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END OF AN ERA: BLOOMFIELD COLLEGE HOLDS ITS 150TH, AND LAST, COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY



Photo By Bloomfield College

By Lev D. Zilbermintz

Call it the end of one era and the beginning of another. A bittersweet moment in the 155 - year-old history of Bloomfield College.

On Saturday, May 20, 2023 Bloomfield College held its last independent commencement before its upcoming merger with Montclair State University. The last graduating class of an independent Bloomfield College had over 280 students.

The graduation started at 11 a.m., with graduating students, their families and invited guests assembling in a huge tent set up opposite Talbot Hall, on the College Quadrangular. Outside, the rainy weather caused a sea of umbrellas and raincoats to be worn by the attendees. Inside the huge tent it was nice and dry.

Dressed in the maroon and yellow graduation caps and

gowns, graduating students marched into the huge tent. Some graduates wore the yellow and red collar that said, "Student Athlete." This meant that the wearer was a member of one of the Bloomfield College sports teams. "Local Talk" counted at least 19 or more student athletes graduating.

Some graduating students wore the green and blue honor cords of Alpha Chi Beta chapter, the college's honor society. Inscriptions on the collars included "Class of 2023," "Nursing," "EOF Scholar," "Generation First," and others.

Cell phones and cameras flashed as the graduating class of 2023 marched to their seats in the huge tent erected for this purpose. On the left and right stood parents, friends, photographers, and other attendees. There was quite a lot of diversity, with Asian, black, His-

(Continued on page 7)

SPRING PRIMARY 2023 PREVIEW

Assemblywoman Britnee Timberlake, who is looking for a State Senate seat



By Walter Elliott

NEWARK - Prospective registered voters in June 6's Republican and Democratic Party Primary Elections will see some familiar faces in newly-redrawn places plus some completely new names on the ballots.

Members of the Democratic and Republican parties faithful, for example, may have to acquaint themselves with being in new State Legislative Districts. All 40 state districts - including the 27th, 28th, 29th and 34th districts in "Local Talk Land" - were redrawn in response to population shifts found in U.S. 2020 Census data.

Some incumbent State Senate and General Assembly members found themselves in a collision course with their colleagues. Several - including Mila Jasey, of South Orange, Tom Giblin, of Montclair and Ralph Caputo, of Nutley - had chosen to retire.

Richard J. Codey, of Roeland,

and Nia H. Gill, of Montclair, however, are running on opposing Democratic Party slates for the 27th District's State Senate seat.

Codey is leading a ticket of Essex County Democratic Committee "Line A" assembly candidates. Gill, however, is heading an "Essex and Passaic County Democratic Organization" ticket that includes Eve Robinson for a 27th Assembly seat and Justin Harris for an Essex County Commissioners at-large seat.

The Giblin and Jasey retirements plus the Codey-Gill joust may represent a generational change of the political guard. How widespread that change will depend on how party and general voters choose on June 6 and in the Nov. 7 General Election.

There are several underline candidates challenging the top line candidates supported by the ECDC or the Essex County Re-

(Continued on page 5)



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Editorial
 Dhiren Shah
 Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

The biggest news this week in the political arena is Florida Governor Ron DeSantis running for the Republican presidential nomination. Donald Trump will have a real contest now in the Primary. In a smart move by DeSantis, he discussed the move with Tesla and Twitter owner Elon Musk before talking to a Fox News reporter. Trump (56.3 points) is ahead of DeSantis in the polls by 36 points. DeSantis is at #2 and way ahead in the polls over former Vice President Pence, former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, current Senator Tim Scott, and business-

man Srivatsa Ramaswamy. All other potential candidates are under two points, including former governor of New Jersey Chris Christie.

Mexico's biggest problem right now is the eruption of the Popocatepetl (Known as El Popo) Volcano and millions of people have evacuated. This volcano was the most dangerous and active volcano. 25 million people live in a radius of 60 miles from the volcano. It is about 45 miles from the capital of Mexico City. In the last century, this volcano was not active, but since a scary episode in the 1990s, there have been some trembling effects there. The U.S. Embassy was evacuated as well.

In a Yahoo News article about the feud between U.S. representatives Marjorie Taylor Greene and Jamaal Bowman, Greene said: "He was aggressive; his physical mannerisms were

aggressive," Greene told reporters during an unrelated press conference on Thursday, a day after their confrontation. "I am concerned about it. I feel threatened by him."

In his own statement, Bowman said of Greene's comments: "Marjorie's attack is beyond a dog-whistle. It's a bullhorn. And it's reckless and dangerous. She has put a target on my back."

Are our elected representatives working for the people or their own ego? We are paying them millions of dollars but see no outcome in helping us. The people, if united, can change their attitude and make them start working for the people.

Lobbying in Washington D.C. costs a lot of money. If there is ban on assault weapons and semi-automatic guns, they don't need to lobby, and with that, they will save some money against the huge profits they used

to get it. I once worked in a police equipment manufacturing company as a controller. So, I know a little about the system.

The state of Illinois' ban on certain guns will take on May 24, 2023. The Supreme Court declined to issue a stay against the ban. The law bans the sale and new possession of semi-automatic assault weapons. The law also restricts the sale of large capacity magazines. It's a good start. Chicago has had the highest crime rate in the past few years. Gun lobby groups will continue to fight with all the legal remedies to overturn the ban. However, the ban is a good start. This should be happening all over the United States of America. In my opinion, the ban will reduce violent crime.

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

Health Workers Win From COVID but Still Mistrust the Future

On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the covid-19 as a “global health emergency.” This was 17 days after the first recorded case in the United States. Many people were confused about what the virus meant and the threat levels it poses. For the next few weeks, media platforms pushed different

narratives about the coronavirus. Some made it seem like the second coming of the Black Death (the bubonic plague), while other news platforms downplayed the coronavirus as nothing more serious than the ordinary flu.

Over the next three years, the coronavirus will have about seven million reported deaths directly associated with it, with the WHO director general even suggesting that the real number is closer to 20 million deaths. However, about two weeks ago, WHO declared that the coronavirus is no longer a global health emergency and instead now a “global health threat.” Of course, this is not in any way suggesting that we have defeated the coronavirus completely. People are still getting the virus all over the planet, and there is always the never-ending threat of new variants emerging, but now, we know there is no longer an emergency

This recent development is a huge win for the world, in general, but most especially for health workers. I remember vividly - during the peak of the coronavirus pandemic in the United States, when hospitals were running out of beds to contain the



sick and emergency rooms were getting maxed out - the burnout and frustrations of physicians across the country. I mean, there was already a worrying burnout rate among physicians and other healthcare workers long before the coronavirus, but COVID did truly crazy damage to physician burnout.

Aside from combating the stress associated with the fight against the coronavirus, physicians also had to fight a lot of false narratives and outright wrong medical advice. There was a lot of politics involved, and at some point, members of the public started turning on their doctors. Seriously, there were actual adults who did not want to take the vaccine because they believed the government was trying to turn us into zombies. Those were truly crazy times.

