

LOCAL TALK

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25¢

“LET’S TALK FOR THE BETTERMENT OF OUR COMMUNITIES”

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

ESSEX COUNTY • EAST ORANGE • ORANGE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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"THE DAY WHEN THE SKY TURNED ORANGE"

Photo By Lev D. Zilbermintz



By Walter Elliott

NEWARK - People in and around the Newark metropolitan area may well remember June 7, 2023 as the day when the sky turned orange.

Smoke from some 160 wildfires in Canada's Quebec and eastern Ontario provinces, aided by a stationary high stalled above Maine and New Brunswick, descended onto New Jersey and the tristate New York Metropolitan region June 6-8. An estimated 9.4 million acres there had been scorched as of June 8.

The smoke particles, which came from the northwest, took a track through New York's Finger Lakes region, the eastern half of Pennsylvania and most of New Jersey on its way to the Carolinas.

Those particles, according to the federal airnow.gov Air Quality

Index, reached 550 particles of 2.5 microns or smaller that Wednesday afternoon - a level beyond the 301-500 Hazardous range that was reached the day before and day after.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection issued a Code Orange air quality alert that Wednesday for Essex and Passaic Counties.

NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency meanwhile showed a Red Flag Warning for critical fire conditions for most of New Jersey and some Pennsylvania counties.

The red flag was for dry ground conditions that set the stage for wildfires. Two fires near Southern New Jersey's Wharton State Forest - the Buzby Boggs and City Line fires - have consumed an overall

FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP INDICTED ... AGAIN



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COUNTING SHEEP INSTEAD OF CATCHING CROOKS



PAGE 10

1,550 acres as of June 12.

Canadian weather officials have said that the first forest fire was sparked by a lightning strike in Quebec on June 2. Firefighters have been coming from across Canada and the U.S. to battle the blazes, which may take all summer.

Around 100 million peo-

ple, as far south as Georgia and as far west as Indianapolis, Ind., experienced unhealthy and "very unhealthy" airborne particulate content, an airborne campfire-like smell, itching eyes and, for some, labored breathing.

Various authorities advised most people to stay in-

(Continued on page 13)



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To
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Editorial
Dhiren Shah
 Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

Former President Donald Trump has been indicted in a Florida Federal Court. Trump surrendered to authorities there and tight security was provided in case of any mishap. It is no secret that he is a target for many US citizens, especially the Democrats. However, in the case of classified documents, he thought he could do anything as president.

He was the president, now he is the former president. Being president, he might have a lot of rights, but being a former president, he is like one of us. I don't know what the truth is and what is not concerning if he really could declassify documents per his rights. But there is one thing that is pretty sure, which is he

has been targeted by the Democratic machine since he became the presidential nominee for the Republican Party in 2016.

The 37-count indictment is unusual for a president, but it happened. He pleaded not guilty. So, for a short period of time, he knows that he will be in the news all the time. He said to his daughter that positive or negative news is good, as long as he is in the news.

Newark is trying to have rent control for the residents. As per the news, it will be 5% per year. However, 5% per year is too much for the residents. If a resident lives in a one-bedroom apartment, the rent is about \$1400. 5% after one year will be \$1470 and after five years it will be \$1,786.79. What happens after 10 to 15 years of a rent raise? Can the resident afford "only" a 5% raise? They are the backbone of Newark. My suggestion is that for the first few years, the rent hike should be about 4%, and after 5 years the rent hike should be about 2%. The older the apartment or building or house, the

cost goes down for the landlord. I think the council should revisit the possibilities of affordability. This is my opinion.

Also, the money most of the tenants pay does not stay within the community, except getting more properties for the landlords. I gave an example of Newark, but it applies to everywhere, including Orange, East Orange, West Orange, South Orange, Irvington, Maplewood, Bloomfield, Montclair, Belleville and so on.

The shootings are getting worse in Newark and the surrounding areas. However, politics are more important to the higher persons who hold the post to serve the people. I am not giving any name, however, when I ask our readers, they always tell me that after 20 years, the quality of life in the urban area has not gotten dramatically worse, but not better either. It only got better for the friends and family members of the elected officials. Some of the members have two jobs in government offices or powerful companies like Veri-

zon, PSE&G, NJ Transit, and others. Once elected, if they were working before with the same company, I don't have problem with those working two jobs in the government. But once they get elected, if the county or any other government or semi-government organization offers them a job, I do not agree with that.

We might have heard on June 13 that in Nottingham, an attack left three dead. The same thing is happening in the United States almost every day or every week. Mass shootings have become a part of life in America. This is the past few years: 2014: 272, 2015: 336, 2016: 383, 2017: 348, 2018: 336, 2019: 415, 2020: 610, 2021: 690, 2022: 646, 2023: 290. The government and the president must do something about the mass shootings and gun violence to save the lives and stop the misery of innocent people.

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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CITY OF NEWARK SUED \$10 MILLION BY DEVELOPER - PART VI

By Lev D. Zilbermintz

As was reported in the June 8, June 1, May 11, April 20, April 14 and March 23, 2023 issues of "Local Talk": the City of Newark, its Municipal Council and certain other parties were sued by the developer, Fairmount Senior Genesis, Housing Urban Renewal Partnership, LLC, Genesis Fairmount Partners, LLC and Genesis Central Ave Partners. The cause of the lawsuit was that the City and its Municipal Council allegedly failed to live up to their side of the agreement and were engaged in unfair play and political shenanigans.

In this, the sixth full part of the article, "Local Talk" sheds more light on what happened.

Lawsuit initiated by Developer

According to court papers, "On July 14, 2020 Plaintiffs initiated this action [lawsuit] by filing a Complaint against Defendants City of Newark, City Council of the City of Newark, Colon, Adol-

fo-Wilson, Garcia, Ladd, Animal Shelter, NCC, ABC Corporate Entity 1-10, and John Doe 1-10.

At or about the same time, counsel for Plaintiffs (the Developer) also filed Notices of Lis Pendens for the Central and Fairmount Properties, thereby giving public notice to all of the filing this action and Plaintiffs' rights, claims, and interests pertaining to those Properties. Those Notices of Lis Pendens were recorded in the Essex County Register of Deeds & Mortgages Office on August 11, 2020."

Translated into everyday English from legalese, the above-mentioned quotes mean that the developer has lost patience and is using the courts to get justice.

