

LOCAL TALK

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25¢

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OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

ESSEX COUNTY • EAST ORANGE • ORANGE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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GRAND OPENING OF A NEW HOME HEALTH BUSINESS IN EAST ORANGE

Photos By Dhiren Shah



By Dhiren Shah

On Wednesday August 23, 2023, hard-working, passionate and soft spoken Antonette Grant opened her new business under the name Victory Care. Why Victory? Her youngest son came up with this name. He said that we are victorious, and that prompted the name “Victory Care.” It’s a nice name, and with her humble nature and dedication to serving people, no one has a doubt about her success.

She was originally a police officer before this journey. During her remarks, she told everyone in attendance why she got involved with the health care industry.

“In a world that is constantly evolving, we realize increasingly the complexities of providing compassionate and effective care in the comfort of your home, and it is something we are invested in. What we do is rooted in us being true believers in God.”

She welcome special guest Mr. Israel E. Klein, LNHA, a former administrator of Brookhaven Center for Rehabilitation and Healthcare, East Orange, NJ.

Klein said, “When I think of Antonette, I think it is harder to find someone as caring, compassionate and truly caring. It’s true about her and true of her mission of helping people. I am absolutely confident that whatever Antonette touches will turn to gold. You can look at the record as a nurse at

Brookhaven as a good nurse and everything she has done with compassion and hard work. As we all say, do what God says is right, which is most important thing in her life. I wish her tremendous success and I am confident that she will be successful with her hard work, compassion and care for the people. I met some of her staff members. Victory Care, I love the name by the way. I wish Antonette tremendous success.”

Antonette said, “I came to this country a couple of years ago. Back home. I was a police officer. I used to ride a motorcycle. In 2009. I lost my mom and my dad. I lost my dad to cancer; I lost my mom with health problems as well. I had no intent to work for

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Editorial

Dhiren Shah
Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

Hurricane Idalia is making havoc in Florida. It will impact mainly central Florida as projected. This will include from Tampa to Orlando. On Tuesday morning, winds were about 76 miles per hour, and in the afternoon, it reached 85 miles per hour. I hope that it does not harm people. Property can be restored, but human lives cannot, and injuries on the human body take a toll on the individuals and families.

Under the letter “I” there are many deadly or horrific storms. Recent ones include: Ian 2022, Ida 2021, Irama 2017, Ingrid 2013, Irene 2011, Igor 2010, Ike 2008, Ivan 2004, Isabel 2003, Isadore 2002, Iris 2001, Inez 1966 and Ione 1955. It’s just a coincidence, but the letter “I”

has too much ego and “I” brings to us on our senses. Should the committee retire the letter I from their list of storm names?

There is a group named The Fist formed in 2022, a committee that applied for a complete recall of Mayor Ras J. Baraka and council members Michael J. Silva, East Ward Council Member, Dupre L. Kelly, West Ward Council Member, Louise Scott-Roundtree, Council Member at Large, Luis A. Quintana, Council Member at Large, C. Lawrence Crump, Council Member at Large, LaMonica McIver, Central Ward Council Member, Patrick O. Council, South Ward Council Member, Anibal Ramos Jr., North Ward Council Member, and Carlos M. Gonzalez, Council Member at Large.

A committee of about 5 people can start a recall process. However, to collect 25% of the signatures is very hard, when voter turnout in 2018 per Essex County Clerk website was 19.17% in 2018. On the Essex County Clerk website, the Newark municipal election results for 2022 were not shown. It is very

hard to collect that many signatures. However, if people get together, everything is possible.

According to Yahoo News of Aug. 28, France’s education minister announced a ban on long robes in classrooms starting with the new school year, saying the garments worn mainly by Muslims are testing secularism in the nation’s schools. Critics say that abayas, worn by women, and khamis, the male garb, are no more than a fashion statement. They say the garments do not constitute an ostentatious sign of religion and should not be banned from classrooms under a 2004 law. For Gabriel Attal, the recently appointed education chief, the garments are “an infringement on secularism,” a foundational principle for France, and, in some cases, a bid to destabilize schools.

There can be arguments for both sides. Under our First amendment rights, students can wear any clothes as long as they are not vulgar or showmanship. At the same time, with the uniforms, all students look alike, and the rich mentality ego can be

thrown out. However, some of the family members has to raise money to buy the uniforms, which might be a burden for some families. In these cases, the law left it on the states to decide in America. Personally, I like uniforms, but they should not be a burden to any family. If the family cannot afford it, the school must find out the way to help them without anyone knowing which students got help.

The Biden administration has started to negotiate 10 drug prices to sale. In India, every item to be sold must have a MSRP (Manufacturers Suggested Retail Price), so the consumer cannot be ripped off. In the same way, at least in the drug industry, there should be a restriction for drug prices. Also, in my opinion, any services or drug prices should not be double than what Medicare or Medicaid pays, so non-insurer patients cannot be ripped off.

Have a wonderful week.

I’ll talk to you next time.

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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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Justice Department Announces Results of Nationwide COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Action

The Justice Department announced today the results of a coordinated, nationwide enforcement action to combat COVID-19 fraud, which included 718 enforcement actions - including federal criminal charges against 371 defendants - for offenses related to over \$836 million in alleged COVID-19 fraud.

“The Justice Department has now seized over \$1.4 billion in COVID-19 relief funds that criminals had stolen and charged over 3,000 defendants with crimes in federal districts across the country,” said Attorney General Merrick B. Garland. “This latest action, involving over 300 defendants and over \$830 million in al-

leged COVID-19 fraud, should send a clear message: the COVID-19 public health emergency may have ended, but the Justice Department’s work to identify and prosecute those who stole pandemic relief funds is far from over.”