So, you will very much understand when I say the coronavirus not being an emergency anymore is an especially huge win for health workers. That's certainly one hurdle cleared, and we deserve it. However, there is another hurdle health workers have to overcome – the future. Yes, the future. I'd explain.

Among healthcare workers, there is a lot of mistrust in the future of our healthcare sector. Before the coronavirus, it was due to the high burnout rates, insurance companies wreaking havoc on the health system, stress, and the like. After the coronavirus pandemic, there are even more concerns, particularly about how ready we are as a nation if something like this ever arises again. And when I say healthcare workers, I mean everyone working in the healthcare sector, from doctors to nurses.

If healthcare workers don't have enough trust in the healthcare sector, how can we instill any trust in the public? Do you recall what happened with

the social distancing regulations and mask mandates - where many members of the general public lost trust in the CDC to make unbiased and only medically-relevant suggestions? I remember writing on this particular topic, and many other physicians also took the mantle of reassuring the public. Now, imagine what happens when the very healthcare workers who should reassure the public also don't trust the future. If what you imagined is an even more broken healthcare sector, your guess is as good as mine.

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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SPORTS WRAP



Photos By Felicia Laguerre Owens



By William Hathaway, Jr.

The New York Red Bulls were in action once again this past weekend at home in Harrison. Thanks to some home cooking on the pitch, they beat the Montreal Impact 2-1, with goals by Andreas Reyes and Cory Burke. NY is now 3-1 in their last four games. Reyes scored the first goal of the game in the 23rd minute in the game and then Burke added the difference make in the 38th minute of the first half. The Red Bulls' current record on the season is 4-7.

The Women's National Basketball Association opened play for the 2023 season, and the supercharged New York Liberty

cooled the Indiana Fever 90-73. Leading the Liberty was new acquisition Breanna Stewart, who posted a franchise team record 45 points along with 12 rebounds in her first game with the team. Her new teammate Jonquel Jones added 14 points, 8 rebounds, and 8 assist while team leader Sabrina Ionescu had a modest 9 points and 8 rebounds. Stewart had 29 points in the first half alone. Nya Smith led the Fever with 16 points and 12 rebounds.

Also, in a loss to Chicago, Phoenix Mercury center Brittney Griner got a standing ovation after her detention in Russia. She showed her appreciation with a 27 point effort.



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PRIMARY (Continued from page 1)

publican Party Organization on the state, county and municipal primary levels. There are more than one "No Petition Filed" on machine and mail ballots, where one party's candidate is running uncontested.

The following is a brief guide of who is looking for Democratic or Republican party endorsement towards the General Election. The four "new" state LD and all five Essex County Commission District towns are listed.

STATE LEGISLATURE - All 120 State Senate and General assembly seats are up to voters' choice this year.

27TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT: West Orange, Montclair, Livingston, Millburn, Roseland, Passaic County's Clifton.

State Senate (Select One)

Incumbent Democrats Richard J. Codey, of Roseland, and Nia H. Gill, of Montclair (EPCDO) are vying for the sole

seat. Neither Essex nor Passaic county Republicans had filed candidate petitions.

General Assembly (Select Two)

Newcomer Alixon Collazos-Gill, of Montclair and John McKeon, of West Orange are running on the ECDC line. Collazos-Gill is married to County Commissioner Brendan H. Gill.

Eve Robinson, of Montclair, is on the EPDO line. Running mate Frank Kasper, of Clifton, withdrew April 12. Craig A. Stanley, late of West Orange, is running on his "Putting the People First." platform. Stanley had been an assemblyman 1996-2008 for the old 28th LD and while an East Orange resident.

Republicans have declined fielding any candidates here.

28th LD: Irvington, South Orange, Maplewood, Newark's "southwest" and Vailsburg-West wards, Union County's Hillside.

State Senate

(Continued on page 11)



UNITED STATES

A WARNING ABOUT TEENS & SOCIAL MEDIA

On May 23, United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy released a new “Surgeon General’s Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health” study. While social media may offer some benefits, there are ample indicators that social media can also pose a risk of harm to the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents. Social media use by young people is nearly universal, with up to 95% of young people ages 13-17 reporting using a social media platform and more than a third saying they use social media “almost constantly.”

With adolescence and childhood representing a critical stage in brain development that can make young people more vulnerable to harms from social media, the Surgeon General is issuing a call for urgent action by policymakers, technology companies, researchers, families, and young people alike to gain a better understanding of the full impact of social media use, maximize the benefits and minimize the harms of social media platforms, and create safer, healthier online environments to protect children. The Surgeon General’s Advisory is a part of the Department of Health and Human Services’ (HHS) ongoing efforts to support President Joe Biden’s whole-of-government strategy to transform mental health care for all Americans.

“The most common question parents ask me is, ‘is social media safe for my kids’. The answer is that we don’t have enough evidence to say it’s safe, and in fact, there is growing evidence that social media use is associated with harm to young people’s mental health,” said U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy. “Children are exposed to harmful content on social me-

dia, ranging from violent and sexual content, to bullying and harassment. And for too many children, social media use is compromising their sleep and valuable in-person time with family and friends. We are in the middle of a national youth mental health crisis, and I am concerned that social media is an important driver of that crisis - one that we must urgently address.”

Usage of social media can become harmful depending on the amount of time children spend on the platforms, the type of content they consume or are otherwise exposed to, and the degree to which it disrupts activities that are essential for health like sleep and physical activity. Importantly, different children are affected by social media in different ways, including based on cultural, historical, and socioeconomic factors. Among the benefits, adolescents report that social media helps them feel more accepted (58%), like they have people who can support them through tough times (67%), like they have a place to show their creative side (71%), and more connected to what’s going on in their friends’ lives (80%).

However, social media use can be excessive and problematic for some children. Recent research shows that adolescents who spend more than three hours per day on social media face double the risk of experiencing poor mental health outcomes, such as symptoms of depression and anxiety; yet one 2021 survey of teenagers found that, on average, they spend 3.5 hours a day on social media. Social media may also perpetuate body dissatisfaction, disordered eating behaviors, social comparison, and low self-esteem, especially among adolescent girls. One-third or more of girls aged 11-15 say they feel “addicted” to certain social media platforms and over half of teenagers report that it would be hard to give up social media.

When asked about the impact of social media on their body image, 46% of adolescents aged 13-17 said social media makes them feel worse, 40% said it makes them feel neither

better nor worse, and only 14% said it makes them feel better. Additionally, 64% of adolescents are “often” or “sometimes” exposed to hate-based content through social media. Studies have also shown a relationship between social media use and poor sleep quality, reduced sleep duration, sleep difficulties, and depression among youth.

While more research is needed to determine the full impact social media use has on nearly every teenager across the country, children and adolescents don’t have the luxury of waiting years until we know the full extent of social media’s effects.

MASS SHOOTING UPDATE

Information recent as of 5-23-2023 at 12 p.m.