According to Investopedia.com, Lis Pendens is an official notice to the public that a lawsuit involving a claim on a property has been filed. Lis pendens is connected to the concept that a property buyer must assume any litigation that that exists pertaining to the property. That is, the new owner assumes

all the litigation and debts on the property that were incurred by the previous owner. In this case, the developer is laying legal claim to both Central and Fairmount Properties.

Unanswered is the question as to why the developer waited so long. Perhaps the developer thought that the City of Newark and its officials would do the right thing and act honorably. If Cory Booker was still mayor, and the previous City Council still in power, that might have indeed been the case. It is a fact that when Booker and the previous council were in power, things went smoothly. But after they left, things took a turn for the worse.

Developer states facts relevant to nine counts in the lawsuit

Before listing the nine counts of which the City of Newark is allegedly guilty, the developer states the "facts relevant to counts seven through nine." After stating these for the record, the developer states what the court should do.

According to court papers, "Recent events confirm that Mayor Baraka and his administration never had and intention of honoring Plaintiffs' rights to redevelop the Central Properties or to facilitate the transfer of Plaintiffs' redevelopment rights to the Proposed Replacement Redeveloper, and have instead been plotting to steer that lucrative project to the Developer Defendants, who have long supported the political endeavors of Mayor Baraka and certain members of the City Council, and earned their allegiance and favoritism."

This means that the developer has finally realized that the Mayor and City Council were playing games. Instead of cooperating with the developer, Mayor Baraka and the City Council are allegedly trying to steer a lucrative project to their business and political allies. The Developer Defendants, as the lawsuit calls them, are the political and business allies of Mayor Baraka and the City Council.

According to court papers,

"Notwithstanding Plaintiffs' clear contractual rights to develop the Central Properties, the Notices of Lis Pendens on record with the Essex County Clerk's Office publicly announcing Plaintiffs' legal stake in the Central Properties, and the pendency of this litigation, the City Council passed a resolution on February 21, 2021, which authorized Mayor Ras Baraka, or his designee(s) to enter into an agreement for the sale and redevelopment of the Central Properties to Kawaida Towers LP (the Resolution). ..."

Per the Resolution, the City sought and received numerous proposals from developers to "partner with the City in the development of an affordable housing project known as Kawaida Towers" and determined that Omni and Mid-Atlantic possessed the proper qualities, resources, and capacities to finally fulfill the vision of Mayor Baraka's father and achieve an objective high on the mayor's personal agenda. As for the developer's (aka Plaintiff's) rights, these were blatantly ignored.

Indeed, as Mayor Baraka has publicly made clear: "If there is one thing I can do before I get out of this place - is to make sure that Kawaida Towers is alive and well in this community."

From reading the court papers, it really sounds as if the Mayor and City Council ignored the developer's legal rights to Central and Fairmount Properties because they were outsiders. Instead, the City Council authorized the Mayor to negotiate with developers that were political and business favorites of the politicians.

Both Mayor Baraka and the City Council were more interested in bringing back Kawaida Towers than honoring the rights of the developer.

Description of Kawaida Towers

According to court papers, "The Resolution was accompanied by a redevelopment agreement between the City and Kawaida Towers LP ("the Kawaida Towers Agreement"). A true

(Continued on page 11)

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SPORTS WRAP



Photos By Anthony Source

By William Hathaway, Jr.

The 42nd annual Phil Simms North-South game took place at Kean University on June 11, in which the North won a tight contest 10-6. The game was played at Alumni Stadium, and the all-time series is now tied at the moment.

Leading the North was Rutherford quarterback Van Weber, who toss a touchdown pass to Jefferson High School's Travis Osterhout in the 3rd

Faith Phillips also scored a touchdown to help lead the team to a 20-14 win.

The soccer world was shaken by the bombshell news that Lionel Messi, one of the greatest stars ever, would be taking his talents to South beach to play for Inter Miami in the MLS. This is the biggest U.S. acquisition of a soccer legend since the LA Galaxy had the services of David Beckham.

Finally, for the first time in franchise history, the Denver



quarter. On the defensive side of the ball, Seton Hall Prep's Jordan McAllister was named the MVP. Meanwhile, the South was led by Burlington City's Aaron Young and Zarir Davis Roberts.

At halftime, they held the first Girls Flag Football All-Star Game. Leading the North team was Irvington's Janasia Wilson who passed for two touchdowns and ran for one more. Teammate

Nuggets are NBA Champions. Denver won the final game of the series 94-89 at home to win the series 4-1. To the surprise of no one, Nuggets big man Nikola Jokic won the Bill Russell Finals MVP award to cap off one of the best playoff runs in history, where he became the first player to lead the postseason in points, rebounds, and assists.



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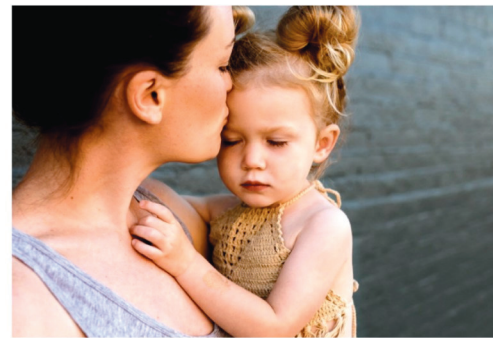
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- **JUNE 22: Better Together Dads** meets 6:30 p.m. monthly on 4th Thursdays to give fathers a safe place for connection with other passionate dads.
- **JUNE 27: Nurtured Heart Approach** meets 6:30 p.m. monthly on 4th Tuesdays to connect and address their concerns, questions, and feelings about raising a child with special needs.

These support groups occur on Zoom, so visit our website for the links: <https://bit.ly/fsoeevents>

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UNITED STATES

TRUMP INDICTED... AGAIN

After becoming the first President to face any kind of true indictment upon state charges in New York, Donald Trump has made more indictment history, this time on federal charges.

On June 9, the 45th POTUS was indicted by the Department of Justice on 37 counts of mishandling classified documents. This ties back to the raid on Mar-a-Lago months ago. Among the details revealed in the unsealed indictment, authorities revealed that Trump was caught on a recording speaking about documents that he did not declassify, but it was too late to do so. Trump appeared in federal court on June 13 and pled not guilty to the charges with last-minute acquired legal counsel, upon the dismissal or resignation of his previous attorneys, based on whomever you believe.

“Good afternoon. Today (June 9), an indictment was unsealed charging Donald J. Trump with felony violations of our national security laws as well as participating in a conspiracy to obstruct justice,” Special Counsel Jack Smith said in a statement.