The announcement was made by Deputy Attorney General Lisa O. Monaco at a roundtable meeting of senior Justice Department officials, law enforcement partners, and Office of Inspector General (OIG) executives. Deputy Attorney General Monaco also announced the launch of two additional COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Strike Forces: one at the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Colorado, and one at the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of New Jersey. These two strike forces add to the three strike forces launched in September 2022 in the Eastern and Central Districts of California, the Southern District of Florida, and the District of Maryland.

At the meeting, Michael C. Galdo, Acting Director of COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement, detailed the results of the three-month coordinated law enforcement action that took place from

May through July 2023, which included criminal, civil, and forfeiture actions. More than 50 U.S. Attorneys’ Offices, including the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Strike Forces, the Justice Department’s Criminal and Civil Divisions, and more than a dozen law enforcement and OIG partners worked together to conduct the sweep.

“I applaud the hard work of our prosecutors around the country,” said Acting Director Galdo. “However, this announcement is not a victory lap. Our mission is not complete. We know from our investigative partners that identifying those who committed pandemic relief fraud and recovering stolen funds is difficult work. But the Justice Department, including our strike forces, U.S. Attorneys’ Offices, and the Criminal and Civil Divisions, is committed to using our criminal, civil, and forfeiture tools to hold these fraudsters accountable.”

As part of the effort, 718 law enforcement actions occurred, including criminal charges, civil charges, forfeitures, guilty pleas, and sentencing, with a combined total actual loss of more than \$836 million. Criminal charges were filed against 371 defendants, and 119 defendants pleaded guilty or were convicted at trial during the sweep. Over \$57 million in court-ordered restitution was imposed. 117 civil matters occurred during the sweep, with over \$10.4 million in judgments. Prosecutors worked with law enforcement to secure forfeiture of over \$231.4 million.

As part of the announcement, Acting Director Galdo said that 63 of the defendants had alleged connections to violent crime, including violent gang members also accused of using pandemic funds to pay for a murder for hire. Twenty-five defendants have alleged connections to transnational crime networks.

Many of the cases in the enforcement action involve charges related to pandemic unemployment insurance benefit fraud and fraud against the two largest pandemic Small Business Administration programs: the Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loans. Additional matters involved pandemic healthcare billing fraud, fraud against the

Emergency Rental Assistance program, and fraud committed against the IRS Employee Retention Credit program (ERC), a refundable tax credit for businesses and tax-exempt organizations that had employees and were affected during the COVID-19 pandemic. IRS Criminal Investigations (IRS-CI) worked with the California Strike Force and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of New Jersey to bring multimillion dollar ERC fraud cases during the enforcement action.

In May 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force (CFETF) to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The task force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts.

The cases were investigated by the following agencies: FBI; U.S. Secret Service; IRS-CI; Defense Criminal Investigative Service; Homeland Security Investigations; U.S. Postal Inspection Service; Army Criminal Investigations Division; Food and Drug Administration’s Office of Criminal Investigations; the Diplomatic Security Service; and the Offices of Inspectors General from the Small Business Administration, Department of Labor, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Veterans Affairs, Federal Housing Finance Agency, Federal Reserve Board, Social Security Administration, the Special Inspector General for Pandemic Relief, Treasury, and the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration.

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SPORTS WRAP

By William Hathaway, Jr.

The National Football League wrapped up its preseason slate this past weekend, with one of the games featuring the annual MetLife Stadium Snoopy Bowl between the New York Jets and New York Giants.

Despite both teams calling the venue home, the Giants were the designated "home" team. Of course, the big story was the unofficial debut of new Jets QB Aaron Rodgers. The future hall of famer did not disappoint, leading his new team to a score on the first drive thanks to a 14-yard TD pass to Garrett Wilson.

Later on, Gang Green cornerback Brandin Echolas picked

off Giants backup Tommy DeVito and took it back 67 yards for a TD. It comes as bittersweet for Echolas, who will be suspended for the first game of the season.

Despite the pick, DeVito did finish 19-29 for 210 yards with a late TD pass to David Sills, who had 6 catches for 81 yards in the contest.

Former Jets starter Zach Wilson led the team after Rodgers was done, and went 11-18 for 107 yards. Jashaun Corbin had a 1 yard Run for Big Blue in the 2nd quarter to make the score 14-7.

In a battle of big legs that could hit from 60, Graham Gano had more chances to show off, hitting from 57, 40, and 56



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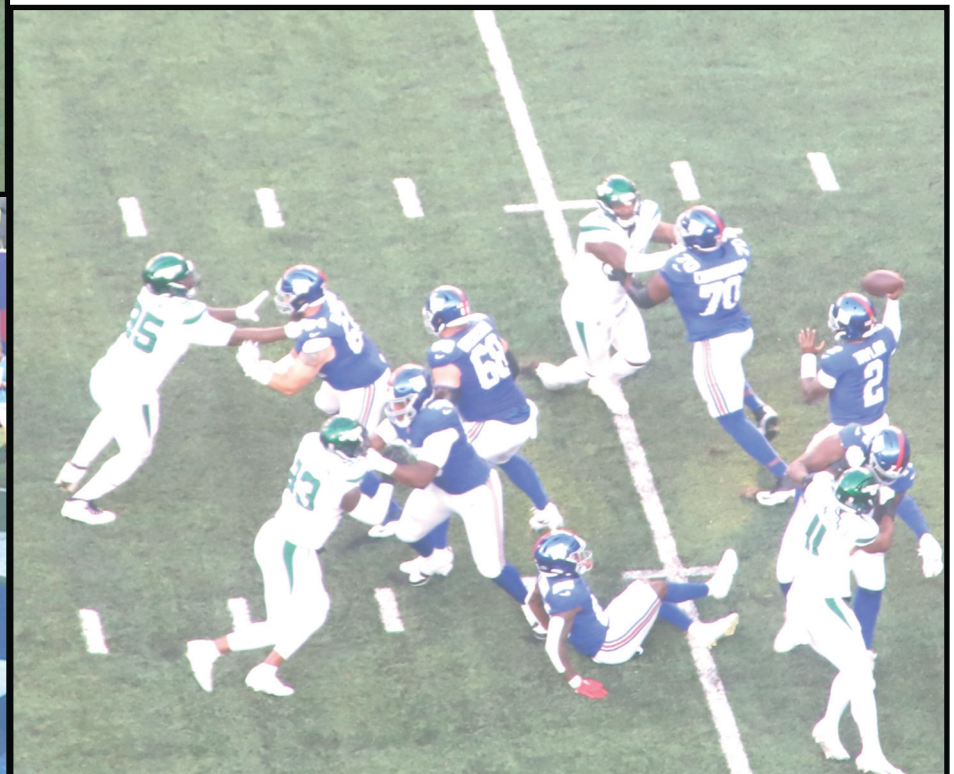


