to pass more laws. So, anyone that knows me knows that I am in politics so I can write legislation and do good work, and we already have a great record that exists doing great things. If I can improve the odds to do more legislation, I want to take that opportunity.

DS: But legislation is still generated in the Assembly?

BT: Legislation is passed by the Assembly as well as the Senate. With the senatorial courtesy, it is more likely that your legislation will be heard.

DS: How have things been in the state government since the redistricting?

BT: Things have been interesting in the state government with redistricting such as District 34. I represent East Orange, Orange, Clifton, and Montclair. With redistricting, I am running for the senate seat, in the areas of East Orange, Orange, Bloomfield, Belleville, Nutley and Glen Ridge.

DS: What is the biggest issue in New Jersey right now in your

opinion?

BT: The biggest issue in New Jersey, I believe, is high cost of living. One of the things I am able to focus on and combat is that there are housing opportunities for all people through affordable housing and workforce housing. It's the cost of living and being able to have access into the middle class, and having access into higher income classes and above the middle class.

DS: The tenants in certain cities have restrictions on rent raises. But rent control is not in all the cities. Why not have statewide rent control?

BT: Statewide rent control is something myself and my housing friends and advocacy groups all over the state are talking about. We do want to see statewide rent control, but we also want to see statewide inclusionary zoning, requiring every single construction project to have a certain percentage of affordability. Especially when there are tax abatements, PILOTs (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) given to developers, those projects especially need affordable housing.

With the model I have been promoting and pushing, we should really look not only at the 80% market rate and 20% affordability rate, but we should be looking at 75% market rate and 25% affordable rate. For those extra 5%, I called working professionals still in poverty, because of the high cost of living. So, someone works for municipal government. They do not qualify for a high salary, but they do not qualify for the affordable housing percent. We need to make sure that we provide stepping tools for more people and broadening the range from 120% median income on down. We have to make sure that we do not take away from those who qualify for affordable housing.

DS: What about the builders who are investing millions of dollars and if they have to build affordable housing, then with a lot of people with higher in-

(Continued on page 13)

BANKRUPTCY

CHAPTER 7 BANKRUPTCY
CHAPTER 13 BANKRUPTCY

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Bloomfield	15,918	178	15,933	179
Caldwell	2,148	21	2,151	22
Cedar Grove	5,067	145	5,072	145
City of Orange	9,947	180	9,947	180
East Orange	21,743	409	21,759	409
Essex Fells	638	2	639	2
Fairfield	2,595	44	2,598	44
Glen Ridge	1,678	20	1,678	20
Irvington	14,830	288	14,849	288
Livingston	8,763	115	8,770	115
Maplewood	6,850	53	6,858	53
Millburn	4,784	18	4,785	18
Montclair	9,324	93	9,337	93
Newark	98,522	1,303	98,574	1,306
North Caldwell	1,886	10	1,888	10
Nutley	8,556	92	8,569	92
Roseland	1,827	27	1,829	27
South Orange	4,573	25	4,581	25
Verona	4,346	26	4,350	26
West Caldwell	3,339	70	3,339	70
West Orange	17,214	284	17,234	284
Total	259,474	3,567	259,686	3,572

NJ COVID-19 TALLIES (As of March 29, 2023)
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DARRYL JEFFRIES RE-ELECTED TO SERVE AS PRESIDENT OF THE ORANGES & MAPLEWOOD NAACP

ORANGE: March 23, 2023 - Darryl L. Jeffries, a prominent marketing communications consultant and civic leader, was reelected to serve a two-year term as President of the Oranges & Maplewood Branch of the NAACP, in the recent special election held on March 16th. Jeffries defeated his opponent by a 16-vote margin 85-69, with 140 votes cast, including one abstention.

"I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all of you who expressed their vote of confidence to re-elect me to serve as your president. I truly owe a debt of gratitude to my election campaign team for their tireless efforts, and unflagging support," Jeffries stated.

"We have experienced an arduous process during this most recent election cycle. Despite the challenges placed before us, we rose to meet and exceed all expectations. We now have a mandate to continue to foster transformative change in the communities we serve. I look forward - with great anticipation - to working with our newly elected leadership team," Jeffries stated.

The new leadership team elected to serve with Jeffries, are the following officers: Danielle K.S. Thomas, 1st Vice President; William M. Brown, III, 2nd Vice President, Stephen Hobson, 3rd Vice President; Angela Stewart, Secretary; Lady Trisha A. Scipio, Assistant Secretary; Shirley Hobson, Treasurer; Members-At-Large: Pamela Gist Schaefer; Victoria Gray; Henrietta Rice; and Arleen Simmons.

"We live in one of the most extraordinary times in our nation's history," Jeffries continued.

PATERSON (Continued from page 5)

joined by Captain Jafca Mandziuk also of the NJSP, and Assistant Attorney General Joseph Walsh, as well as other members of the Department of Law and Public Safety.