“This indictment was voted by a grand jury of citizens in the Southern District of Florida, and I invite everyone to read it in full to understand the scope and the gravity of the crimes charged.

“The men and women of the United States intelligence community and our armed forces dedicate their lives to protecting our nation and its people. Our laws that protect national defense information are critical to the safety and security of the United States and they must be enforced. Violations of those laws put our country at risk.

“Adherence to the rule of

law is a bedrock principle of the Department of Justice. And our nation’s commitment to the rule of law sets an example for the world. We have one set of laws in this country, and they apply to everyone. Applying those laws. Collecting facts. That’s what determines the outcome of an investigation. Nothing more. Nothing less.

“The prosecutors in my office are among the most talented and experienced in the Department of Justice. They have investigated this case hewing to the highest ethical standards. And they will continue to do so as this case proceeds.

“It’s very important for me to note that the defendants in this case must be presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law. To that end, my office will seek a speedy trial in this matter. Consistent with the public interest and the rights of the accused. We very much look forward to presenting our case to a jury of citizens in the Southern District of Florida.

“In conclusion. I would like to thank the dedicated public servants of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with whom my office is conducting this investigation and who worked tirelessly every day upholding the rule of law in our country. I’m deeply proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with them. Thank you very much.”

As expected, the former president went on his Truth Social platform and railed against his opposition.

“I never thought it possible that such a thing could happen to a former President of the United States, who received far more votes than any sitting President in the History of our Country, and is currently leading, by far, all Candidates, both Democrat and Republican, in Polls of the 2024 Presidential Election. I AM AN INNOCENT MAN!”

MASS SHOOTING UPDATE

Information recent as of 6-13-2023 at 12 p.m.

2023 Mass Shooting Stats:

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

- Total Mass Shootings: 341
- Total Dead: 457
- Total Wounded: 1309
- Shootings Per Day: 2.08
- Days Reached in Year 2023 as of June 13: 164

Latest High Profile Incident

- Location: LoDo neighborhood - Denver, CO
- Time: Around 12:30 p.m. local time, June 13.
- Deceased: None.
- Injured: 10, including suspect.
- Shooter(s): One gunman, identity unknown as of press time.
- Weapon(s): Handgun.
- Motive: An argument. Details unknown as of press time.
- Status: Arrested, charges pending.
- Notes: Shooting happened in an area where residents were celebrating the Denver Nuggets winning the 2023 NBA Finals.

AFRICA

TERRORISTS ARRESTED IN OPERATION

A counter-terrorism operation coordinated by INTERPOL with the support of AFRIPOL has enabled frontline police across Central and Eastern Africa to arrest 14 terror suspects and seize explosives.

The operation, codenamed Tripartite Spider, was organized to support the ability of national Counter-Terrorism (CT) investigation teams to identify suspected terrorists and disrupt the financial networks behind them.

It was undertaken in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda.

The operation involved police, customs, border forces and counter-terrorism experts, including INTERPOL’s Regional Counter-Terrorism Node in Africa.

Underlining the need for a pan-African, multi-stakeholder effort against terrorism, the 14 suspects arrested during the operation were linked to terror groups ADF, Al-Shabaab and ISIS, which pose a growing threat across Africa.

Leads and objectives generated during Tripartite Spider are being followed up by participating countries beyond this operation with investigative and analytical support provided by INTERPOL’s Counter-Terrorism directorate.

Among the arrests two individuals were intercepted as suspected members of Al-Shabaab, while another was arrested for his alleged links with the 2022 Oicha (DRC) deadly suicide bomb attack attributed to ADF. Another suspect was held for terrorism financing through a huge money transaction scheme disguised as a flowers business, with alleged links to an ISIS suspect tied to the 2017 attack on the International Village Hotel in Bosaso, Somalia.

Another four individuals were arrested for suspected links to ISIS activities in Southern Africa while another individual was reportedly found in possession of a significant quantity of explosives, including 12 cartons of explogel - 25kg per carton, 24 reels of 250m of detonating cord and 400 pieces of electronic detonators.

Using INTERPOL’s global criminal databases for wanted people, stolen travel and identity documents, and stolen vehicles, law enforcement in the participating countries worked together with INTERPOL and AFRIPOL to locate, intercept and stop criminals trying to cross borders.

The use of INTERPOL Notices to identify the suspects as well as INTERPOL’s Counter-Terrorism Crime Analysis File (CT CAF) to obtain analytical input helped underpin the operation, with INTERPOL’s Counter-Terrorism directorate facilitating information sharing and intelligence analysis.

With INTERPOL, AFRIPOL and the African Union working side by side and developing

(Continued on page 7)

WORLD NEWS FLASH

(Continued from page 6)

combined responses to Africa’s policing needs, Operation Tripartite Spider was undertaken under the framework of INTERPOL’s Support Program for the African Union in relation to AFRIPOL (ISPA).

The ISPA Program supports AFRIPOL in strengthening its position as the lead institution in Africa for preventing and combating transnational organized crime, terrorism and cybercrime.

EUROPE

UK PUSHES TO END PLASTICS POLLUTION

The UK, alongside 52 other members of the High Ambition Coalition (HAC) to End Plastic Pollution, has signed a far-reaching Ministerial Statement, calling for an ambitious global plastic pollution treaty to tackle plastic pollution and protect the marine environment.

The HAC is a coalition of over 50 governments that have since agreed to end plastic pollution by 2040.

A Joint Ministerial Statement, published May 26, calls for a range of mandatory provisions to be included in the global plastic pollution treaty, currently under negotiation. These include reducing the production and consumption of primary plastic polymers to sustainable levels; eliminating and restricting unnecessary, avoidable or problematic plastics, chemicals and products; and eliminating the release of plastics into nature, amongst others.

The statement comes ahead of the second Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-2) taking place in Paris next week and sets out the HAC’s key ambitions for INC-2, taking the UK one step further towards the ambition of ending plastic pollution by 2040.

Plastic pollution is one of the biggest environmental threats that we currently face and is interlinked with climate change and biodiversity loss. This Joint

Ministerial Statement builds on the UK government’s commitment to help to develop an ambitious, international legally binding treaty that demands urgent action on plastics and drives forward our mission to protect at least 30% of the world’s ocean by 2030.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said: “Plastic pollution continues to have a devastating effect on our world’s ocean, people and the wider environment. That’s why it’s more important than ever to step up, take action and drive forward the change needed to bring an end to plastic pollution globally.