yards in the game. His Jets counterpart Greg Zuerlein hit one from 29.

After the Giants cut the deficit to 17-16 in the 4th quarter, Jets 3rd string QB Tim Boyle tossed a 4 yard TD pass to Alex Erickson, and then a 2 point conversion to Jason Brownlee. Boyle and Erickson connected again from 14 yards later, which

was followed by DeVito throwing another TD to Sills, with the game already decided.

When it was all said and done, the Jets beat the Giants 32-24. However, the story is not finished for 2023, as the two teams will meet again in Week 8 of the real season.



GRAND OPENING OF A NEW HOME HEALTH BUSINESS IN EAST ORANGE

Photos By Dhiren Shah



GRAND OPENING

(Continued from page 1)

home care or health care. I wish during those years I would have learned health care. I came here and decided to transition to health care.

“During COVID I saw that family members could not visit their families. There must be another way to help them. So, I thought to provide healthcare within their home, and make sure that they are being tak-

en care of. That thought came into my mind. I continue to nurture it, and today is the day of delivery. The name strangely came from my youngest child. He said, ‘mummy you are going to be victorious.’

“But what do I have to offer? That is the biggest question. I feel like it is treating family members with dignity and respect within the comfort of their homes. I can guarantee you that for our staff, training is very important. A thorough background check is a must. You are here, so you are part of it. So

now you all have to tell at least 10 people about Victory Care. Thank you, guys for coming, and I appreciate each and every one of you coming here. I ask that you continue to pray for me and Victory Care at Home.”

For those who want to take advantage of Victory Care at Home services, please call Antonette Grant at (862) 888-5334. They are located at 134 Evergreen Place, Suite 501-1, East Orange, NJ 07018.



CHANGES DOMINATE NOV. 7 GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT

By Walter Elliott

NEWARK - There will likely be some registered Essex County voters who will open their sample and/or Vote By Mail Ballots for the Nov. 7 General Election and ask:

"Is that the right party on Line A?"

And on both major parties' newly redrawn 27 New Jersey Legislature ballot lines:

"Who are these people - I didn't vote for them in the (June 6) primary?"

The Essex Republican Party Organization's candidates, for the first time in 19 years, will be on Line A. The Essex County Democratic Committee's candidates will be on Line B.

Essex County Clerk Chris Durkin publicly pulled the ERPO's capsule in a bingo-style drawing here Aug. 14 - a traditional procedure that almost did not happen. Montclair Republican Committee Chairman Michael D. Byrne and his attorney, Giancarlo Ghione asked N.J. Superior Court Judge Robert H. Gardner that Monday morning to postpone the drawing.

Byrne and Ghione asked Gardner for an injunction to postpone the drawing until the League of Women Voters or a similar nonpartisan group gets to monitor the drawing. The plaintiffs said that ECDC candidates' receiving Line A for 17 straight years is a "statistical impossibility."

Gardner denied Byrne's injunction. Durkin (D-South Orange), who has been elected as County Clerk since 2006, insisted in an Aug. 18 statement that "each ballot drawing is conducted in a fair and open process where the public is invited to attend."

Perhaps the bigger concern is regarding the respective ECDC and ERPO lineups for LD27 for State Senate and General Assembly.

Those new Nov. 7 lineups

are to be before voters in West Orange and Montclair, "West Essex" Livingston, Millburn and Roseland and Passaic County's Clifton - who had made their party choices on June 6.

A majority of participating Democratic party faithful had chosen Richard J. "Dick" Codey, of Roseland, for State Senate plus John McKeon, of West Orange and Alixon Collazos-Gill, of Montclair, for General Assembly in the June 6 primary elections.

A majority of participating Republican party faithful had written-in Michael D. Byrne, of West Orange, for State Senate plus Jonathan Sym, of Millburn and Irene De Vita, of Clifton, for General Assembly. Neither the Essex nor Passaic Republican Party Organizations had submitted petitions to place candidates on the LD27 primary ballot.

The Democratic district ballot, since their Aug. 24 committee meeting, has McKeon now running for State Senate. Livingston Councilwoman Dr. Rosura Bagolie joins Collazos-Gill on the Assembly slate.

Republicans' district ballot, as of Aug. 28, is Byrne, De Vita - and "To Be Announced."

The Democratic dilemma began when Orange native and former Governor Codey announced his Jan. 4, 2024 retirement on Aug. 14. A majority of party voters had selected the 50-year legislator over fellow incumbent Sen. Nia Gill, of Montclair, in a redistricting-caused head-to-head primary.