"Due to a number of events and concerns relating to the Paterson Police Department, there is a crisis of confidence in law enforcement in the City of Paterson," said Attorney General Platkin. "People throughout Paterson deserve a public safety system that protects and serves all members of its community, just as the members of the Paterson Police Department deserve adequate resources, support, and innovation from their leadership.

"Chief Abbassi is an experienced, proven leader who has built community trust and achieved excellence through his innovation

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at the highest levels of law enforcement in this country. I am grateful for his service and I look forward to working with him to ensure public safety in Paterson. I am committed to restoring public confidence in the Paterson Police Department, which includes providing the officers on the force the support, resources, supervision, and training they need to be an exemplary police department."

In addition to assuming control of the City's police department, Attorney General Platkin is announcing the following initiatives to improve public safety in Paterson, and throughout the state:

- Implementation of the ARRIVE (Alternative Responses to Reduce Instances of Violence & Escalation) Together mental health-law enforcement co-responder program in Passaic County -

including bringing ARRIVE Together to Paterson. Currently operating in Cumberland, Union, and Atlantic Counties, and set to expand to additional counties this summer, ARRIVE Together pairs an officer, who is crisis intervention trained, with a mental health screener in an unmarked vehicle to respond to 9-1-1 calls for service relating to mental or behavioral health crises. Governor Murphy has proposed \$10 million in next year's budget to expand the program statewide. With the support of Governor Murphy, the Attorney General is in the planning stages of bringing the ARRIVE Together initiative to Passaic County, and is committed to implementing the program in the City of Paterson as soon as the framework and appropriate supports are in

(Continued on page 12)

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.

GIBLIN RETIRING FROM STATE ASSEMBLY

MONTCLAIR - Thomas P. Giblin, 76, within 24 hours March 24-25, has gone from being a General Assemblyman of the "Old" 34th Legislative District/"New" 27th LD to leaving.

Giblin (D-Montclair) announced Friday that he was calling time on his 18 years in the State Legislature and 50 years of political life. He will remain active as Essex-West Hudson Labor Council AFL-CIO President and CEO of the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 68.

The 2020 Census-based redrawing has sent him, Montclair and Passaic County's Clifton from the old 34th to the new 27th. He and any other state assembly and senate member from Montclair would have been pitted against fellow Democratic Party incumbents John McKeon, of West Orange, and Sen. Richard Codey, of Roseland. (Assemblywoman Mila Jasey, of South Orange, has earlier decided to retire.)

"It has been my greatest honor to serve as an assemblyman, freeholder, surrogate and party chair, working to improve the quality of life for the people of New Jersey," declared Giblin.

The East Orange native and former Newark and West Caldwell resident was referring to his years as county then-freeholder/now-commissioner 1977-79 and 1982-90, county surrogate (1990-93) and New Jersey State Democratic Committee Chairman (1997-2001).

LeRoy Jones - chairman of the Democratic Party's State, Essex County and East Orange

Committees - named Montclair on Alixon Collazos-Gill as Giblin's replacement for the June primary. Saturday. Jones asked Collazos-Gill after polling the party's municipal leaders.

Collazos-Gill was an aide for Cong. Steve Rothman (D-Englewood). The Colombian immigrant is a public affairs executive of the Gill Group here. She is also the wife of Essex County Commissioner Brendan Gill.

NEWARK - The third reported collision between at least one car and a school bus happened at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Muhammad Ali Avenue on March 22, sending students to two nearby hospitals.

Newark Public Safety Director Fritz Frage said that a school bus had struck a car - which in turn hit a parked car by the corner at about 8:29 a.m. that Wednesday. The bus was carrying 16 children from 6 to 11 years old.

Half of the students, who complained of pain, were taken to University Hospital for treatment of non-life-threatening injuries. The other half was taken to RWJBarnabas Health Newark Beth Israel Hospital for precautionary examinations.

Another three students were taken to a hospital as a precaution after a bus and a car collided along the 100 block of Manchester Place at 8 a.m. March 7. Both drivers involved stayed to talk with responding Newark police officers.

The driver of a third school bus was checked after a 9:45 a.m. March 1 collision on Branford Place between Treat Place and Broad Street - and the driver of the other car arrested.

Frage said that the car was driven and occupied by three under-aged youths when they struck the bus. The car was reported as stolen.

The bus driver who had a pain complaint was taking 11 Central High School students, a teacher and a teacher's aide on a field trip. None of those occupants reported any injuries.

IRVINGTON - Township police officers who were part of an investigation that had led to the Oct. 31 conviction of a Newark man for sexually abusing his two

stepdaughters had looked forward in his March 10 sentencing.

New Jersey Superior Court Newark Judge Verna Leath sentenced Thomas Crandell, 53, of Newark to 106 years in state prison that Friday. Crandell, under the No Early Release Act, has to serve at least 85 percent of his sentence - which means his first chance for parole will not happen until the year 2113.