“I am proud to be amongst other HAC members signing this statement that calls for ambitious new measures within the global plastics treaty and look forward to some productive and high-reaching discussions in the upcoming INC-2 meeting in Paris.

The HAC statement builds on the UK’s wider commitments and work to protect and enhance the marine environment.

Earlier this year, delivering on the Environmental Improvement Plan the government announced the designation of the first three Highly Protected Marine Areas in English waters and launched a consultation on proposed management measures for sandeel fishing with the aim to reduce further negative impacts on important marine biodiversity.

Building on our existing single-use plastic bans and carrier bag charge, the Government is introducing further bans from October on a range of single-use plastic items – including plates, cutlery, balloon sticks and expanded and extruded polystyrene drinks containers. In April, we also announced that we will ban the sale of wet wipes containing plastic subject to public consultation.

The INC-2 meeting taking place in Paris is the second out of five sessions with United Nations member states. A global plastic pollution treaty is hoped to be finalized by the end of 2024.

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PULMONARY/SLEEP DISORDERS

Jeffrey Miller, DO

PODIATRY

Jodene Shwer, DPM
Amro El-Nakib, DPM

NEUROLOGY

Ruth Clark-Brown, MD
Borget Cort, APN

GYNECOLOGY

Clifford Toliver, MD

PEDIATRIC & ADULT ENDOCRINOLOGY

Tara Rajiyah, MD

NUTRITION

David Sonenberg, MS, RD, CDE

PRIMARY CARE/ INTERNAL MEDICINE

Eddy Simon, MD
Nancy Cahiwat, MD
Mamatha Mohan, MD
Myriam Sterlin, MD
Aleksander Lekan, MD
Hemlata Bhatia, MD
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Normita Narvaez, MD
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TOWN WATCH

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

COUNTING SHEEP INSTEAD OF CATCHING CROOKS

NEWARK - The city's "top cop" went public on the status of two of his officers June 8 after a photo of what the duo were accused of was posted on social media June 5.

The two unidentified uniformed officers, as depicted in a photograph posted on Reddit June 5, appeared to be asleep in a marked patrol SUV.

One officer was in the cruiser's passenger front seat with its side window rolled down. He has his head tilted against the vehicle's A-pillar with his eyes closed. The other officer, in the driver's seat, appears with her head on her patrol partner's shoulder with her eyes closed.

The Reddit posting, entitled "To Protect and Sleep," drew over 24,000 posted responses. There are no other immediate identifiers except that the SUV came from the 6th Precinct and that was parked before a modern brick building with a black fence on a driveway or parking lot apron.

"An investigation by NPD's Office of Professional Standards was immediately launched" said Newark Public Safety Director Fritz Frage, who added that the division had learned of the photo on May 31. "Pending the outcome of the investigation, the two officers have been immediately suspended and without pay. No further information is available."

Newark Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 12 President Jeffrey Weber, on June 9, said that he is withholding judgement on the officers until the internal in-

vestigation concludes. Weber is concerned, however, on the NPD's swift suspension of the duo once they had learned of the photo.

There are no further details, including on how the Reddit poster acquired the photo, as of press time.

IRVINGTON - A township man has filed a racial discrimination suit against a Belleville fast food company and its store general manager nearly a year after he was fired while handling his daughter's medical emergency.

Wesley Hammonds, 32, in New Jersey Superior Court-Newark filings in April, said he was first hired to become the Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen assistant manager at 50 Washington Ave. in June 2020.

The general manager, said Hammonds, instead, had him preparing orders in the kitchen instead of interacting with customers. Hammonds, who said he was the only African American in the store during his 23 months with Belleville Chicken LLC, added that he was being paid at the lower kitchen staff rate.

Its general manager, said Hammonds, verbally degraded African Americans as "crazy" and "your people." He said he was denied vacation time that non-Black employees had received.

The last straw came in May 2022 when he called the GM that he was running late due to getting his daughter to a local hospital. His supervisor texted back: "If u don't show up, u out."

When he attempted to find someone to look after his daughter so he could return to work, the GM texted: "Don't bother showing up for me, you're already out of my store." His request to be transferred to another Popeyes was denied.

Hammonds is suing Belleville Chicken and the GM for creating a hostile work environment and for violating the state's anti-discrimination law. Neither Belleville Chicken nor Popeyes have responded to comment requests.

EAST ORANGE - A State Superior Court-Newark jury has ruled, on June 9, that a city constable cannot take on the duties of a law enforcement officer by

himself - and found the East Orange City Constable guilty of impersonating a police officer.

The jury's foreman told Superior Court Judge Siobhan A. Teare Friday that they found Todd Thompson, 55, of East Orange, guilty of impersonating a police officer and the unlawful possession of a weapon.

Thompson, who was appointed East Orange City Constable, was accused by a local cab driver of stopping him by turning on police lights that Thompson had installed on his personal car July 2, 2022. The cabbie added that Thompson identified himself as a police officer, demanded his car's documents for inspection and "brandished a handgun."

A relative of the taxi driver told a reporter that the dispute began when Thompson took too long to respond to a traffic light change and the cabbie behind him honked his horn.

Thompson went into "a profanity-laced tirade" at the taxi driver, which the latter tried to break off by passing around him. It was then Thompson put on his lights and stopped the taxi.

The cab driver became suspicious of Thompson and called the Newark Police Division. NPD officers, after an on-scene interview, arrested Thompson on the above counts plus making terroristic threats. He is to be sentenced on July 31.

Constables, who are appointed by a municipal council or a judge, generally serve subpoenas and summonses. Other particular duties vary by jurisdiction.

ORANGE - The selection of Orange native Richard Codey over fellow State Senate incumbent Nia Gill, of Montclair by Democratic Party voters in the new 34th Legislative District here June 8 reminded some longtime observers of when the future governor and senate president defeated another Orange political figure in the 1997 General Election.

Codey, who won the June 1977 Democratic party primary, was seeking his third term in the General Assembly in the then-26th LD. That district comprised Orange, West Orange, East Orange and part of Newark.

Orange Assistant City Attorney Daniel DiBenedetto, 27, was going up against Codey on that

November's ballot. DiBenedetto, who had the support of West Orange and Essex County Republican chairman John P. Renna, Jr., won the June primary over five other candidates.

26th District voters favored Codey over DiBenedetto by more than 14,000 votes in the 1977 General Election. Orange Mayor Carmine Capone, a republican, promoted DiBenedetto as City Attorney in 1978.