2023 Mass Shooting Stats: (Source: Mass Shooting Tracker, <https://www.massshootingtracker.site/data/?year=2023>)

- Total Mass Shootings: 280 (including Newark)
- Total Dead: 404
- Total Wounded: 1055
- Shootings Per Day: 1.96
- Days Reached in Year 2023 as of May 9: 143

Latest High Profile Incident

Location: Three locations - Clarksdale, MS.

Time: Around 3 to 3:30 a.m. local time, May 22.

Deceased: None.

Injured: 14.

Shooter(s): Unknown.

Weapon(s): Unknown.

Motive: Suspected beef after concert.

Status: At-large.

EUROPE

META SMACKED WITH €1.2 BILLION FINE

Following the European Data Protection Board’s (EDPB) binding dispute resolution decision of April 13, 2023, Meta Platforms Ireland Limited (Meta IE) was issued a 1.2 billion euro fine following an inquiry into its Facebook service, by the Irish Data Protection Authority (IE

DPA). This fine, which is the largest GDPR fine ever, was imposed for Meta’s transfers of personal data to the U.S. on the basis of standard contractual clauses (SCCs) since July 16, 2020. Furthermore, Meta has been ordered to bring its data transfers into compliance with the GDPR.

Andrea Jelinek, EDPB Chair, said: “The EDPB found that Meta IE’s infringement is very serious since it concerns transfers that are systematic, repetitive and continuous. Facebook has millions of users in Europe, so the volume of personal data transferred is massive. The unprecedented fine is a strong signal to organizations that serious infringements have far-reaching consequences.”

In its binding decision, the EDPB instructed the IE DPA to amend its draft decision and to impose a fine on Meta IE. Given the seriousness of the infringement, the EDPB found that the starting point for calculation of the fine should be between 20% and 100% of the applicable legal maximum. The EDPB also instructed the IE DPA to order Meta IE to bring processing operations into compliance with Chapter V GDPR, by ceasing the unlawful processing, including storage, in the U.S. of personal data of European users transferred in violation of the GDPR, within 6 months after notification of the IE SA’s final decision.

The IE DPA’s final decision incorporates the legal assessment expressed by the EDPB in its binding decision, adopted on the basis of Art. 65(1)(a) GDPR after the IE DPA, as lead supervisory authority (LSA), had triggered a dispute resolution procedure concerning the objections raised by several concerned supervisory authorities (CSAs). Among others, CSAs issued objections aiming to include an administrative fine and/or an additional order to bring processing into compliance.

The final decision taken by the IE DPA is available in the Register for Decisions taken by supervisory authorities and courts on issues handled in the consistency mechanism.

BLOOMFIELD COLLEGE

(Continued from page 1)

panic and white students and attendees present at the graduation.

After the graduating class of 2023 came the professors in their colorful robes, the Board of Trustees, Bloomfield College President Marcheta Evans, the Faculty Marshal, Bloomfield College Alumni Association President Maurice Lyle and invited honorable guests. People applauded as the students and dignitaries marched past.

As the college officials and dignitaries took their seats on the stage, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. This was followed by a benediction given by Reverend Anita M. Wright, pastor of the Trinity Presbyterian Church.

Michael A. Palladino, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty at Bloomfield College, gave a speech. He was followed by Vernon M. Endo, Chair of the Bloomfield College Board of Trustees.

In his remarks, Mr. Endo said, "...here first at Bloomfield College. You did so under difficult circumstances. We are very proud of you. This is your day. ... We worked to finalize the merger with Montclair State University. This was not the conventional wisdom. Thank you for answering our call for help, Montclair State University President Jonathan GS Koppel and the Board of Trustees." A round of applause followed Mr. Endo's remarks.

Vice President Michael A. Palladino introduced Bloomfield College President Marcheta Evans.

In her speech, President Evans said in part, "Welcome, Class of 2023! Celebrate this momentous occasion. ...I became your president in 2019. We endured so much. Social unrest... I am so proud of you. Faculty, administrators. So many people helped you (graduating class) to get there."

"Please stand - medical profession because you put your life on the line. First generation students recognized. First in family to receive higher education.

There is only a small percentage of people that have a degree. Especially if they are people of color."

"Make sure that when you need help, you ask for it. ... We are continuing to make amazing things happen. Together we can make a better tomorrow. Congratulations to you all!"

A video, made of collage taken from old yearbooks, was shown. "The Bloomfield College environment prepares students to be global students", said one caption.

Bloomfield College is the only four-year black, Hispanic institution in the state of New Jersey.

Montclair State University President Jonathan GS Koppel delivered his congratulatory remarks after BC President Evans. In his speech, Dr. Koppel said in part, "I see joy. I see pride. We are on this occasion, all Bloomfielders. ... We bring two institutions together to create more opportunities. ...The line between today and future success, I can guarantee you, is not going to be straight. Do not be discouraged. I am confident that Bloomfield College and Montclair State University will build upon the past and create a better future. You should have the belief that tomorrow will be better."

Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty Michael A. Palladino recognized several faculty members for their achievements. Palladino thanked faculty members for their 16, 42, and 49 years of service respectively.

Maurice Lyle, Class of 2009 and President of the Bloomfield College Alumni Association and Alumni Grand Marshal, recognized outstanding alumni for their service. The alumni association president gave the Distinguished Alumni Association Award to John DeLucca, Class of 1966.

Aliyah Lynette Rivera, '23, was the valedictorian. Speaking in Spanish, Ms. Rivera delivered her remarks through a translator. In part, Ms. Rivera said, "Today we celebrate our accomplishments and academic growth."

Michael A. Palladino, Vice
(Continued on page 9)

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Funding provided by the NJ Community College Opportunity Grant program

BLOOMFIELD COLLEGE

Continued from page 7)

President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty, together with Bloomfield College President Marcheta Evans, presided over the conferral of honorary degrees.

James Douglas Axelrod was awarded the Doctor of Humane Letters degree. The Honorable Mila A. Jasey and the Honorable Mikie Sherill were awarded honorary Doctor of Laws degrees.

According to the event program, Mr. Axelrod “served as a dedicated member of the Bloomfield College Board of Trustees from 2015 - 2021. He continues to serve as an advocate for the educational needs of our institution's underserved student population and as a sought-after advisor to our College leadership.”

According to the event program, “The Honorable Mila M. Jasey is currently Deputy Speaker serving her eighth term in the New Jersey Legislature representing the 27th Legislative District, consisting of 14 towns in

Essex and Morris Counties.

In awarding Assemblywoman Jasey her doctorate, Dr. Palladino said, "She helped get \$12.5 million for Bloomfield College" when the school was in financial crisis.

Assemblywoman Jasey told the audience, "I speak to you as a mother, grandmother and politician. ... They can never take away your education. My father and brothers were descendants of enslaved people. Paternal grandparents emigrated from Jamaica. My aunt graduated from Montclair State University, became a teacher. She was the seventh of eleven children." According to Jasey, she has nine brothers.

According to the event program, the Honorable Mikie Sherill currently represents New Jersey's 11th Congressional District where Bloomfield College is located, and serves on the House Armed Services Committee and the House Select Committee on Strategic Competition between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party.