LeRoy Jones - the chairman of the East Orange, Essex County and State Democratic Committees - was faced with a ticket change. His first move was to convene an LD27 county committee meeting for Aug. 24.

"Let me dispel the notion that the process was 'backroom politics,'" said Jones in a televised Aug. 25 interview. "The

(Continued on page 11)

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SEPTEMBER 11: Let's Talk — Parent Support Group meets 6:30 p.m. monthly on 2nd Tuesdays to help parents and caregivers learn new strategies that effect positive change.

SEPTEMBER 28: Better Together Dads meets 6:30 p.m. monthly on 4th Thursdays to give fathers a safe place for connection with other passionate dads.

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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.

NEWARK - A motorist implicated in the Aug. 8 hit-and-run of an elderly Vailsburg resident has been arrested and charged.

Newark Public Safety Director Fritz Frage, on Aug. 25, announced the arrest of Nylissa Whetstone, 19, of Perth Amboy. Whetstone is accused of driving a car that had struck a senior woman in the Intersection of South Orange Avenue and Sandford Avenue Aug. 8 and leaving the scene.

Frage released photos taken by local surveillance cameras of an orange late model two-door car and of a woman walking by the vehicle that allegedly linked Whetstone to the incident. He did not otherwise say how else she was connected, including whether she was arrested here, in Perth Amboy or elsewhere.

The elderly woman was admitted to University Hospital in stable condition. It is believed that she is a resident of a nearby senior citizens center.

Whetstone has been charged with assault by automobile and leaving the scene of a motor vehicle accident that caused bodily injury.

Five-Year-Old Dies in Newark

Acting Essex County Prosecutor Theodore N. Stephens, II and Newark Public Safety Director Fritz Frage announced that the Essex County Prosecutor's Office Homicide/Major Crimes Task Force is investigating the death of a five-year-old child.

On August 28, at 7:26 p.m., Newark police were notified of a five-year-old found unresponsive in the bathtub of an apartment on the 400 block of Washington Street, Newark. The child was transported to University Hospi-

tal and pronounced dead at 8:19 p.m. The cause and manner of death is pending an autopsy.

The investigation is active and ongoing. No arrests have been made. Anyone with information is asked to contact the Essex County Prosecutor's Office tips line at 1-877-TIPS-4EC or 1-877-847-7432. Calls will be kept confidential.

Body Found in Weequahic Park

Acting Essex County Prosecutor Theodore N. Stephens, II and Sheriff Armando B. Fontoura announced that the Essex County Prosecutor's Office Homicide/Major Crimes Task Force is investigating the death of a man whose body was found in the lake at Weequahic Park.

On August 29, at about 11 a.m., the Essex County Sheriff's Office was notified of a dead body in Weequahic Park. Upon arrival, police located a body in the lake. He was pronounced dead at the scene at 11:06 a.m. At this time, the man has not been identified. The cause and manner of death is pending an autopsy.

The investigation is active and ongoing. No arrests have been made. Anyone with information is asked to contact the Essex County Prosecutor's Office tips line at 1-877-TIPS-4EC or 1-877-847-7432. Calls will be kept confidential.

IRVINGTON - Authorities, as of press time, are searching for the suspect who shot a Newark on a township street here Aug. 25 while his friends and family are making his funeral arrangements.

Acting Essex County Prosecutor Theodore "Ted" Stephens II and Irvington Public Safety Director Tracy Bowers announced that Tony King, 50, had died in a local hospital at 12:05 a.m. Aug. 27.

Responding Irvington police officers told ECPO Major Crimes Unit detectives that they had responded to a gunshot call from the 100 block of Isabella Street at 11:25 p.m. Friday.

They found King suffering from gunshot wounds and called for emergency ambulance service.

Stephens had identified King as a law enforcer in the Essex

County Department of Corrections. His last rites have not been announced as of press time.

EAST ORANGE - Members of the 75 Prospect Street Tenants Association have filed a petition in New Jersey Superior Court-Newark's Law Division Aug. 16 to appoint a receiver to remedy "outstanding habitability issues."

The tenants association, by getting a receiver, would order and oversee what they said is a long train of defective elevators, inconsistent heating and air conditioning, persistent water leaks, mold and damaged ceilings and walls.

The repair orders would be made by the court-appointed receiver, who would override past infrastructural decisions made by current and past building owners and property managers.

Current and past Prospect Castle LLC and 75 Prospect Holdings are named in the petition as defendants. Other defendants include Platinum Management, of Orange, One Wall Communities, LLC, of Stanford, Conn., Fannie Mae, and SH5 Construction Corp. SH5, of Brooklyn, who holds a 2007 construction lien, is named as "a necessary party."

The receivership petition is the latest turn of a long series of maintenance and repair issues at the Brick Church landmark 75 Prospect St., or "The Castle." The 1928 structure holds 44 apartments on its 10 floors.

Tenants, when interviewed by a local television reporter, said that the City of East Orange had fined the owners and property manager \$2,000 a day since June until its elevators are repaired.

One tenant said that he believes that the lords of 75 Castle were not making repairs so that the 44 apartments could be subdivided into smaller units.

Platinum said that they were waiting for supply-chain hampered parts for the elevators and that the building is in debt by \$1 million. Platinum and Prospect Castle had brought CBRE in June to find a buyer.

ORANGE - Four citizens are vying for the three nonpartisan Orange Public Schools Board of Education seats on the Nov. 7 General Election Ballot.

All three incumbents - Sa-

mantha Crockett, Dr. Fatimah Turner and Jeffrey Wingfield - are looking for a majority of participating registered city voters to re-elect them. Their current three-year terms expire on Jan. 4.

India Williams is the fourth candidate, making her first Orange Board of Education campaign run.