DiBenedetto became Orange's Business Administrator in Mayor Paul Monicelli's administration in 1984. He was appointed as an Orange municipal judge in 1986. DeBenedetto left in 1980 for Asbury Park, via New York City, where he became the shore city's municipal judge in 2011-21.

DiBenedetto, 73, was born in Newark Oct. 15, 1949, and had graduated with the Orange High School Class of 1967 - and died in Asbury Park April 9. A celebration of his life is being planned. Memorial donations may be made to www.aspca.org.

WEST ORANGE - West Orange High School Class of 2019 graduate Colin Joshua Len Morgan's own May 27 graduation from the United States Military Academy at West Point was not complete until his cousin bestowed that Thursday's last honor in a special way.

Col. Clifton Kyle, USMA Class of 2001, commissioned Colin Morgan as an U.S. Army Second Lieutenant at the academy graveside of older brother Chris (CJ) Morgan, Jr.

CJ Morgan, WOHS Class of 2016, continued his star wrestling record while studying to graduate with West Point's Class of 2020. A June 6, 2019 on-site training accident, where a troop carrier overturned, killed him.

The family, while the academy granted Colin's other brother full posthumous graduating honors in 2020, started the CJ Morgan Foundation in West Orange. The foundation provides college scholarship to graduating WOHS seniors who have demonstrated "exceptional leadership, community service and involvement in extracurricular activities."

"I'm proud to finish what you started, CJ," said 2nd Lt Morgan before reporting to Rutgers University to pursue a Masters in
(Continued on page 14)



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NEWARK SUED PART VI

(Continued from page 4)

copy of the Kawaida Towers Agreement obtained from the Office of the City Clerk is attached as Exhibit Z.

According to the Project Summary, which is Attachment A to the Kawaida Towers Agreement, Kawaida Towers will be a single 15-story building with approximately 66 residential units and retail space, “a community facility space” and amenities on the first two floors.

Among these amenities is a “permanent exhibition space illustrating the history of the Kawaida Towers project,” and presumably paying homage to the late Amiri Baraka.”

What needs to be understood is that the City of Newark has made an agreement with Kawaida Towers LP, and intends to honor it. Meanwhile, the agreements made with the developer have been ignored and effectively made null and void. After all, it was Mayor Cory Booker and the previous City Council who initiated these agreements. The current Mayor, Ras Baraka, and the new City Council do not want these Booker-era agreements with the developer.

Kawaida Towers is a personal project of Mayor Baraka. From what court papers say, the mayor wants to succeed where his late

father could not.

Meaning of the Resolution and the Kawaida Towers Agreement. Plaintiff has no rights. Million-dollar property sold for a pittance.

Court papers state that both the Resolution and Kawaida Towers Agreement are notable in several critical respects.

“First, the Resolution purports to “supersede any previous Agreement(s) or conditions related to the redevelopment of the (Central Properties)” including the City’s existing agreement with Plaintiffs.

Second, despite the pendency of this action and the Notices of Lis Pendens, the City has affirmatively represented and warranted in the Kawaida Towers Agreement that: (i) [t] here is no action, proceeding, or investigation now pending nor any basis therefor, known or believed to exist which questions the validity of this Agreement or any action or act to be taken by the City pursuant to this Agreement;” and (ii) there is no pending litigation which would affect the City’s ability to convey the Central Properties to Kawaida LP.”

Third, the Kawaida Towers Agreement confirms that the development of Kawaida Towers will be supported by millions of dol-

lars in tax breaks and subsidies, including tax-exempt bonds from the NHMFA, “subordinate financing from the City of Newark, and LIHTC tax credit equity.

Fourth, and most notably, in addition to the millions in tax breaks and subsidies, the City has purportedly agreed to sell the Central Properties to the Developer Defendants for roughly one percent of their appraised value, and an even smaller fraction of their fair market value.

According to the Resolution, the assessed and appraised values for the Central Properties were \$2,276,400 and \$1,180,000, respectively. Yet the Department of Economic and Housing Development recommended that the City Council sell the Central Properties to Kawaida Towers LP for just \$23,847.68, and the City Council approved that low purchase price.

A footnote in the court papers gives crucial financial information about the actual value of the properties being sold.

“By way of further perspective, the proposed purchase price of \$23,847.68 is: (i) approximately \$2,252,552 less than the assessed value of the Central Properties; (ii) approximately \$1,156,152 less than the appraised value; and (iii) approximately \$526,152.32 less than the 2008 appraisal

(Continued on page 12)



*From
The
Pastor's
Heart*

OP-ED BY DR. ROBERT KENNEDY

**Greet One Another
With A (Holy) Kiss**

The instruction to “greet one another with a holy kiss,” as the apostle Paul gave in his parting greeting to the church in Rome (see Romans 16:16), interests me immensely.

I have often wondered how such an instruction would fit during, and what is being called, post-Covid 19. The fact is that what was a gracious sign of welcome and friendship has become highly complex today. A kiss is not just as Louis Armstrong used to sing in his song:

*You must remember this,
A kiss is just a kiss, a sigh is
just a sigh.
The fundamental things ap-
ply
As time goes by
And when two lovers woo
They still say, "I love you"
On that you can rely
No matter what the future
brings
As time goes by
Moonlight and love songs
Never out of date
Hearts full of passion . . .*

No, Louis, “A kiss is not just a kiss” anymore and never has been. Here is another song a little later than the time of Louis Armstrong. The words of that second verse say:

*What do you get when you
kiss a guy?
You get enough germs to
catch pneumonia.
After you do, he'll never
phone ya
I'll never fall in love again.
I'll never fall in love again.*

In America, kissing had gained currency, not as a general greeting, as in many other cultures, but as an expression of romance. Yes, Hollywood made it famous in the movies, and there was that time when adults and boys and girls could be seen kissing everywhere and often. Some people rank kissing as follows:

- The cheek kiss - is seen as platonic, often without any real feelings attached.
- The mouth kiss - is viewed as sexual.
- The hand kiss - is seen as romantic and perhaps intended to lead to more.
- The neck kiss and other erogenous zones are seen as sexual and so on.

But today, who wants to kiss, unless you know that a person has not been in contact with Covid 19 and other diseases, of the kind? Or how can you trust to kiss any person when kissing has

been used for so much sexual abuse? The day's advice should be, “Be careful who you kiss, where you kiss, and how you kiss, et cetera, for kissing can be dangerous.”