Once Congresswoman Sherill finished making her speech, the presentation of candidates and conferring of degrees in curricula began.

Three Bloomfield College students were awarded a Bachelor of Science / Master of Science Degree. Domshanika Hatcher, Jakara Henry and Yoshley Mejia all received B.A./M.A. degrees. Antonio Gordon received a Master of Arts in Teaching.

A total of 273 students' names were on the event program, all of whom graduated with the Class of 2023. Of these, 21 graduated cum laude, or Honors; 15 graduated magna cum laude, or High Honors; 15 graduated with summa cum laude, or Highest Honors. According to the event program, "A student who has earned a cumulative grade point average of 3.50 and a 3.50 average in the major is eligible for cum laude; both averages must be 3.65 for magna cum laude and 3.80 for summa cum laude."

As each graduate stepped on

stage, he or she was given the diploma by Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Students Michael A. Palladino. Stepping forward a few paces, the graduate was met by Bloomfield College President Marcheta Evans. The college photographer took a photo of every student with President Evans.

Maurice Lyle, Class of 2009, President of the Bloomfield College Alumni Association, addressed the Class of 2023 once the conferral of degrees was completed.

"It is an honor to address the 150th Commencement Class. We applaud you... to a successful life," BCAA President Lyle told the graduating class of 2023. "Whatever you aspire to do, do it! Choose your life more carefully. Stay in touch!" BCCAA President Lyle told the graduating class.

Dr. Steven Kreutzer delivered the graduate salute. During his speech, Dr. Kreutzer held the mace. Kreutzer was the Grand Marshal of the 150th Bloomfield

(Continued on page 15)

TOWN WATCH

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

NEWARK - The lights are on in the Riviera Divine Hotel but, since May 1, nobody's home.

The Riviera's new ownership coalition, led by Newark's GK Group has had industrial-strength anti break-in panels installed on 's doors and most storefront windows of 165-169 Clinton Ave. Any occupants - clients or temporary shelter residents - have been moved out of what was in 1922 "Newark's Million Dollar Hotel."

Logistics Real Estate Sales, of New York City, announced on April 4 that it had negotiated the sale of the 101-year-old eight-story hotel from the Riviera Hotel Corp. to a consortium including KS Group, Giga Holdings and Jersey City's Pride Investment Group for \$8.5 million. The Riviera Hotel Corp., of 45 Academy St. here, had bought the building from the Peace Mission (founded by "Father Divine,") Dec. 15, 2006 for \$800,000.

The KS Group, headed by co-CEOs Daniel Spiegel and Yeuda Kotkes, may be best known for having a 15-story, 360-unit apartment building going up in University Heights. 50-54 Sussex Ave., replacing a former auto body shop, is to open in mid-2024.

"I'm thrilled to share that we've acquired the 220-room Historic Riviera Hotel in Newark!" said Giga founder Jeff Blau on his LinkedIn page April 5. "This is an exciting milestone for our company and we're honored to be part of this transaction."

None of the transaction's parties, however, have said what the new owners have in mind for the 1922-built hotel. The Central Newark Planning Board, citing density concerns, denied Riviera

Corp.'s plan to convert the eight-story building into 99 residential units plus ground floor retail space on Sept. 29.

The Riviera hotel had opened in 1922 with a dining room and a storefront drug store-soda fountain after being built for what would be \$18.057 million in today's dollars. Father Divine and his Peace Mission bought the hotel in 1949 for \$550,000 (now \$7 million) in cash and promptly enacted a racial desegregation policy for guests.

IRVINGTON - 722 Chancellor Ave., with the cutting of a ribbon and the approval of lease applications here May 12, has entered a new historical era.

A group of investors and civic officials, headed by Irvington Mayor Anthony "Tony" Vauss and entrepreneur Adenah Bayorh, snipped the red ribbon in front of what is now a five-story, 56-unit apartment building that Friday.

722 Chancellor Apartments, after 23 months' construction, is a blend of one- to three-bedroom apartments available to residents at or below 60 percent of the area's annual median income. Five of the units, reserved for residents with special needs, come with services provided by the YMCA of Greater Newark.

The building - constructed in Irvington's Redevelopment Area, Urban Enterprise Zone and Smart Growth Area - was pioneered by The NRP Group and Adenah Bayorh & Associates.

"Growing up in affordable housing in this community myself," said Bayorh, who started off owning and operating the 1212 Springfield IHOP where the Kless Diner was, "I was able to identify the specific needs of residents that would require from an apartment house like this."

The Sandra Jones Community Center named after the late councilwoman, among the range of 722 Chancellor's amenities. It will include a fitness room, a computer room, a children's playroom, a laundry room, a leasing/management office and "an Irvington-themed mural to capture the spirit of the city."

It is not known whether that mural will include 722 Chancellor Ave.'s previous structure which held the Chancellor Theatre, Roxy Drug Store and Falcone's Pizzeria. The 1,250-seat 1920s-80s Chancellor was

known to hire and feature Jerome Laevitch - the future comedian Jerry Lewis - and to close in the summer for a lack of air conditioning. All of 722 Chancellor's 56 units have central A/C.

EAST ORANGE - It appears that the fate of the Brick Church's namesake sanctuary building here at 552 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd./7 Prospect St., lies in the hands of a Brooklyn developer.

David Scharf, of the Scharf Group is talking with preservationists and concerned citizens of East Orange about what sort of future the Second Presbyterian Church/Temple of United Christians Brick Church at MKL and Prospect's northwest corner will have.

The Scharf Group has the same address as New Brick Church, LLC - an entity that had first proposed renovating the 1858 church and adding an extension for residential purposes in 2021.

The Temple of United Christians, after a decade of problems maintaining the 165-year-old edifice, sold the property in 2020 to NBC LLC for \$420,000. NBC then presented an application to the East Orange Planning Board to build a seven-story apartment building north of the house of worship. The planning board denied the application for the lack of adequate parking and the Brick Church Redevelopment Zone Plan requirement to have first floor commercial/retail space.

All was quiet at 552 MLK/7 Prospect until Zuccaro, of Garfield, installed a perimeter fence around the .3165 acre lot and began demolishing the church's north side on April 17. Concerned citizens prompted the city to issue a stop work order on its own demolition permit, leading to an April 24 State Superior Court-Newark hearing.

Superior Court Judge Lisa Adubato, that Monday, has listened to TUC attorney Calvin Souder's call for a formal stop work injunction until the congregation can buy back the building. TUC and New Brick Church had a partnership during the 2020-21 application before the planning board.

Adubato did not issue an injunction but instead told NBC/Scharf to negotiate with TUC and concerned citizens. There is

otherwise little standing in the way of Scharf finishing the demolition since East Orange is one of the few New Jersey municipalities that does not have an historical preservation committee or board.

ORANGE - The revamping of Orange Commons Military Park here in the East Ward is happening in full view through a chain link fence this summer.