The sentence came after a jury, on Oct. 31, had convicted Crandell on all 26 sexual assault and child endangerment charges lodged by the Essex County Prosecutor's Office.

Crandell was convicted of sexually abusing the older stepdaughter several times while she was 14-to-17-years-old 2014-17. He was also found guilty of similarly abusing the younger stepdaughter, then 14, three times in 2018.

The daughters reported the abuse to the Irvington Police Department in late 2018. Township officers had since worked in league with ECPO's Special Victims Unit on the investigation.

EAST ORANGE - ECPO Accident and Compliance units had been investigating a March 26 police pursuit that led to a bus crash and a city police officer firing a shot.

At least two EOPD patrol cars were pursuing a suspected vehicle east on Springdale Avenue when the latter car veered into the path of a westbound NJTransit No. 34E bus west of North Arlington Avenue at Noon Sunday.

The NJTransit driver ran off the road to avoid the errant car, sending it through a fence of the Bethel Haitian Baptist Church and onto its side lawn. No one on the Doddtown-bound bus was reported as injured.

The car's three suspects bailed out of the car and fled; they remain at large.

A police officer had reportedly fired a shot. It is not known whether anyone else responded with gunfire.

The said gunfire brought in county prosecutors, who are acting on the New Jersey Attorney General's Office orders to investigate any police-involved shootings.

It is not known whether the church's worship service, which

usually starts at 11:30 a.m., was interrupted. Parishioners exiting 320 Springfield Ave., had to move around the closed Springfield/No. Arlington intersection.

It is not known whether NJTransit's Orange Bus Garage dispatched a tow truck and a replacement bus for the 34's East Orange-South Street Newark runs.

ORANGE - Parking, PILOT and ownership concerns were brought up by the Orange Planning Board over a pair of flanking residential housing proposals presented here March 22.

Brick City Reconstruction, of Newark, during that Wednesday night Zoom meeting, wanted to build a pair of 3.5-story residential buildings at 150 and 151 Taylor St.

150 Taylor would replace the 1940-built DMV Supermarket with four attached single-family homes. Each home will include a ground-floor garage.

151 Taylor would be similarly sized but to be occupied by nine residents and eight cars. It would replace a currently vacant four-bedroom two-story house built in 1930.

BCR, who has built other residential, commercial and workshop projects throughout New Jersey, owns both properties' deeds. Their addresses flank Taylor Street at its T-intersection with Hickory Street.

Developer attorney Elnardo Webster, Jr., saying that the projects "wouldn't be viable without a tax abatement," stated that his client is looking for a Payment in Lieu of Taxes. Board members and Council President Tency Eason said she would consider it, provided that the units are resident-owners who have to live there for at least five months.

Taylor Street resident Fiona Douglas said that she and her neighbors "are struggling for parking." The hearing is to resume on April 26.

WEST ORANGE - The contention over renewing Township Attorney Richard D. Trenk's contract was more than just the Township Council's resulting split vote at their March 21 meeting.

Mayor Susan McCartney provided the tie-breaking vote
(Continued on page 14)

RICE (Continued from page 1)

re-election came largely from his own character. That character, in the eyes of "Local Talk," included self-sacrifice, principles and integrity with some street sense.

Rice was unbossed and unafraid while standing up for minorities and the underprivileged. He frequently spoke his peace in the State House, City Hall and in other legislative or public meetings. He occasionally broke ranks with colleagues and Democratic Party operatives on particular issues.

Former governor Richard Codey, while he was Senate President, would give advice to his colleagues who complained about Rice's on-floor speeches.

"When he starts talking, don't interrupt," said Sen. Codey (D-Roseland). "If you wait, he's a complete gentleman. He's just a joyful and wonderful human being."

Those qualities began to form in Ronald Louis Rice when he was born Dec. 18, 1945 into a family of six and first raised in Jim Crow era Richmond, Va. Rice's parents divorced when he was 9, however, and a judge had him move with his father, Benjamin "Bennie" Rice, to Newark.

While Bennie worked as a barber, Ron was a Newark Public Schools student. The then-South Side (now-Malcolm X. Shabazz) High School student was a member of its executive committee, band, mixed chorus and boys glee club.

"Big Ron," in his "Optimist" yearbook, was described as "cool and collected" and having "a natural talent for making friends."

The Class of 1964 graduate began studying at Howard University before the military draft for the Vietnam War started. Rice enlisted with the U.S. Marine Corps in 1966 and was honorably discharged in 1970 with Navy Unit and Presidential Citations. His time included a 1968-69 tour in Vietnam which he never talked about in public, if ever.

"You spend one day there, you spend 100," said Rice in

2006. "It's all the same."

The honorably discharged Rice answered Mayor Kenneth Gibson's call for more minorities to join the Newark Police Department in 1970. The glasses-wearing Rice was kept from being hired until his letter-writing campaign lifted that NPD ban.