Of course, I do not want to be seen as being so negative, as if I think all kisses are lustful and self-centered. There and those decent and innocent, like that which was given to Jesus by the woman washing his feet. Luke reports that a certain man named Simon gave a feast at his house for Jesus and that a woman turned up and began to wash Jesus' feet and kiss them. And Simon (and Judas as recorded in another place) criticized the woman. Jesus intervened and told a story that focused on the woman's forgiveness. Then he posed a question to Simon. Simon answered, saying, “I suppose the one he forgave more.”

Then Jesus continued by saying to Simon, “You have rightly judged.”⁴⁴ Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped *them* with the hair of her head.”⁴⁵ **You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in.**⁴⁶ You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil.⁴⁷ Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is for-

given, *the same* loves little.” (Luke 7: 43-47 NKJV, emphasis mine).

As is clear, the woman's kiss was distinguishable from an unchaste and lascivious kiss. It was not a hypocritical and deceitful kiss, such the one Joab gave Amasa, when he inquired of his health and took him by the beard to kiss him, and stabbed him under his fifth rib (2 Samuel 20:9 2 Samuel 20:10).

Nor was it the kiss that Judas gave to Jesus when in the betrayal he cried, “hail master,” and kissed Jesus to point him out to those who had come to arrest Jesus (Matthew 26:49). Someone called the Judas kiss, “The kiss that blistered.”

The reflection on the complication of the kiss causes me to ask, what kind of kiss do you give (if you ever do) in your greeting to others? Is your kiss spiritual, holy, decent, hearty, or sincere? Or is your kiss lustful, hypocritical, and self-centered?

At the depth of the reflection, it's not about a kiss but about how we greet, welcome, and treat others. The fact is that we can live our lives at a distance. We can treat each other as untouchables or find ways of being dignified and kind in how we relate.

Maybe you have found your way of overcoming the distancing, so I encourage you to let it be with holiness and respect for each other as God would have us do.

NEWARK SUED PART VI

(Continued from page 11)

price used to set the acquisition price to be paid by the Plaintiffs more than 13 years ago.”

Voting by the City Council members. Their conflict of interest.

According to court papers, “Voting with respect to the Kawaida Towers Project is also rather telling. The Resolution was sponsored by Council Member LaMonica R. McIver and seconded by Member Mildred Crump.

Public records from the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission confirm that both McIver and Crump received \$2,600 contributions from Omni in May 2018.

Council Member McCallum, who was hit with federal criminal charges based on alle-

gations of having received bribes and kickbacks from developers, also voted in favor of the Resolution.

Meanwhile, other City Council members, who abstained from voting on the Resolution, have subsequently explained precisely why they have chosen not to support the project.

For example, two City Council members who have abstained have commented in the press about the “inordinate amount of money” being contributed to the Kawaida Towers project by the City in comparison the “very minimal investment on (the developers’) part.”

Council Member Anibal Ramos has specifically remarked that: (i) “[t]he subsidies being provided here for development - and I’m not trying to say that (66) units of affordable housing is not important - but considering you are looking on the financing side to provide \$5 million in CDBG subsidy (and a

tax abatement - the developers, when they did the presentation, basically acknowledged they have a very minimal investment on their part;” and (ii) “I would hope that the Department of Economic Development is able to work on a better deal for the city as it relates to this project.”

Council Member Carlos Gomez has likewise stated: “If the project included some significant contributions by the developers, I would be a sponsor of it. What I am objecting to is the city's contributing an ordinate amount of money to the project.”

Only two Council Members opposed the project. Everyone else approved it. This says much about the cooperation of Mayor Baraka and the City Council at that time.

Next: The \$10,000,000 Charges by the Developer Against Newark



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THE DAY WHEN THE SKY TURNED ORANGE

(Continued from page 1)

doors or limit outside exposure and activity. Children, senior citizens and/or people with heart and/or breathing problems were particularly stressed to stay indoors.

Dozens of outdoor activities were brought inside if not postponed or outrightly cancelled. Some indoor activities, events and meetings were also put off or called off.

The Newark Public Schools were among five public school districts to be closed June 7-8. West Orange Public Schools canceled their outdoor June 8 activities.

The Orange Public Library Board of Trustees postponed their monthly meeting from 6:30 p.m. June 8 to June 15.

Gov. Phil Murphy (D-Rumson) ordered

most State of New Jersey offices to close at 1 p.m. June 8. Those offices were reopened by 10 a.m. June 9.

The haze and smoke caused delays of an average 82 minutes for airline departures from Newark Liberty International Airport June 8.

Rutgers Medical School's Committee of Interns and Residents had postponed June 7 rallies for better working conditions and wages in Newark and New Brunswick for another time.

Those who live in California and other Western U.S. and British Columbia may be telling their East Coast counterparts, "Now you know what we've been going through since 2017."

The Western US had been going through 20 years of drought. The Colorado River has been experiencing such low water levels that the river dries up before it can empty into the Gulf of Baja.

Dry conditions have turned its wildfire season out there into a wildfire year.

The rain, when it does hit, brings flooding and mudslides with it. California had experienced 22 such storms last winter.

East Coasters may be taking the following pages from their Pacific Coast colleagues:

- Make fire break lines by clearing shrub-

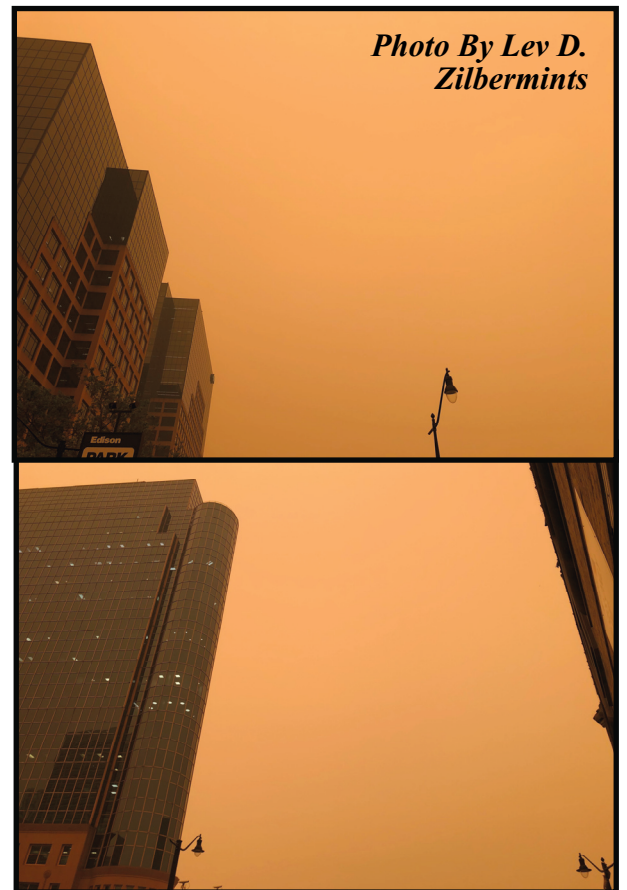


Photo By Lev D. Zilbermintz

bery and small growth trees.