"Local Talk" and others have seen city workers and/or contractors uproot 17 trees and all shrubbery on the two block island that separates Main Street from South Main Street. The park's east end, anchored by the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors Monument, has been extended by some 20 feet.

City Business Administrator Chris Hartwyk and UEZ Coordinator Chris Mobley told "Local Talk" May 23 that the uprooting and extension are part of an overall \$1.5 million renovation project going on through August.

The project, when complete, will feature a contemplative walkway, lighting and strategically placed flagpoles. The felled trees and shrubbery will be replaced with new trees and vegetation.

Contractor S. Batata Construction, of Parlin, has pledged to keep or carefully move monuments on the grounds. "Local Talk" had noticed that the World War Two/Korea/Vietnam memorial that was originally in front of the Orange Public Schools Colgate building (Where the Rosa Parks Community School is now) had been moved a couple of feet for clearance.

Hartwyk and Mobley said that the revamped park can be used for contemplation or for events like farmers markets. The project is being paid through a \$1.2 million New Jersey Green Acres grant; Orange's 25-percent matching funds are to be drawn from a state Urban Enterprise Zone grant. Batata was awarded the \$1,004,944 lowest responsible bid; a design engineer was also hired.

The Orange Commons Military Park, once used as an army drill grounds, goes back to the Colonial era - predating the city's 1806 incorporation.

WEST ORANGE - Engineers and architects hired by the
(Continued on page 12)

PRIMARY (Continued from page 5)

Renee C. Burgess is seeking a Democratic nomination towards her first fully elected term. The ECDC appointed the former Irvington Councilwoman to succeed the late Ronald C. Rice. The ECRPO did not field any state senate candidates here.

There are three candidates seeking the Democratic nod. Incumbent Cleopatra Tucker, of Newark and Essex County Deputy Clerk Garnet R. Hall, of Maplewood, are on the ECDC ticket. Challenging is former Maplewood mayor Frank E. McGehee on his own "Democrats, Change ... It's Up to Us" platform.

Newark South Ward Republican Vice Chairwoman Joy Freeman and fellow Newarker Willie S. Jetti are seeking Republican voters' endorsement.

29TH LD: Newark's North, East, Central, "West Side" and "southeast" wards.

It appears that incumbent Democrat M. Teresa Ruiz and ECRPO's Maritza Mathews will get their June 6 nominations to face each other Nov. 8.

In the assembly primaries, incumbent Democrats Elena Pintor Marin and Shanique Speight and challenging Republicans Noble Milto and Orlando Mendez are seeking their respective parties' endorsements.

34TH LD: East Orange, Orange, Bloomfield, Glen Ridge, Belleville, Nutley.

Senate

Britnee Timberlake, of East Orange, has decided to leave her Assemblywoman seat to run for the open senate seat. No prospective Republicans have filed.

General Assembly

Outgoing Bloomfield Mayor Michael Venezia and Essex County Newark Technical High School Principal Carmen Morales, of Belleville, are looking for the Democratic party nod.

The ECRPO is meanwhile putting up James McGuire, of Nutley against the "Stop the Insanity" campaign of East Orange's Rev. Clenard H. Childress.

ESSEX COUNTY

For Surrogate, incumbent Alturrick Kenney, of Newark, and challenger Peter Russo, of Bloomfield, are seeking their Democratic and Republican nominations.

COMMISSIONERS

District One: Newark's North and East Wards plus parts of Central, South and West Wards

Incumbent Robert Mercado, of Newark, wants the Democratic blessing. There is no Republican entered.

District Two: Irvington, Maplewood and parts of Newark's Central and South wards

A'Dorian Murray-Thomas, Newark, is seeking the Democratic nod to succeed the retiring Rufus Johnson, of Newark. No Republican was fielded.

District Three: East Orange, Orange, South Orange and part of Newark's West Ward.

Incumbent Tyshammie L. Cooper, of East Orange, is on the EDCD ticket. No Republicans had filed.

District Four: West Orange and "West Essex."

Democratic incumbent Leonard M. Luciano, of West Caldwell, and Republican challenger Adam Kraemer, of West Orange, are looking for their parties' endorsements.

District Five: Bloomfield, Montclair, Glen Ride, Belleville, Nutley

Commission Vice President Carlos Pomares, of Bloomfield, is seeking Democratic nomination. Kirsten M. Blochak, of Belleville, wants to be the Republican challenger.

At-Large (Select Four)

Democratic Patricia Sebold, of Livingston; Brendan W. Gill, of Montclair; Romaine Graham, of Irvington; and Wayne Richardson, of Newark vs. Justin Harris (EPCDO) (Rufus Johnson, of Newark, is retiring.)



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Fairfield Councilman Joseph Cifelli, Alexandra Campisi, of West Caldwell; Aristotle Popolizio, of Roseland, and Michael Pocolinko, of Caldwell make up the ECRPO slate.

MUNICIPAL PRIMARIES are being held in East Orange, Maplewood and Bloomfield.

In EAST ORANGE, there is a competition for this year's Fifth Ward seat to succeed outgoing incumbent Mustafa Al-M. Brent.

City grants analyst Naima Fauntleroy is running on the ECDC line. Ampere Civic Improvement Association co-founder Royston Allman is campaigning on his own "Bringing Communities Together" banner.

In Ward Two, City district leader Sammed Monk is looking to succeed incumbent Brittany D. Claybrooks.

Fauntleroy, Monk, Foirst Ward Councilwoman Amy Lewis, Third Ward Councilwoman Vernon Pullins, Jr. and Fourth Ward Councilman Casim L. Gomez, Jr. are all on the same ECDC and Mayor Ted Green's

"Green Team 2023" slate. Lewis, Pullins and Gomez are running unopposed.

MAPLEWOOD Township Committee (Select Two)

The township's Democratic committee is supporting current Mayor Dean Dafis and fellow incumbent Victor De Luca for both Township Committee seats. The Maplewood Republican Committee declined fielding candidates.

All three BLOOMFIELD Ward Council Members - Jenny Mundell (Ward One), Nicholas Joanow (Ward Two) and Sarah Cruz (Ward Three) are running unopposed.

Essex County Clerk Christopher Durkin reminds prospective voters that May 30 is the last day for voters to request Vote By Mail Ballots by mail. VBMBs have to be postmarked on or before June 6 or be put in designated drop boxes before 8 p.m. that Tuesday. Polling machine locations will be open 6 a.m. - 8 p.m. June 6.

Details, including polling station and dropbox locations may be found at essexclerk.com.



*From
The
Pastor's
Heart*

OP-ED BY DR. ROBERT KENNEDY

**Be Likeminded
Toward One Another**

In elementary school, I remember a game that some kids (especially girls) liked to play. It was not one of those structured games on the playfield. One of those games happened when two kids sat beside each other or talked together.

If, for any reason, the two kids were thinking about the same subject but by coincidence came out with the same sentence simultaneously, one would hasten to hit the other on the arm and say, "Die before me." Of course, more mature ones would say, "Great minds think alike, and fools seldom differ." Sometimes they would repeat the first part of the latter proverb, "Great minds think alike," then hold the second part to get a laugh, with "Fools seldom differ." Many kids played the game and often used it to build relationships.