"I had the honor and privilege of working alongside then-Det. Rice in the Newark Police Department" said Essex County Sheriff Armando Fontoura. "Ron was a no-nonsense, straight-shooting, great street cop. Ron Rice carried that same approach to the world of politics."

Det. Rice, off-shift, graduated from Essex County College with an associate's degree in police science. He would go on to get a bachelor's degree in administration and planning from John Jay College of Criminal Justice and a master's in criminal justice from Rutgers. He had attended classes here at Rutgers School of Law.

Rice was promoted to sergeant before he resigned in 1982 to manage PSE&G's safety and security department. He was already the West Ward Councilman, having won the May 1982 non-partisan election.

He would be re-elected three times before resigning to run against Sharpe James for mayor in 1998. James crushed Rice for his third mayoral term, 56 percent to 27 - but appointed Rice as his deputy mayor in 2002.

Rice resigned as deputy mayor on July 1, 2006, for two reasons. The first was that he and his "Home Team" of council candidates were shut out by former councilman Cory A. Booker and his slate that May. The second was that he had decided to keep his state senate seat in light of the newly-enacted state ban on dual office holding.

Rice was first elected to the State House in a special 1986 election to succeed the late John P. Caufield. Caufield, who was also Newark Fire Director, suddenly died on Aug. 24, 1981.

"John and I had our offices in the same building (in Vailsburg)," recalled Rice. "He once



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looked at me and said, 'Whatever happens to me, I want you to have my seat.' "

Rice turned back challenges for the 28th District seat that included those supported by several Democratic Party power brokers.

In the 1997 Democratic primary, Rice won the party nomination by 1,218 votes in an off-the-party-line campaign against former policeman Larry Brown. Brown was favored by Mayor Sharpe James, Cong. Donald M. Payne, Sr., State Sen. Wynona Lipman and North Ward Democratic Committee leader Stephen N. Adubato, Sr.

District voters returned Rice over former Assemblyman Willie Brown by 986 votes in the 2001 primary. Rice edged then-Irvington councilman and county freeholder D. Bilal Beasley by 475 votes in the 2007 primary.

Rice also weathered three U.S. Census-driven drawings of his district in 1990, 2000 and 2010.

"Local Talk" remembers Rice and the late Sen. Marion Crecco (R-Bloomfield) commiserating

with each other after a public Bloomfield event over the redrawn 28th District.

Crecco found herself and Bloomfield drawn out of the 34th, where she had won four elections, into the 28th. Rice eventually defeated Crecco, 69 to 29 percent.

While in the State House, Rice co-founded and was chairman of the Legislative Black Caucus.

"Our people need help; they're crying to us from the streets," said Rice when he was made chairman. "Corporate America, the schoolhouses, the correctional facilities, even the churches - they weren't there for them because, in each case, they may one see one, three or four (Black representatives in those institutions.)"

Rice until last summer, seemed poised to run after the 28th's latest redrawing. He and General Assembly Members Cleopatra Tucker (D-Newark) and Ralph Caputo (D-Nutley) were to run in Newark's Vailsburg-West

(Continued on page 13)



*From
The
Pastor's
Heart*

OP-ED BY DR. ROBERT KENNEDY

Finale: Never A Curse Again

A mother called me a few days ago, and I figured it had to be urgent. I could not answer her first or second call, for I was on the phone listening to my sister-in-law, who had just heard of her sister's death. I knew of the long sickness of the sister, and I sensed the pain of my sister-in-law.

I knew she needed to know I was listening (for that is what I knew was necessary at the moment). Those times of bantering that we often did as we called on our friendly talk were suspended. The moment needed serious reflection and space for bringing our pain of the brokenness caused by death, so I listened and listened, and then I prayed.

By the time I had finished listening and praying with my sister-in-law, there was another call and another, all sharing some pain from brokenness or losses. Then, later in the evening, we went to the launch of a website for the Foundation of the University, which my wife and I attended. We returned very late

at night, and after worship, we went to bed.

The next morning, we went into another day's routine, and I did not return the call of the one person who had called twice the day prior until my wife and I had returned from our morning exercise. On the way home, my wife asked, did you call so and so who tried to speak with you twice yesterday? I said, "No," but I will as soon as I get home. So I did as promised and thought it would be a short call; however, it was not.

I had to spend 30 minutes listening. It was from a mother whom I had baptized and pastored. She always called several times, and she had my ears, and I know she knew of my attitude toward her and her family. A few weeks before, she called and appraised me of the incident with her son, over whom we had prayed many times. He is accused of taking the lives of two persons and was arrested. He is now in prison, getting ready for his trial.

I do not know whether she forgot that she had told me the story twice before and that we had prayed, but this time she wanted me to listen to what was happening further. She wanted my full attention. And because I knew her circumstances and how safe she felt when she connected with me as her former pastor, even though I am a distance

away, I knew I needed to listen to her.