It is not known as of press time whether any of the four candidates have formed joint, purpose-built campaign tickets. Crockett and then-candidate Lenora Young first ran in 2020 on a common platform.

Turner and Wingfield had run together in 2020 on the infamously-promoted "Orange BOE Democratic Team." Board of education candidates, by being nonpartisan, cannot publicize any ties to a partisan political party.

WEST ORANGE - Township Chief Municipal Judge Dennis Dowd, after listening to the West Orange Code Enforcement inspector and the department's lawyer plus a Pleasantdale bagel shop owner, his landlord and their attorney Aug. 22, have directed both sides to continue negotiating before the Sept. 26 court session.

The Township of West Orange vs. Jarrett Seltzer case, since the June-issued citation and initial June 27 court hearing, hinges on the interpretation of Sect. 14-8.2 (b) of the township zoning code over business window covering.

The statute states that there should be no covering or shading of a business' display windows during public hours. No goods or equipment be on display. Any signage is to cover no more than 33.33 percent of a window.

Seltzer, who opened Bagels by Jarrett at 451-57 Mt. Pleasant Ave. in 2020, and his landlord said that they had largely inherited the covered windows from an earlier restaurant at 451 and the former Dance Warriors studio at 457.

The window coverings Seltzer, with his landlord's blessing, has left on saves \$3,000 a month in electricity. The window coverings, they added, shields cooking equipment from public sight.

Dowd, on July 27, had stayed what would have been a

(Continued on page 13)

ELECTION CHANGES

(Continued from page 7)

vacancy filling process was followed to the letter of state statute by us. As far as why Sen. Codey is retiring, that's between the Senator and his family."

It was first thought that Essex County and Clifton's 356 delegates would have been choosing either McKeon or Collazos-Gill's husband - Brendan Gill. B. Gill is the Montclair Democratic Committee Chairman who, then and now, is running for Essex County Commissioner reelection.

Collazos-Gill, on Aug. 17, then withdrew her Assembly candidacy in favor of husband Brendan Gill. Bagolie meanwhile expressed interest in running for an Assembly seat.

Jones then became concerned that having three prospective candidates from West Orange and/or Montclair would alienate the district's three West Essex towns. He did get the blessing from Clifton Democratic Chairman John Currie, on Aug. 22, to whatever is legally right before Currie went on a scheduled vacation.

Before the 356 delegates would start on Aug. 24, Collazos-Gill announced that she will stay in the Assembly race. Husband B. Gill, she added, withdrew to concentrate on his county commissioner campaign.

"As to what was going on," said Jones of the Brendan and Collazos-Gill changes, "that's between Mr. and Mrs. Gill."

McKeon, at the delegates meeting, was given the senate assignment by acclamation. The same

delegates selected Bagolie over former Assemblyman Craig Stanley, 107-59, or a 64/36 percentage split.

Stanley, who represented East Orange while a former 34th LD Assemblyman, had moved to Montclair for an unsuccessful June 6 27th LD assembly primary run. He - like B. Gill, Collazos-Gill and Bagolie - were looking to fill a vacancy, not taking an electoral "second bite."

Nia Gill could have also sought to rejoin the LD27 slate as a vacancy seeker. Neither N. Gill or Stanley could have filed petitions to run as independent General Election

candidates under the state's "Sore Loser Law." That law sets the filing deadline of petitions for November minor party or independent candidates for 4 p.m. of the major party primary elections.

Essex County and Clifton Republicans are to meanwhile choose Aug. 29 past press time between Michael Mecca, Jr. and Malvin Frias - both of Clifton - to succeed Sym.

Sym, who is a Naval Reserve commander, announced Monday that he and his family are moving to Virginia to be closer to his one-year deployment. Mecca and Frias have expressed interest.

Sym had attained his assembly space by receiving 212 districtwide Republican write-in votes June 6. De Vita drew the other slot with 194 votes. Byrne got the senate spot with 192 votes.

6 p.m. Aug. 31 is the hard deadline for county clerks to receive candidate ballot changes either by voluntary withdrawal or by party directions. The Nov. 7 ballot will then be frozen; candidates who have later resigned, have withdrawn from campaigning or have died cannot get their names removed.

The Aug. 29 candidate change and Aug. 31 ballot freezing actually

came two weeks earlier than in previous years. Gov. Phil Murphy (D-Rumson) signed a state law in July that moved up those deadlines.

Durkin, his Passaic County colleague Danielle Ireland-Imhof and their election division workers would rather have ballot name changes made on or before Aug. 18. - which still stands for the November Board of Education candidates.

Ruben Rodriguez, for example, withdrew his petitions for Belleville Board of Education Trustee on Aug. 18 before his Aug. 24 announcement.

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*From
The
Pastor's
Heart*

OP-ED BY DR. ROBERT KENNEDY

**Speak To One Another
With Psalms, Hymns
And Spiritual Songs**

On reading the above instruction, I reflect on my days in elementary school, when as students, we recited and intoned Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem put to music:

*I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For, so swiftly it flew the sight,
Could not follow it in its flight.*

*I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong,
That it can follow the flight of song?*

*Long, long afterward, in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to*

*end,
I found again in the heart of a
friend.*

I do not know what this poem (put to music) might mean to you, but it does mean a lot to me. Longfellow, who taught modern languages at Harvard University, had an idealistic vision for peace in America. His poetry struck a chord with the young country sharply divided over slavery.

I reflect on today's America, so profoundly divided by political and religious extremism. As I listen to popular songs and even much of the sacred music of the day, I sense the pain of the division, oppression, depression, rebellion, darkness, and mindlessness that is all around. Not much is being sung or said about building unity and community today. Not much is being shared about the kind of joy that fills the soul of those who share the peace of God.