I have also heard that telepathy is when two individuals simultaneously verbalize the exact thoughts. In another context, a friend or relative calls on the phone at the same time while you

are dialing or have your phone in hand to call them, or you are texting them while they are texting you; we might speak of it as a chance. But, again, you might be shocked to see a person who is a close friend turn up at a place wearing the same colors as you.

My wife and I, who have been married for 52+ years, often dress in the same colors without any plan to do so. She did not see me when I got dressed and left the bedroom, only to find that she was wearing similar colors as she came out to where I was.

Why am I mentioning all the scenarios above? It is to emphasize that although we are so insistent on proclaiming our individuality, there is something in building relationships and community that we should not just treat as a coincidence but need to do as a strategic venture.

I am not calling for all of us to dress in a similar manner, pick up the phone at the same time to call or text one another or say the same thing at the same time, but I am calling for us to stop being so contrary to one another in our thoughts and behavior. I am not calling for what is known as "herd mentality" or "groupthink," where it is assumed that an action is appropriate because others are thinking about it or performing it. I am calling for collaborative thinking that can build our homes and communities.

As the apostle Paul sought to build up unity in the church com-

munities he led, he reminded the members that they needed to "**Be likeminded towards one another**" (cf. Romans 15:5).

I am not a great sports player or a fan, but I have paid enough attention to the game of baseball to note that team members have to be like-minded to make a success of the game. For example, a catcher and a pitcher must think together. The catcher must know whether the pitcher will throw a curve ball, a breaking ball, or a straight ball over the center of the plate. The catcher must think out the speed of the ball, etc. Collaborative thinking must go into each ball thrown. There has to be understanding between the one behind the plate and the one throwing the ball. The same collaboration goes in football, basketball, and all games that demand more than one player. You either think together and win or think independently of each other and lose the game.

Again, let me be clear that my suggestion does not diminish the need for diverse thoughts and opinions. As is made clear, diversity of thought elevates teams by fostering communication around individual perspectives and creating a posture of thinking beyond oneself. It's a key ingredient to candid conversation, innovation, and execution. But one might idolize diversity of thinking so much that it destroys relationships and community. We must encourage diversity of thought and not confuse it with contrary

or conflictual thinking, by which some people think their opinions are so great that they cannot give place to others' thoughts.

Let me return to the proverb, "Great minds think alike," but "Fools seldom differ" to remind us to be humble in our thinking. In this, I suggest that:

1. We should not idolize our thoughts.
2. We should not be disrespectful of the thoughts of others.
3. We ought not to engage in groupthink.
4. We should not think that the thoughts of others are not as crucial as ours.
5. We must not share thoughts of evil with others.
6. We are not to be patient with those whose thoughts contradict ours.

We are to strive to be like-minded. That is, building unity and community instead of constantly fighting with thoughts and words. The apostle Paul's appeal to be likeminded was written to church folks arguing and breaking up their community. Like-mindedness is still needed in our society today, where there is so much conflict because we want to prove how individualistic we are.

Therefore, the simple message is that we must do all we can to bring our thoughts closer to each other to build community.

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 10)

Daughters of Israel may have gone back to the drawing board in the wake of the West Orange Zoning Board of Adjustment's May 11 denial of their nursing home's expansion plan.

The DOI expansion plan, after 11 public hearing sessions over nine months, came down to a "No" vote that Thursday night. The final site plan proposal had failed to get at least four of the seven board members' votes to pass.

DOI at 1155 Pleasant Valley Way since 1962, sought to build 163 housing units within a three-to-five story 122,560 square foot building on its 18-acre property. While the five story part would face Pleasant Valley Way, the three-story part along Parsons and Skyline drives would be partially set into the hillside.

DOI architect KDA, of Cherry Hill, had projected the building's construction being done in three phases over 10 years. The extension, once built out, would include 24 as-

sisted living and assisted mental living units, a formal dining room, a library/reading room, a pool and a theater.

The daughters and architect were asking for three D variances, including raising the residential zone's maximum height from 2.5 stories to six; and 11 C variance, including the doubling of loading docks to four.

DOI and its experts said that the expansion would turn the entity into a "continuum care community." Critics, including neighbors and Our Green West Orange, called the application's traffic plan "flawed," that the proposal is based on an "outmoded model" and that the nursing home has been nonconforming to the township's master plan for decades.

SOUTH ORANGE / MAPLEWOOD - Although the South Orange-Maplewood School District Board of Education eventually approved all personnel that Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ronald Taylor had recommended early May 12, three administrators' renewals were given extra scrutiny over

the 5.5-hour session.

A majority of the school board members first spun off the proposed reappointments of Columbia High School Principal Frank Sanchez, Curriculum and Instruction Assistant Superintendent Ann Bodnar and Language Arts Supervisor Jane Bean-Folkes from their consent agenda early in their meeting.

The board, led by President Kaitlin Witleder, then called for an executive session to discuss the three administrators' fates. They returned two hours later to find a capacity SOMSD Administration Building committee room audience. Another 600 people were said to be watching on YouTube and Webex.

The in-person speakers, at two minutes each for three hours, spoke their peace on Sanchez, Bodnar and Bean-Folkes. Current and past Maplewood mayors Dean Dafis and Frank McGehee were among those adults and students who wanted to keep Sanchez. Several had both home- and professionally-made "Keep Sanchez at All Costs" signs.

(Continued on page 14)

MUSIC FOR COMMUNITY UNITY

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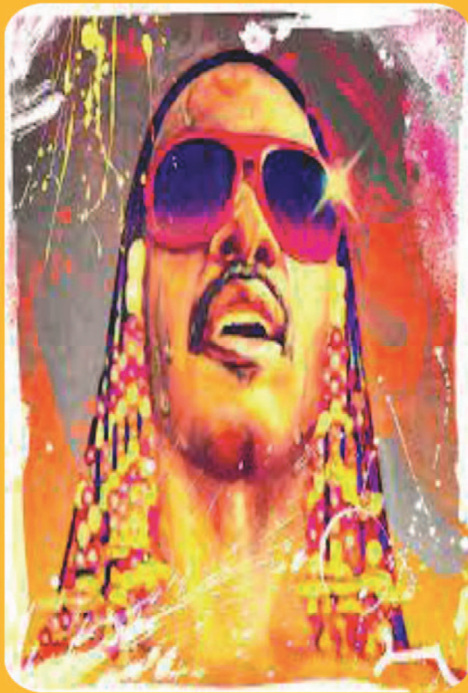
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SETON HALL STUDENTS PROTEST LACK OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES FACULTY: PART II

By Lev D. Zilbermintz

On May 18, "Local Talk" published a piece on Seton Hall students voicing their concerns about a lack of diversity pertaining to the teaching faculty at the university. This is Part II of that article.

What did Seton Hall University Do About AFAM?