She went into great detail to inform me of all she had done to warn her son. She spoke slowly, and I needed to go, but I had to listen to let her know that I concurred that she had done her best and that it was not her fault that the boy had committed the egregious act. In parting, I prayed for her healing, stating that one day she and I will understand the MYSTERY OF THE CURSE, although I do not think we will ever fully understand.

The Curse, we know, has a reason (Proverbs 26:2), and as is apparent from the above, we might be able to explain all the reasons. Nevertheless, it is more than likely that some of the MYSTERY will remain. Not even eternity will give us the finality of the answers we might seek.

We know today that "The wages of sin is death" and that "the gift of God is eternal life" (Romans 6:23). These are indisputable facts. We can accept or reject them as we choose. But we might not be able to explain every detail about them. We might be spending all eternity still investigating them. Of course, I do not know how much we will care about explaining them as much as we will care about getting away from the Curse of sin and enjoying eternity.

For all the pain that sin has brought, I do not know that I will have an interest in eternity to solve its mystery. What I will be happy for is that I can be home with Jesus. Yes, after listening to my sister-in-law on the death of her sister, who was ravaged by disease, and then the intervening stories of sadness and the heart cry of the mother whose son committed the murder, the lyrics of the song below came to mind as I reflect on being away from it all and being in a place of safety and rest.

*Hallelujah, home at last. The redeemed are home at last.
All heaven is filled with happiness, for the age of sin is past
Around the great white throne near the kings of kings
They clap their hand till the heaven rings,
Hallelujah, home at last; the redeemed are home at last.*

Yes, to be away from the legacy of the curse into the land of the blessed will be something.

How would you like to live in a place without a curse?

Do not forget that we bring curses on ourselves by our bad choices today. But if we make the right choice and secure eternity in the home of the blessed, we are never to experience a curse again.

PATERSON (Continued from page 9)

- place.
- Revising the statewide Use of Force Policy to include protocols for barricaded individuals. Situations involving people who are barricaded within a room or other confined space pose significant challenges and risks for all involved - civilians and officers alike - and such situations may arise for any number of reasons. In order to ensure that law enforcement's response is as effective and consistent with our Use of Force principles as possible, the Attorney General's Office and the Office of Public Integrity and Accountability will engage with experts and stakeholders to develop protocols that guide the appropriate use of force, and the successful use of mental health professionals, in such situations.
- Formation of a working group to study and produce policy recommendations

concerning interactions between law enforcement and community-based violence intervention (CBVI) groups. Both law enforcement officers and violence intervention specialists are critically important to ensuring public safety in New Jersey communities. They are complementary parts of a holistic approach. There may be times when effective interaction between these entities will optimize public safety outcomes. Moreover, taking a comprehensive and effective approach to reducing violence in our communities requires that we develop strategies that facilitate and encourage partnership between law enforcement and community-based components of our public safety system. The Attorney General is convening a working group to propose protocols for such interactions and for better coordination.

"This announcement will not quell the

strife in the City of Paterson overnight," continued Attorney General Platkin. "It will not immediately restore public confidence that the police are committed to providing every resident of Paterson with fair, just, and effective public safety. Nor will it address the concerns of officers asked to do a hard and dangerous job in a community that - after years of fiscal challenges and a revolving door of police leadership - has lost faith in its police department, making the jobs of those officers even more difficult.

"Rather, the actions taken by my office today represent a pledge to the residents and officers of Paterson that the State of New Jersey is committed to the safety and success of the entire Paterson Community. Exercising control over the police department and bringing in nationally recognized police leadership for the department is the first step of a process towards a safer and more just City of Paterson."

TIMBERLAKE (Continued from page 7)

comes wanting to buy nicer apartments, they are hesitant to buy it.

BT: People are not hesitating to buy the apartments, the builders can make it pencil out, as long as they receive something called subsidy. I have been extremely instrumental and making sure that we have the affordable housing, fully funded in the state of New Jersey. That fund right now has over \$60 million in it, and I was also instrumental with my housing friends in getting housing production funds, which have more than \$300 million in it.

These are the funds the developers can go after, to offset the costs of building affordable housing, but even if they do not go after those funds, and if the townships are granting PILOTs or tax abatements, then I do believe then that affordable housing should be required. If they are coming to the township for some kind of public assistance, then they should not displace the public for these developments.

DS: Can they do one big development in one place and affordable housing in another place?

BT: That is the model that has been done before. Personally, it's not my favorite model. I believe that every development should be mixed income and mixed use.

DS: In your opinion, what do you think Gov. Murphy has done right AND what has he done wrong during his administration?

BT: I think Governor Murphy has something right to codify *Roe v. Wade* and passed the law. I do not promote abortions, but I promote a woman's right to choose and make a decision about her own body. Furthermore, I am a proud feminist and I believe in women's empowerment. I believe in a woman's right to choose in all aspects of life. Governor Murphy did a great job really pressing the legislation to codify *Roe v. Wade*.