I'm curious if my perception is getting muddled as my birthday, which is very close, puts me in a period of life when I live with much nostalgia. But I am

arguing that the spirit that drove the songs we used to sing in my public elementary school is lost. I speak of songs focusing on high moral values, such as integrity, kindness, grace, and peace. I am speaking of songs focusing on positive social change, such as Vince and Jenny Gill's song, "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me."

I am thinking of the songs created during the Post-reformation life in Europe and the great Awakening moments in American life that were sustained throughout my childhood into adulthood. I am thinking of the tremendous spiritual songs in Antebellum America that continued for many years in helping to build the black churches and community. I am thinking of the powerful congregational singing that inspired the members' hearts as they went through the week to their daily tasks. You have to believe I am nostalgic, allowing my imagination to run wild.

Again, maybe it's just my jumbled perception, but finding a place or congregation with the kind of robust singing in which

the majority are participants, as in much of my growing-up days, is challenging. It seems as if people have stopped singing Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual songs in many places. I speak of songs with deep theological reflection that lift God as Father, Christ as Brother, and the Spirit as the uniter. It seems that many people who go to churches today go for a performance in which a soloist or a Praise Team is singing, and they watch or listen as spectators.

I am sorry if I seem like I am being too nostalgic; that is the pain that I am feeling. And I am making the point that we need to take with greater seriousness the counsel to express ourselves to one another with Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19), as the apostle Paul admonished the members in the church of Ephesus.

Do not allow the popular songs, with their expressions of darkness and division, to drown out the songs we can sing to bless others. Let us lodge a piece in their hearts, as Longfellow suggested.

MONTCLAIR STATE COLLEGE STUDENT INDICTED UNDER HEINOUS ALLEGATIONS

TRENTON - The Office of the Attorney General announced Aug. 28 a state grand jury has voted to file criminal charges against a college student who allegedly deceived children he contacted online into providing him sexually explicit videos of themselves, then used the internet connection of his Essex County-based university to upload the videos online.

A grand jury in Trenton has returned a 12-count indictment against Keyon Luff, 21, of Edgewater Park in Burlington County, N.J. Luff was indicted on charges including manufacturing child sexual exploitation and abuse material. The defendant is being held at the Essex County Correctional Facility in Newark pending trial.

According to the investigation led by the Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) Cyber-crimes Unit/Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Taskforce, between January and July 2021, Luff used a popular social media platform to contact at least three chil-

dren between the ages of 14 and 16 online, directed them to engage in sexual acts, told the victims to record themselves on video, and instructed them to send the lewd videos to him.

Luff allegedly created fictitious social media accounts to contact underage children and engage in sexually explicit conversations. According to the investigation, the defendant impersonated an adult female on one platform and utilized that false identity to obtain sexual files of others, including minors.

Detectives seized numerous digital devices from Luff's dorm room during the execution of a search warrant on May 3, 2023. Investigators determined the defendant was allegedly in possession of illicit, unlawful images of child sex abuse.

"As alleged in the indictment, the defendant assumed a fraudulent identity, posing as a woman with the specific intent of deceiving and manipulating children. The

grand jury determined this individual utilized this charade to induce victims to produce footage that would later be shared online without their knowledge or consent," said First Assistant Attorney General Lyndsay V. Ruotolo. "Such material should not exist, let alone circulate. And the manner in which it was allegedly obtained from the victims is not only abhorrent - it illustrates the alleged predatory premeditation that went into these crimes."

"This case illustrates that the Division of Criminal Justice will stop at nothing to investigate and prosecute those who exploit children over social media platforms," said J. Stephen Ferketic, Director of the Division of Criminal Justice. "We urge parents to be vigilant, and to be aware of who their children are communicating with on social media platforms."

The criminal investigation leading to

(Continued on page 14)

TOWN WATCH

(Continued from page 10)

\$1,250 daily fine on Seltzer until a resolution is to be arrived. Seltzer, on his Aug. 24 BXJ Facebook page said that the township offered him an undisclosed fine in exchange for a guilty plea.

MAPLEWOOD - The Township's planning board, as early as its Sept. 12 meeting, may take up a consultant's report that singled out eight Jefferson Village properties as non-condemnable areas in need of redevelopment.

The report, researched and produced by Phillips Preiss Grygiel Lehney Hughes LLC Aug. 1, identified eight properties on a block bordered by Maplewood Avenue, Inwood Place and Durand and Woodland avenues in Maplewood's traditional central business district. (Maplewood's original commerce hub was named Jefferson Village before it became South Orange Township and, in 1922, Maplewood.)

Two of the said properties are prominent: the former Bank of America branch and the Maplewood Theater Building.

Bank of America had vacated 161 Maplewood Ave., at the corner of Inwood Place, last year. The Maplewood Bank & Trust Co. had its headquarters built on the .466-acre lot in 1928. It was a Summit Bank branch when BoA moved in in 1991.

155 Maplewood Ave., built in 1926, is a two-story structure holding six street-level stores and as many second-floor offices. It is anchored by the six-screen, 1,412-set movie theater, which has been closed since the start of the 2020 COVID pandemic.

The Maplewood Theater had opened March 15, 1927 as a silent movie house and live performance space - the latter use that Mayor Dean Daffis may pose as cue to its future use.

BLOOMFIELD - A Newark man may well have responded to his first municipal court appearance over an Aug. 4 shoplifting here that escalated to a threatened assault.

Responding Bloomfield police officers said that they were responding to "a man with a knife" call from within a Franklin Square Mall store that Friday.

They soon found the

Stop & Shop shift manager, who quickly pointed out a man walking away on 8-12 Franklin Ave.'s parking lot. The officers found concealed health and beauty aid goods on the person, arrested him and brought him back to the supermarket.