- Set up community clean air shelters.
- Distribute HEPA filters and K95 and KN95 masks.
- Weatherize houses to create clean air areas and to seal off smoke.
- Install air quality sensors.

The Observation Booth



OP-ED By Andrea Dialect

LET THERE BE ART

Without art, the world would be just like the beginning, nothing. I believe that. I always sit down and think about how God took that canvas which is the world, and created this beautiful planet of all arrays of beautiful colors, trees, flowers, and greenery and all else. I always tell myself I have a little bit of God in me when I take that canvas and create something beautiful like God did. Without that, it would be just darkness! - Hassan

BLANK CANVAS

Because of the era my grandmother had come up in when I told her that I wanted to be an artist, she said to me that "that wasn't something that we, as people of color, do. We go to school to be a teacher or work

for a company or something like that."

So I went to school for Accounting. My grade average was 2.0 when struggling to be that accountant, but as an inspiring artist, my GPA rose to 3.5. If she was still here, I think her mindset would have changed as time changed by now.

I was about nine years old when I started dabbling in art. I used to draw on the back of my uncle's pictures. You know how they'd go to the bar, and they'd take a picture, and it had the little frame? That was my canvas, and I used to get my behind whipped. I didn't have paper, so I drew on the back of that frame. It was a white space there, so that was my paper. That was a regular thing, and I kept at it, and I guess I stopped when I got tired of those behind whippin's, lol!

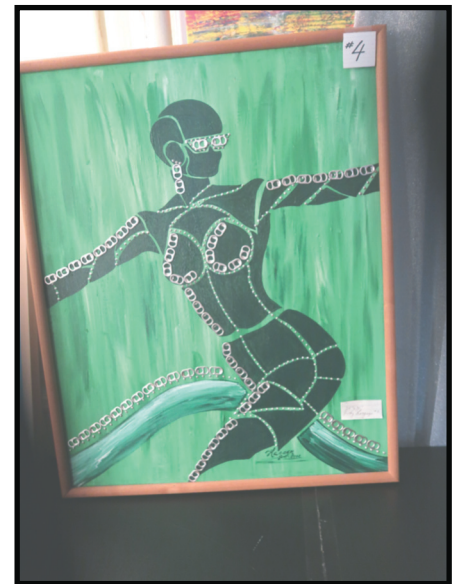


ARTIST HASSAN AKA (GH)
Photo By Andrea Dialect

Nobody ever brought me that paper, but when I got to grammar school, I'd get the paper from school. Those starter drawings were the usual kid drawings, the big ol head, and the triangle and stick figure legs. Now most of my art is either abstract or fashionable. Back in the seventies, album covers started coming out, and they were very artistic. I used to color a lot of "Earth, Wind, and Fire" albums. Those were very creative album covers. So I would color those and add my little touch to it. There was a Spanish Artist named Antonio that I liked. I used to love him. I would always buy the New York Times newspaper and look for his work. Then there was a guy named Kenneth Paul Block that was also a great artist and inspiration.

I started college at Essex County but graduated from Newark's School of Fine Industrial Art, which used to be on top of Arts High. Most of the teachers there had come from New York and were from Pratt, FIT and those really awesome schools. We were gaining knowledge that most in that industry were paying around one thousand dollars a class, and we were paying twenty. Many suburbanites caught wind of that and took advantage of the opportunity, so it was a nice mix. I received my degree in Fashion Illustration there. It was fabulous.

Back then, Art was so much fun. Back then, I could go to FIT and sit in the cafeteria with the students because they were open



to having potential students come there and experience the school. FIT, that was my dream! When I got that letter from FIT admissions office New York, New York, West 27th Street Manhattan that said, "You are approved," I screamed. I was so happy you'd think I got into Yale. But unfortunately, I didn't read the letter in its entirety and I didn't make payment for the seat and I lost that opportunity. I was so happy to be accepted which is great but I didn't do the most important thing. So I just stayed at the Fashion Institute. That was a lesson learned! ...

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)

Science in cell and developmental biology. The GEM fellow will then report at Oklahoma's Fort Sill for officer training.

There will be a third Morgan attending the USMA. Sister Chase, after graduating with the WOHS Class of 2023 June 22, will take the 2023-24 school year at Georgia Military College before reporting to West Point.

SOUTH ORANGE - Authorities may offer more information on the man and woman found dead here on Cameron Field May 27 when the Regional Medical Examiner's Office in Newark releases its toxicology report.

The saga, according to the South Orange Police Department blotter, started with an anonymous phone call to police headquarters at 8:45 a.m. that Saturday. The caller, self-identified as a motorist, told of seeing "two people sleeping" on the field while driving along Meade Street.

A dispatched patrol officer soon found the man and woman on that field dead. The officer, who also notified the ECPO, stayed until the medical examiner recovered the bodies.

The SOPD report, on May 27, listed the cause of death as "apparent overdoses." It is presumed that the decedents' families have been notified.

Cameron Field, a five-acre tract alongside South Orange Avenue West and the Rahway River East Branch, was opened by the village in 1912. It was dedicated after the nearby Church of the Holy Communion Rectory, the late Rev. Louis Cameron, May 30, 1914.

Legendary MLB New York Yankees Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig once played on the field's baseball diamond in a semi-professional game Oct. 27, 1929. The non-profit Cameron Field Corp. successfully kept the field as "a free public playground with no other purpose" after the village attempted to

build its municipal pool there 1969-72.

MAPLEWOOD - Claire Gianni Sinclair threw out the first two of 3,500 rubber ducks into the Rahway River East Branch to start the annual Memorial Day Duck Race here at 11 a.m. May 29.