For what Governor Murphy did wrong, I have a program bill that I am still working on to cross the finish line. I am not able to finish it yet, even with the earlier agreement. I am still working on it. The bill provides equity and a level playing field for people who are experiencing foreclosures. It will help the person who is losing their home or next of kin which could their son or daughter,

or renter who has been paying their rent on time then all of a sudden received a notice that the landlord is not paying their mortgage and they are being evicted, or a non-profit corporation wants to purchase the property and create affordable or workforce housing, or person who has committed to live in the community for seven years, they could. With the Community Wealth Preservation Bill I authored, they could participate at the foreclosure sale, with 3.5% down, and the rest of the money due in 90 days. Right now, as it stands at the sheriff's sales, it is mainly cash deals, you have to have 20% down and the rest of the money within 30 days with interest building on the 11th day. With having to have cash or a money order, we know historically black and brown people have not had deep pockets to purchase and participate in that foreclosure sale. With my bill, it creates equity for those five categories. That also stops a lot of abuse from LLCs that are coming in and owning the homes in communities all over the state of New Jersey. He didn't sign it into law.

DS: This one is from our own Kristopher Seals: "I have had difficulties with getting gas at stations lately. Attendants have either pushed the wrong button for the wrong, and more expensive, grade of gas, or have even entered the wrong dollar amount of gas. (Ex. I say \$29 instead of \$30, because attendants have tried to put in \$40, claiming a 'mistake.') Those are just some problems. So here is my question to you as a constituent: Will you support making this a ballot question: 'Should New Jerseyans be allowed to pump their own gas? Yes or No?'"

BT: Yes. There should be a hybrid approach. If you want to pump your own gas, you should be able to do so. If you don't want to pump your gas, there will be an attendant there who will do it for you.

DS: Is there any chance we may see Governor Timberlake someday?

BT: Never say never.

DS: I have observed that elected officials take care of their family and friends, whereas with real people who have real problems, they ignore them. Still, the people are ignorant to elect the same people over and over again. What is your opinion about electing the right people in the election process?

BT: I think that I always tell people

"As I announce my retirement, this is a heart-wrenching letter to compose," said Rice to the Legislative Black Caucus. "Together, we've been etching compassion and equality into our society, one issue, and sometimes one person, at a time."

Rice was laid to rest next to his late second wife, Shirley N. Rice. Shirley was a University of California-Berkeley adminis-

trator who met and married Ron in 1978. Shirley, 76, who became a longtime ECC administrator, suddenly died Aug. 3, 2020.

when asking for their vote, not to vote for me just because I ask, but to look for my record and vote for me because you believe in my work. I work very hard to work for the people in the great state of New Jersey and make sure that everyone has an opportunity and access to the American Dream. My record of \$15 minimum wage, my record of independent investigations when anyone loses their life in an interaction with a police officer. This legislation came a year or two ago before the George Floyd case and only passed in the Assembly by one vote.

My record of securing the funds that we have for affordable housing. It is about our children having a better future, it is about women's rights, birthing access which I have been instrumental in, including making sure we are reducing the infant maternal death rate as New Jersey has one of the highest rates, particularly amongst black women. My work is about helping people, my work putting principal over politics. All voters are empowered to ask what your record is, if it is a legislator, what laws have you passed, if it is an administrative, what laws have you supported and what is your vision for administration.

DS: Blind voting is where all the representative vote on a measure and no one knows who voted for the resolution. So, without any knowledge, the lobbyist cannot interfere directly or indirectly. what do you think about blind voting, to kick out the lobbyists?

BT: I believe that anyone who is doing the work of the people, is what you should research. We can look up and search who is asking for our vote, and what they have done to uplift the community. Voting is a very powerful tool.

DS: Do you have any message from your constituents?

BT: I want to thank to my constituents for sending me to Trenton as their New Jersey State District 34 Assemblywoman, and I am asking you to send me back at this time as your District 34 Senator. I am promising to continue to put forth prolific pieces of legislation that will change lives and reverse some of the issues, particularly as relates to poverty and access to housing, great healthcare, education, and so much more.

DS: Thanks for your time, Ms. Timberlake.

"Local Talk" extends condolences to son Ronald C., daughter Yuki T., grandchildren Mia, Ayden and RJ, brothers Joseph and Alton Benjamin and sisters Renee and Sharon among his survivors.

RICE (Continued from page 11)

and "southwest" wards, Irvington and Union's Hillside plus new additions South Orange and Maplewood.

Rice, however, began missing State House sessions. A doctor's examination detected cancer - which needed his full attention to fighting.

The Observation Booth



OP-ED By Andrea Dialect

BRANDING IDENTITY



Photos By Andrea Dialect

A brand identity is a set of tools or elements used by a company to create a brand image. A brand image is a customer's perception of the brand

consisting of various associations related to it and memories about interacting with it. - Google

That was Goggle's definition; here's mine... Branding Identity is when somebody sat at the roundtable after ditching that grub and concocted a Petri dish that sends out an aroma that entices hunger pangs, which knowingly tells ya that what's home cookin in-house will appease the palate and appetite as enticing those cravings for brain food at whelm.