The manager identified the man as the one he had stopped in the store's vestibule. He said that the suspect - who was earlier seen hiding the goods and leaving without paying - displayed a boxcutter and threatened the worker.

The suspect - identified as Justin Anderson, 19, of Newark -- was charged with shoplifting,

possession of stolen objects, weapons possession and assault by threatening bodily injury.

MONTCLAIR - Township Councilman Peter Yacobellis, on Aug. 23, said that he is done with public life.

Yacobellis is "one and done" as an at-large councilman. He will not pursue a second term in the May 7, 2020 nonpartisan municipal election.

The Out Montclair co-founder is also "none and done" with the 2024 mayoral candidacy campaign. Yacobellis had announced his bid here May 24 and had amassed \$40,000 in campaign contributions. That

\$40,000 would have been used to compete against whoever else who wants to become Montclair's next mayor.

Yacobellis, in an Aug. 24 interview, said that he was drawn to public service for social acceptance, a tendency that was a response to being bullied as a child.

"I've reached a point in my life where I want to make choices that give me the opportunity to thrive and be happy and healthy," said Yacobellis. "Becoming mayor of Montclair wouldn't make me happy; I had ignored the churning in my gut months ago. Being under the microscope is not for me."

**LA GENTE OLVIDA BOLSAS A MENUDO
QUIZÁS VUELVAN A BUSCARLA
SEGURAMENTE NO ES NADA**



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The Observation Booth



OP-ED By Andrea Dialect

GRINDERS ROW (FACEBOOK GROUP) SPOTLIGHT

SHE WAS RIGHT ON POINT. AS A GIFT, I WAS GIVEN A FITTED CAP PAINTED WITH A FACE PARTIALLY TRANSFIXED ACROSS MY FOREHEAD CLEVERLY IN VIEW. IT FITTED WELL, IT LOOKED FAB. EVERYBODY WANTED IT, EVERYBODY LOVED IT AND I WORE IT UNTIL IT FELL OFF MY HEAD DUE TO OVERUSE. MY GIRL WAS...

ON CUE

“During Girl Talk some time ago, my girlfriends (and I) felt as if there were a lot of controversies going on at the time, as far

as women were concerned. We felt that there was a need for more positive images of women. The notion that the approach should be from a feminine aspect was agreeable. We also believed that (that) representation clearly should be one that encompassed the feminine spirit. This is my contribution to that!” - Yvonne Onque

Yvonne Onque
Occupation: Artist / Entrepreneur

The very first image that I painted on apparel had been replicated from a postcard. It was a print of Yemeja, the African goddess of the ocean, rising from the water. At the time, my sons had already started their Canvas Wear line and would always encourage me to create my own product line, but I didn't really take their suggestions seriously. Supposedly, you can say that God-S Wear had been created out of necessity, because I'd created my initial piece after receiving an invitation to an event. I wanted something jazzy to wear, so I painted my version of the postcard image of Yemeja on a shirt that I had lying around the house. Surprisingly, while I was at the event, the shirt received a lot of attention. There were also several requests, so I started designing the shirts for relatives and people that I knew.

That was my turning point. One day, I up and left my full-time job and God-Wearable Art



kind of snowballed into what it is today.

When I created the original God-S image, I wanted her portrayal to be a compliment to women, something from a very feminine aspect, something that ministered to the spirit: eyes closed, very peaceful, soothing colors, etc., and I've painted it that way ever since. ...

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.

MSU STUDENT INDICTED

(Continued from page 12)

Luff's arrest was launched following a cybertip from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), a private nonprofit that assists with the location of missing children, reduction of child sexual exploitation, and prevention of child victimization.

In this investigation, NCMEC reported that a cloud-based file hosting service reported that several files depicting suspected child sex abuse were uploaded to its platform. Investigators determined that the Internet Protocol (IP) address used to upload the files was associated with the university Luff was attending, and further investigation identified him as a suspect.

Luff has been indicted on the following

charges:

- Manufacturing Child Sexual Exploitation/Abuse Material - three counts, 1st Degree
- Sexual Assault - 2nd Degree
- Photographing or Filming a Child in a Prohibited Sexual Act or in the Simulation of Such an Act - three counts, 2nd Degree
- Impairing or Debauching the Morals of a Child - three counts, 3rd Degree
- Possession of Child Sexual Exploitation/Abuse Material (less than 1,000 items) - 3rd Degree
- Impersonation - 4th Degree

First-degree charges are punishable by 10 to 20 years in prison and fines of up to \$200,000.

Second-degree charges carry a sentence of five to 10 years in state prison and a fine of up to \$150,000.

Third-degree charges carry a sentence of three to five years in prison and a fine of up to \$15,000.

Fourth-degree charges carry a maximum sentence of 18 months in New Jersey State Prison and a fine of up to \$10,000.

The investigation was led by the DCJ Cybercrimes Unit under the supervision of Lt. Richard DaSilva. Deputy Attorney General Robert Guarni is prosecuting the case for the DCJ Cybercrimes Unit, under the supervision of Deputy Unit Chief Lisa Rastelli, Unit Chief Jillian Carpenter, and Interim DCJ Director Derek Nececkas.

These charges are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

FIVE INDICTED BY STATE GRAND JURY IN SCHEME TO BURGLARIZE MEDICAL OFFICES

TRENTON - The Office of the Attorney General and Office of the Insurance Fraud Prosecutor (OIFP) announced on Aug. 16 that five individuals were charged in an 80-count indictment for their alleged participation in a statewide prescription drug theft scheme spanning 11 counties.