According to shu.edu, "Around 5-10 students annually apply for the Africana Studies major, with usually, at most, 1-2 enrolling. In any given academic year, approximately a dozen students are enrolled in the program (including first and second majors and minors), with the majority pursuing Africana Studies as a minor.

"To strengthen the Africana Studies program, the College of Arts and Sciences has separated the role of the Africana Studies Director from the new tenure-track faculty position in Africana Studies. Dividing these roles will increase the capacity of highly

qualified teachers in the program by at least three courses per year. It will also help the success and retention of the new faculty member by focusing that individual on teaching, research and advising."

Interestingly enough, the website of the College of Arts and Sciences at Seton Hall University was updated on May 3, 2023, the same day that the takeover of President's Hall took place. The statements on that site raise more questions than answers.

Statement by Seton Hall University

Laurie Pine, the Director of Media Relations, issued the following statement.

"Seton Hall will continue to listen to our students' concerns and look forward to engaging in further constructive dialogue. We're focused on the work that will achieve our shared goal of building an even more vital and robust Africana Studies program.

"Seton Hall is committed to

academic freedom and civil discourse, always rooted in our values and Catholic mission. We are deeply committed to the critical discipline of Africana Studies and underscore how vital it is for all our students, independent of their major field of study, to be able to learn about their (and other) cultures, histories and identities. The remarkable diversity of our university community is one of our great strengths."

There follows a link to "the steps the University has taken to support Africana Studies and more fully integrate diversity, equity and inclusion into life on our campus."

Students slam university statement

Upon hearing the response of the University's administration, protesting students slammed it as nothing more than empty rhetoric. In a statement posted on protect.afam.shu account on Instagram at 10:35 a.m. on Friday, May 5, Protect AFAM Movement at Seton Hall said that the

administration was not acting in good faith.

"An email was sent out to the administration on behalf of The Protect AFAM collective asking for a public meeting at 4 p.m. on Thursday (May 3) in the Chancellors Suite. We did not get a response until 6:42 p.m. yesterday (May 4) evening. The University made it a priority to blast out an email to students and make an addition to their website listing the ways in which they have been 'supportive' of Africana Studies Program and the Protect AFAM Movement, a statement full of blatantly false claims and empty performative rhetoric.

"Furthermore, we can confirm that the Provost and President attended meetings yesterday with other groups to discuss the movement without an AFAM representative present. Communications continue to come from parties who have admitted multiple times that they do not have the jurisdiction to address our demands," the Protect AFAM

(Continued on page 14)

SETON HALL (Continued from page 13)

Movement statement read.

Statements of support from other student organizations, Interim Director of Africana Studies

Since the protest started on May 3, numerous student organizations have expressed support for the Protect AFAM Movement. Unidos Bailamos, Gamma Omicron Chapter of Alpha Omicron Phi, the West Indian Student Organization, Black Student Organization, Undergraduate Student Diplomacy, Lamda Xi chapter of Zeta Tau Alpha, Seton Hall PRIDE, the various School of Diplomacy organizations, all have issued statements of support for the Protect AFAM Movement. The Setonian reported in its May 6 online edition that “newly elected Student Government Association President Kai Hansen arrived and spoke to some of the protesters.”

Interim Director of Africana Studies and Special Assistant to the Provost releases a statement in support of Protect AFAM

In the evening of May 4, Revered Forrest Pritchett, the Interim Director of Africana Studies and the Special Assistant to the Provost, released an Open Letter in support of the “Protect AFAM movement.”

According to protect.afam.shu on Instagram, Rev. Pritchett's letter states, “The students involved in the Protect AFAM movement are operating in the best tradition of student activism. Black Studies only exists on college campuses because of student protest. Seton Hall students are not protesting because of a perverse desire for attention. In fact, today's (May 4) sit-in was the last option. As Special Assistant to the Provost, the Interim Director of Africana Studies, and the head of the Martin Luther King Jr. Scholar-

ship Association, I stand in full solidarity with the demands of the Protect AFAM collective and movement, along with an unyielding demand for amnesty in them expressing their basic human right to protest for change.

“I have served Seton Hall University with distinction for 45 years. I have witnessed Black Studies in its high point during the 1970s and all the protests that followed. At what point does the administration reflect on its errors regarding support for Africana Studies? Punishing and harassing the students for speaking the truth to power is not only un-American, but it goes against the very principles that Seton Hall University prides itself on.”

Unanswered Questions

Based on the information presented by the university, allegedly not too many students enroll in the African American Studies program. The question begs to be asked, how much effort is Seton Hall University putting into recruiting potential students into the Africana Studies program? Moreover, Seton Hall University has to compete with Rutgers-Newark, Essex County College, Berkeley College and Montclair State University for students interested in Africana Studies.

Another question is, if SHU is committed to academic freedom and civil discourse, then why is the institution looking to punish protesters? Why were not students allowed to present their grievances to the Board of Regents? Why was the only full-time faculty member teaching African American courses removed? Why did not the university administration ask current students for help in recruiting new students to the African American courses and Africana Studies program?

“Local Talk” found that students have posted registration forms for Africana Studies online. The students are actually trying to get more interested potential students to reg-

ister for the Africana Studies program.

Students respond to administration, say their rights are being violated

According to AFAM statement on Instagram, "Seton Hall continuously sends Trace Herzog, security manager, to periodically surveil our activities after the individuals of the movement have expressed their discomfort after the actions of night 1. On night 1 (May 4) he was sent to take pictures of the individuals and the space including at 4 a.m. when everyone was asleep and no one was conscious and able to acknowledge his presence..."

A three-minute video posted on Instagram by AFAM members shows Mr. Herzog talking to students in President's Hall the following evening. The students are heard talking to the security manager, who then goes up the stairs in President's Hall.

Administration refuses to meet with students

So far the administration of Seton Hall University has refused to meet with representatives of the Protect AFAM movement. According to Instagram and the Setonian, the administration welcomed New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy on campus on May 3. As reported by the Setonian. The governor was a speaker for the course Government and Politics of New Jersey.

From the information available, it seems that the university spoke about the AFAM movement without an AFAM representative being present.

According to the Setonian, the administration proposed to meet with three Protect AFAM representatives at 4:30 p.m. on May 3 if the protestors vacated the President's Hall at 4 p.m. that day. Protect AFAM stated in an Instagram post that read in part, "The Office

(Continued on page 15)

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 12)

Bean-Folkes' reappointment was initially denied, 5-4. Then Board Member Johanna Wright, of South Orange, said she was confused over which individual measure was being voted on and wanted to change her vote. Wittleder said that the board will get back to Bean-Folkes after voting on Sanchez and Bodnar.

Sanchez and Bodner were reappointed. Bean-Folkes, on the recast, was retained 5-4.

BLOOMFIELD - Patrons, visitors and staff of the Bloomfield Public Library's older building have had to walk and work around construction zones lately.

What is best known as the BPL Children's Library here at 90 Broad St., has been closed since May 20. The May 23 and 24 Storytimes, as a result, has since been held under the library courtyard's tent.