That's Ms. Madison Realty in a nutshell. What a worthy candidate to assist in our Women's Month commemoration. Feel free to post Grind Worthy features or flyers or info on my Facebook Group: Grind Worthy.

CURB APPEAL

"When you're a new client, you get a considerable amount of my time, the branded water, the branded pen, and other goodies. That's your initial gift. But when you first go under contract, you get a bottle of Champaign. Once you are a client, I talk to you every day until closing, and that's when you get to ride in the Sprinter, and given that Tiffney gift, it becomes an experience.

Doting on my clients is very practical. It is also very beneficial to the client. You want to reward them because buying and the process can be over-

whelming. They're nervous, so you want to calm their nerves, and what calms nerves better than Champagne? - Madison

“As a black woman, I feel very optimistic when I step out of that van in my community. Sadly because most of our young women are constantly bombarded by YouTubers or video vixens, or reality TV stars, and they only see them as being successful. Yet, unbeknownst to them, your real hero and those who are successful are right here in your backyard. So when they see my vehicle, they'll know they can succeed in their own right by doing something different than the norm. Yes, we can lead in a positive way, and that's what makes branding essential.

“It is vitally important because it is how the customer identifies you. That's how the consumer understands your point difference. So it's very important



to be unique in your branding, and it is also important to be consistent with your branding all across the board; the same font, same colors, same logos, and your color theme. Your photos aren't necessarily, but everything else should be consistent.

“I wanted to take things next level, so I purchased my branded vehicle one year ago. I made that decision because it serves as a moving billboard. No matter where I am, someone always asks me for a card. ‘Oh, is that you?’ ‘You sell real estate?’ It's an interactive component, always a conversation piece. It's a strong return on investment, so it serves its purpose.

“Another strategy is when I step out of that van every day. I wear a black tuxedo suit because it is conservative and fits well. As a realtor, if you look professional, that works. But honestly, your real appearance is presented when you open your mouth because you could be all dressed up and not know what you're talking about.



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.

TOWN WATCH

(Continued from page 10)

that Tuesday night, approving the new \$170,000 four-year contract for Trenk. McCartney had appointed the longtime township attorney during this January's reorganization meeting, which needed either council confirmation or denial.

The new contract, which now runs until Dec 31, 2026, calls for Trenk to be paid \$42,500 annually for "general legal matters" only. He is to also bill the township at \$175 an hour for "litigation, arbitration or mediated matters" - which was set in a separate resolution.

Councilwomen Michele Casalino and Tammy Williams voted for the first resolution's approval. Council Members Dr. William "Bill" Rutherford and Susan Scarpa voted "No." Councilwoman Asmeret Ghe-

bremichicael abstained, setting the stage for McCartney's tie-breaker.

The other \$175 an hour ordinance for "the other matters," was passed on a similar 3-2-1 roll call. McCartney has likely signed both measures well within the 20-day signature window.

Trenk, who practices bankruptcy and litigation law from a West Orange office, was first appointed township attorney in 1998.

SOUTH ORANGE - Respective attorneys for the South Orange-Maplewood School District and a resigned Kindergarten teacher, barring an out-of-court settlement, may be headed for trial later this year.

Former South Mountain Elementary School teacher Sarah Barlow and her attorney, Gregory B. Noble, filed a complaint in Superior Court-Newark against SOMSD for violating the state's Conscientious Employee Protection Act. The suit, filed on Dec. 22,

became public by Feb. 15.

Although Barlow had not listed SMES Principal Kevin Mason in the suit as a respondent, their deteriorating work relationship eventually led to the four-year teacher's resigning on Nov. 1.

Barlow had wanted paraprofessionals to assist her in teaching special needs students in her class but said she did not get the NJ Department of Education minimum. She said that the insufficient aides exacerbated the social anxiety that she has had since being a teenager.

Mason first rebuffed Barlow's desire for support for a student who had expressed suicide and a parent's agreement to hold back her child from graduating during the 2019-20 school year. Mason later moved Barlow's class to a Mountain Annex room.

Mason sent an October 2022 letter to Barlow calling her "crying spells" unprofes-

(Continued on page 15)

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 14)

sional and to look for a corrective action plan. She took a six-week medical leave and, on the advice of her therapist, resigned Nov. 1.

MAPLEWOOD - The owner of a bridal store here in the Hilton section will be making a five-mile trip back to State Superior Court-Newark May 22 for a possible pretrial hearing stemming from her March 22 arrest.

Nidelka Mayers, 53, was released from Newark's Essex County Correctional Center March 23 after pleading not guilty to five counts of theft by deception. Township police arrested the Maplewood Bridal store owner at her East Orange residence 24 hours earlier.