The state grand jury returned an indictment against Divinete Jeffries, 30, of East Orange; Kevin Lucanto, 48, of Paterson; Akeem Adelekan, 28, of East Orange; Otto Lachenauer, 43, of Westfield; and Satia Salters, 25, of East Orange. The case is the result of an extensive investigation by the Office of the Insurance Fraud Prosecutor - Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU), in partnership with federal, state, and local authorities.

“These defendants conspired to unlawfully gain entry to doctors’ offices, steal prescription blanks, and forge physicians’ signatures, in order to acquire a cough syrup commonly used as an ingredient in a dangerous narcotic cocktail,” said First Assistant Attorney General Lyndsay V. Ruotolo. “This alleged conspiracy involved the use of fraud to further fuel the opioid epidemic.”

“Medical offices in various parts of the state, including Wayne, Morristown and Bridgewater, were targeted for burglary while pharmacists across the state were misled by these defendants into filling invalid prescriptions,” said Interim Insurance Fraud Prosecutor Al Garcia. “Anyone who engages in criminal, deceitful behavior to obtain drugs, particularly on a scale this vast, must be held accountable.”

The grand jury heard testimony that in 2022 and 2023, the defendants conspired in an elaborate scheme where Jeffries would allegedly burglarize medical offices and steal prescription pads from doctors. The stolen prescription pads would be used to forge prescriptions and were supplied to various pharmacies around the state. The prescriptions would be filled and issued to the defendants, who used stolen identities and fake manufactured drivers’ licenses to fraudulently obtain Promethazine with Codeine, a schedule V controlled dangerous substance (CDS), a cough syrup typically abused due to its opioid content.

Divinete Jeffries was ordered detained by state Superior Court Judge Colleen M. Flynn in Middlesex County, and he will be held in detention at the Middlesex County Jail pending further proceedings.

Detective Dominique DeFrancisci is leading the investigation assisted by Detective Chantel Blake, under the supervision of Lt. Jarek Pyrzanowski and Deputy Chief Rich King. Deputy Attorney Gen-

eral Lawrence Krayn is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant Bureau Chief Michael Klein and Bureau Chief Heather Hadley for the OIFP - MFCU.

The Federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), New Jersey State Police, Bergen County Prosecutor’s Office, Sussex County Prosecutor’s Office, Essex County Prosecutor’s Office, Morris County Prosecutor’s Office, Ocean County Prosecutor’s Office, Hunterdon County Prosecutor’s Office, Bergen County Sheriff’s Office, Brick Police Department, Edison Police Department, Wayne Police Department, Hackettstown Police Department, Toms River Police Department, Millburn Police Department, Tenafly Police Department, Paramus Police Department, Bridgewater Police Department, Franklin Borough Police Department, East Orange Police Department, West Caldwell Police Department, Tinton Falls Police Department, Califon Police Department, Newton Police Department, Sparta Police Department, Woodbridge Police Department, and the Morristown Police Department, all played integral roles in the investigation.

The charges are merely accusations and the defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Second-degree charges carry a sentence of five to ten years in New Jersey State Prison and a fine of up to \$150,000. Third-degree charges carry a sentence of three to five years in New Jersey State Prison and a fine of up to \$15,000. Fourth-degree charges carry a maximum sentence of 18 months in New Jersey State Prison and a fine of up to \$10,000.

New Jersey MFCU’s total funding for federal fiscal year (FY) 2023 is \$9,418,641. Of that total, 75 percent, or \$7,063,984, is awarded under a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The remaining 25 percent, totaling \$2,354,657 for FY 2023, is funded by the State of New Jersey.

OIFP’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit specifically protects Medicaid beneficiaries and the Medicaid Program from fraud, waste, and abuse. To report Medicaid fraud or patient abuse and neglect, please email NJMFCU@njdcj.org or call 609-292-1272. If you are concerned about insurance cheating and have information about a fraud, you can report fraud anonymously by calling the toll-free hotline at 1-877-55-FRAUD, or visiting www.NJInsurancefraud.org. State regulations permit a reward to be paid to eligible persons who provide information that leads to an arrest, prosecution, and conviction for insurance fraud.

MAN ACCUSED IN DWUMFOUR MURDER PLEADS NOT GUILTY

MIDDLESEX - Rashid Ali Bynum, the man accused of murdering Sayreville Councilwoman Eunice Dwumfour, has pleaded not guilty in a detention hearing this morning. He was ordered by Judge Joseph Paone to remain in custody.

Middlesex County Prosecutor Yolanda Ciccone previously announced on Aug. 16 that Bynum, 29, of Portsmouth, Virginia was indicted by a Middlesex County grand jury for first-degree Murder, second-degree Unlawful Possession of a Weapon, and second-degree Possession of a Weapon for an Unlawful Purpose. Assistant Prosecutor Amber Gibbs presented the case in front of a Middlesex County grand jury, who returned the aforementioned indictment.

On February 1, 2023, at approximately 7:22 P.M., authorities received a 911 call reporting shots fired in the area of Samuel Circle, in the Parlin section of Sayreville, NJ. Sayreville Police Department responded to the scene, upon their arrival, officers located town councilwoman Eunice Dwumfour, 30, of Sayreville, in her vehicle who had sustained multiple gunshot wounds. Dwumfour succumbed to her injuries and was pronounced deceased on scene.

On May 30, 2023, Bynum was arrested and charged with the murder of councilwoman Eunice Dwumfour. Bynum was taken into custody outside a residence in Chesapeake, Virginia without incident. On July 27, 2023, Bynum was extradited to New Jersey.

This indictment is the product of the collaborative efforts of multiple law enforcement agencies. As is the case with all criminal defendants, the charges against Rashid Bynum are merely accusations and he is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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