It is the start of an at least \$1 million ren-

ovation project that will last through the summer. The million has been included in the township's Calendar Year 2022 municipal budget with the balance drawn from various grants.

Acting Township Administrator Anthony DeZenzo said, on April 12, that the project is to bring the 1927 building up to safety codes and improve its accessibility and function.

The work became necessary when the state labor departments Public Employees' Occupational Safety and Health office issued the library an Order to Comply. The PEOSH reported several age-related problems while stressing that the employees and public, then as now, were not endangered.

The 1927 building became the Children's Library when the main building opened in 1967. The older structure has also included a ground floor theater and, on the third floor, the Historical Society of Bloomfield Museum.

Construction updates are to be posted on

the BPL and Bloomfield Township websites.

MONTCLAIR - The Montclair Public Schools' \$138,858,260 2023-24 budget, which it had passed on the 11th hour May 15, has become a bitter pill for most members of the township community to swallow.

The MPS Board of Education, after eight months of preliminary hearings and a seven-hour executive and public meeting that Monday night, passed the budget after approving \$5,449,593 worth of budget cuts. Those cuts include the laying off of 34 certified teachers and paraprofessionals and the nonrenewal of contracts of another 39 paraprofessionals plus \$635,500 in central office salaries and benefits.

What all but two MBOE members approved included the cuts of 22 teachers and the abolishing of another nine teaching positions through attrition among MHS, the Glen and Rand middle schools and the Hillside

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TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 14)

and Nishuane elementary schools. Board member Eric Scherzer abstained from voting; Kathryn Willis-Demming was absent.

Some board members said that the cuts were based on the schools' number of students and staff. They and MPS administrators had factored in the loss of 611 districtwide students 2019-22. They had to approve a budget that night or their budget plan would go before the Essex County Superintendent of Schools and ultimately the N.J. Department of Education - the latter considering Montclair's budget "\$20 million above adequacy."

"They don't care about the magnet system, courtesy busing, the medical system (or) anything beyond adequacy and what the state mandates," said board member Brian Fleischer who added that not approving the budget would press "a nuclear button that would put kids and staff in the blast radius."

Some of the 100 people in the Montclair High School George Inness Annex - including students, parents and Montclair Education Association - asked why the cuts were being made in Montclair's South End, which had been historically underfunded. They had asked the school board and, on May 18, the Township Council, about diverting some of the redevelopment Payments in Lieu of Taxes to fund part of the district as is done at Cedar Grove and Princeton.

About 400 MHS students, on May 18, walked out of class and a mile south to the MPS Administration Building. They presented three demands: retain the 73 teachers and paraprofessionals, keep the current MHS schedule and Schools Superintendent Dr. Jonathan Ponds' resignation.

BELLEVILLE - Property tax and water bill payers will learn of the township's next step towards a cashless government on Aug. 1.

The township, in a May 6 website and

Facebook posting, will no longer have its tax and water departments accept cash payments. Both departments will take payments by check, money order and/or online.

By online, Belleville tax and water customers can use their credit or debit cards to pay their bills on the municipal website, courtesy of a third party entity called Nexbillpay.com, of Birmingham, Ala. NPB, according to its website, normally caters to rural utility companies.

The Belleville Water Department also has customers creating accounts or have detailed questions answered by calling (479) 493-2328. (479) is the area code for Bentonville and Northwestern Arkansas.

The township, earlier this year, had new curbside parking meters along Washington Avenue. Those meters can read credit and debit cards and electronic parking apps - but no cash.

Belleville's water and tax departments, on Aug. 1, 2022, stopped accepting payments for both bills on the same check or money order. Separate tax and water checks have since been accepted. There is still a physical payment drop box between Town Hall and the Public Safety Building.

NUTLEY / CLIFTON - Construction of a hotel and a medical office building, barring an appeal by Nutley to a higher court, may well go up on Clifton's side of the ON3/ex-Roche Pharmaceutical property.

A State Superior Court-Paterson judge ruled in favor of Clifton and ON3 developer Prism Capital Partners, and against Nutley, on May 10.

Clifton's Planning Board in separate 2020 and 2021 public hearings, had approved Prism's site plan applications for the Marriott AC/Element Hotel and a pre-leased Hackensack University Meridian Hospital medical office building and ambulatory care center.

The Township of Nutley then took Prism

and the Clifton Planning Board to court later in 2021. Nutley's in-house and hired lawyers said that both proposals needed the township's input - especially when it comes to a traffic plan.

The case is symptomatic of Nutley's deteriorating relationship with Prism and Clifton over the 116-acre ON3 tract's development. Nutley claims that Clifton is using the Payment in Lieu of Taxes both municipalities had approved to stimulate repurposing of the Roche site to benefit the city at Nutley's infrastructural expense.

Nutley, in 2021, had considered breaking away from the ON3 project by seizing the township's part of the land through eminent domain.

The Superior Court-Paterson judge, on May 10, had ruled that the hotel is being built within the City of Clifton and therefore need no consent from Nutley. This ruling was similarly extended to the Hackensack Meridian office building.

SETON HALL (Continued from page 14)

of the President and the Provost have been meeting with various faculty, departments and student organizations but has yet to meet with us and continues to refuse our request to meet until we leave President's Hall. ... Despite requesting to meet with the administration live and in public, they refuse to comply as they do not want the truth to be released to the public."

According to an Instagram post by Protect AFAM around 6 a.m. May 8, the administration is trying to get President's Hall back from the students. A message posted on Instagram says, "They are headcounting every hour and communicating about locking the building down. Please join us in the AFAM House, formerly known as President's Hall. We need numbers!"

"Local Talk" will keep its readers updated on the latest developments.

BLOOMFIELD COLLEGE

(Continued from page 9)

College Commencement.

Vice President Palladino thanked Human Resources, staff of Dining services, Student Affairs and Academic Affairs for making the 150th Commencement possible. He then closed the 150th Commencement.

Everyone stood. Reverend Anita Wright of the Trinity Presbyterian Church delivered the benediction.

"Bless you when you come in, bless you when you come out," Reverend Wright intoned.

As everyone stood, the last Bloomfield College recessional took place. Dr. Kreutzer, holding the Bloomfield College mace, marched past. After him came BC President Margaret Evans, the Board of Trustees, faculty, dignitaries. Then came

the graduating class of 2023 in their maroon and orange caps and gowns, with collars and honor cords. Some of the collars bore inscriptions such as "student Scholar," "EOF Scholar," "Student Athlete."

As music played "Happy" by Pharrell Williams, the last independent Bloomfield College graduation came to an end. Surprisingly, there was no tassel turning. Holding their awarded diplomas, the just-minted graduates left the tent where the Bloomfield College graduation was held.

Full Disclosure: Lev D. Zilbermint graduated magna cum laude, 3.77 GPA with the Class of 1996 from Bloomfield College. Mr. Zilbermint was President of the Alpha Chi Beta Chapter in 1994-95; Secretary in 1995-96. He was also President of the Bloomfield College Day Student Government in 1996, and a member of the Judiciary Board, 1994-96.

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