The first two ducks were for her late parents and duck race co-founders Charles and Eleanor Gianni. Charlie, 77, died here April 28, and Ellie, 67, who died here March 15, 2013, started the duck race as a fundraiser for the YMCA of the Oranges, MEND and other local charities.

Charles Moore Gianni, who was born in New York City Sept. 14, 1945, moved here in 1950 and remained a lifelong Maplewoodian. He had commuted to work in the New York Stock Exchange for 30 years before retiring to own and operate Maplewood Stationers, 171 Maplewood Ave., until 2014.

Gianni, Columbia High School Class of
(Continued on page 15)

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 14)

1963, married his high school sweetheart Eleanor Youngs. Both became Maplewood Stationers co-owners, members of the "South Mountain YMCA" and the Maplewood Kiwanis Club and parishioners at South Orange's Our Lady of Sorrows Church.

They raised Claire, Kathryn Harris, Timothy and Charlie Gianni, Jr. here. Five grandchildren are also among their survivors.

Charlie was laid to rest beside Ellie at Union's Hollywood Memorial Park, after a Funeral Mass at Our Lady of Sorrows, May 4. Memorial donations may be made to the South Mountain YMCA Duck Race, 13 Jefferson Ave., Maplewood, 07040.

BLOOMFIELD - A Second Ward resident will not be coming home until he satisfies a 15-month federal prison sentence for embezzlement which he began on June 8.

U.S. District Judge Esther Salas, from her Newark bench that Thursday, sentenced Marco Alvarez, 47, to 15 months' time plus three years' supervised release. He is also to make \$317,582 in restitution to the national hotel chain that he had worked for.

Salas' sentencing was in exchange for Alvarez pleading guilty on April 14, 2022 to one count of wire fraud. He was accused of diverting over \$300,000 in company funds while senior analyst for strategic sourcing for 68 months.

"Alvarez was responsible for administering the company's corporate credit card program, authorized to approve credit card applications and access account information," said US Attorney-New Jersey District Philip Sellinger. "From April 2014 through January 2020, Alvarez embezzled funds from the hotel through unauthorized use of the hotel's corporate credit cards to purchase goods and services."

Alvarez admitted to making \$317,582 worth of unauthorized purchases and had attempted to conceal them by transferring credits owed to the hotel credit cards.

Sellinger thanked the U.S. Postal Inspection Service in Newark, among other investigators, for their assistance.

MONTCLAIR - If Montclair citizens here and nearby have been having problems electronically accessing individuals and departments since June 5, at least three municipal officials have said that it is due a "criminal group" perpetrating "a cyber incident."

"We're reaching out today (June 6) because our township IT department recently experienced a cyber incident," said Mayor Sean Spiller. "It appears that a criminal group that has attacked multiple

municipalities in similar fashion is responsible."

Spiller said that state and federal law enforcers - including the FBI and both Homeland Security offices - were immediately called to trace and locate the perpetrating attackers. Third party cyber companies were also called in to contain any electronic or software damage and restore service.

At Large Councilman Peter Yacobelis confirmed the attack and that the federal government will likely reimburse Montclair for restoration costs since the municipal government was targeted.

Montclair Communication Director Katya Kwok said that the incident is not related to the MOVEit cyber-attack that has hit other governments here and abroad in recent weeks. No one, as of June 14, has identified the other New Jersey municipal agencies struck with Montclair. Neither has anyone said whether there is any ransomware involved.

Newark's police division and its other city departments were hit by similar attacks in 2016 and 17. The latter incident included encryptors' demand to pay \$30,000 in Bitcoin to unlock the files.

Cyber security and insurance companies have seen a 540 percent increase of cyber-attack reports from 2016 to 2018. New Jersey governments, businesses and individuals had lost \$79,711,756 to the ransomware installers and/or cyber attackers in 2019.

BELLEVILLE - Although how long a Belleville man's state imprisonment for confessing June 2 to a 2022 burglary of a Clifton residence and sexual assault of a minor resident will not be known until Oct. 2, it will most likely be a long time.

The Passaic County Prosecutor Camelia Valdez, that Friday, said that Andres Vasquez, 25, had pleaded guilty to third-degree endangering the welfare of a child and first-degree aggravated sexual assault.

Vasquez had confessed before a State Superior Court-Paterson judge that he had entered the child victim Clifton resident's bedroom window late on May 31, 2022. He said that he did not know the victim and had no permission to enter the house. He went on to strangle and have intercourse with the child.

State prosecutors, in exchange, recommended that Vasquez serve at least 85 percent of a 10-year state prison sentence before being considered for parole. He would be first taken to the state Adult Diagnostic and Treatment Center in Avenel.

Vasquez, when he is released, is subject to Megan's Law registration and lifetime parole supervision. He remains held in Hackensack's Bergen County Jail since his June 3 arrest by Clifton police and PCPO detectives.

JUNETEENTH REPARATIONS MARCH & RALLY IN NEWARK, NJ

The Juneteenth March And Rally For Reparations will be held on Monday, June 19, 2023, 2:00pm, starting at the Lincoln Statue, 12 Springfield Avenue, in Newark, New Jersey. The statue is located at the intersection of Springfield Avenue and West Market Street.

The march is endorsed by the People's Organization For Progress (POP), New Jersey Institute For Social Justice, and other organizations.

"The demonstration is being held to once again demand reparations for African Americans for the centuries of enslavement of our ancestors, nearly a century of apartheid Jim Crow segregation, and institutionalized racism, inequality, oppression, and exploitation that continues to this day," Lawrence Hamm, Chairman, People's Organization For Progress stated.

"We are marching to demand passage of the reparations commission bills, A938 and S386 by the New Jersey State Legislature, and passage by Congress of HR 40 and S40 which would establish a federal reparations commission," Hamm said.

"We urge the New Jersey Legislature to follow the example of the New York Legislature which passed a reparations bill last week. We demand the New Jersey Legislature pass the reparations bill and that Governor Murphy sign it into law," he said.

Speakers at the event will include activists, elected officials, and representatives from labor, clergy, and the community. Among the speakers will be Lawrence Hamm, Chairman, People's Organization For Progress, and Ryan P. Haygood, President & CEO, New Jersey Institute For Social Justice.

"The People's Organization For Progress has supported the demand for reparations for African Americans since it was founded 41 years ago," he said.

"POP has held reparations marches, rallies, programs and other activities every year for decades. Several years ago in the spirit of unity and in recognition of the Juneteenth holiday POP joined with other organizations for an annual reparations march," he said.

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