MPD's Detective Bureau began investigating Mayer when five of her customers had complained at its headquarters across Springfield Avenue from her store.

The fivesome said that they had ordered and paid deposits for wedding dresses, going back to last August., that they never got. They accuse Mayers of stopping communication with them. They had to go elsewhere for their dresses.

Maplewood Bridal may or may not have reopened for business as of press time. Mayers, during March 22-23, had redirected calls to a Paterson bridal shop. Maplewood Bridal's website announces that it is moving to "a new location."

Mayers' store is or was one of several at 1607-11 Springfield Ave., a mixed-use residential/commercial building. It has stood on the eastern corner of Springfield and Burnett avenues, replacing a long-time Shell station, in 2020.

BLOOMFIELD - The township's rush hour minibus service will be expanded to help Decamp bus riders as of April 10.

Mayor Michael Venezia, on March 23, announced that the minibuses will continue north into Clifton's Allwood Park and Ride in the morning. Former Decamp commuters may then board NJTransit's No. 192 buses to complete their trips to New York City's Port Authority Bus Terminal.

Those same minibuses will pick up returning PM rush-hour riders at Allwood for rides home. The Bloomfield Recreation Department, which runs the rush hour jitney and midday senior bus service, coordinated the expanded service with its existing runs to and from NJTransit's Bloomfield Station.

Bloomfield, as of press time, is the first municipality in Local Talk's Decamp territory to provide an alternative to when the Montclair-based private carrier ends all of its commuter bus lines at the end of April 7.

Decamp, citing 20 percent of its pre-

pandemic passenger ridership levels, will end its Nos. 33, 44, 66/66R and 99 routes 12:01 a.m. April 8. Its riders in North Newark, West Orange, Montclair, Glen Ridge, Belleville and Nutley are among those who will also be affected.

NJTransit is looking to add train runs on its Montclair-Boonton Line and runs and/or buses on applicable bus routes. Private carriers Boxcar and OurBus have been taking online and in-person rider surveys.

West Orange and Montclair also have minibus service. They, trailblazer Maplewood, South Orange, Irvington and Union's Springfield are under a federally funded, NJTransit-awarded rush hour commuter service mostly to commuter rail stations.

GLEN RIDGE - What started out as a Glen Ridge official spotting an illegal dumping occurrence here on March 9 literally turned into a federal case.

The borough's police and public works department plus the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency combined to locate and sanction the contractor they believed responsible for that Tuesday's act.

GRPD Officer Joseph Anello responded to a DPW worker's call from Ridge-wood Avenue and Washington Street. The employee saw another person pouring "an unknown substance" into a corner storm sewer drain.

Off. Anello, summoned Nutley HazMat, who determined that the poured fluid was paint and an unknown substance. HazMat, in turn, called for the EPA before cleaning up the spill.

The officer and his colleagues meanwhile performed a records check, which led to identifying a suspected but otherwise not publicly identified contractor. GRPD issued the suspect a borough ordinance violation ticket before turning the matter over to the EPA.

BELLEVILLE - Whoever has been shooting movie scenes here at the former Essex County Isolation Hospital at the northwestern corner of Belleville and Franklin avenues the last 10 days may have had to get permission from three property owners.

The Warner Bros. film production unit, purportedly shooting scenes for a "Joker" sequel, had to get permission from Alma Realty, of New York. Alma is converting the landmark nine-story, 200,000-square-foot 1932 building into a 245-unit apartment building featuring 5,500 square feet of retail space.

The film's producers had likely got permission from two Bethlehem, Pa. owners of The Great Lawn to erect tents and park equipment. New Horizons Investment owns 6.53 acres at "233 Franklin

Ave., and Azan International, 1.38 acres at "580 Belleville Ave."

New Horizons and Azan bought the respective lots for an overall \$455,000 at a 1999 delinquent property tax sale held by Belleville Township. The township held the tax sale when then-hospital tenant Garden State Cancer Center got behind on its tax payments.

The center's 1996-2011 era here ended when it defaulted on a \$5 million Essex County Improvement Authority loan and declared bankruptcy. The county awarded Alma the building for \$3.7 million on Dec. 21, 2012 over eight bidders.

Belleville's residents and elders, however, want to keep The Great Lawn free of any redevelopment. "Local Talk" remembers one proposal to build single-story retail stores on each of the lawn lots in the early 2000s.

Mayor Michael Melham and Town Manager Anthony Iacono, on Feb. 14, applied to the NJ DEP's Green Acres State Land Acquisition Program as a funding source. The DEP, on Feb. 28, said that they will have to wait until the other three Green Acres-funded projects, which Belleville received an overall \$1.445 million for, are finished.

Belleville had received \$601,000 to refurbish a baseball diamond by the Second River, \$260,000 to repair a riverbank retaining wall and \$484,000 to turn a former rifle range at Hoover Avenue and Joralemon Street into a park. The DEP, counted three projects while Belleville officials counted two by combining the Second River wall and ball-field.

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