

LOCAL TALK

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25¢

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

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

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Phone: 973-622-1111 • www.localtalkweekly.com

E-mail - Newspaper: localtalk@aol.com * Printing: localtalkprinting@gmail.com

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SENATOR MENENDEZ FACING EXPLOSIVE INDICTMENT

Wife, Three Others Charged

NEW YORK - Damian Williams, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and James Smith, the Assistant Director in Charge of the New York Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), announced that an Indictment was unsealed Sept. 22 charging U.S. Senator Robert Menendez, his wife Nadine Menendez, a/k/a "Nadine Arslanian," and three New Jersey businessmen, Wael Hana, a/k/a "Will Hana," Jose Uribe, and Fred Daibes, with participating in a years-long bribery scheme.

The Indictment alleges that Menendez and his wife, Nadine Menendez, accepted hundreds of thousands of dollars of bribes from Hana, Uribe, and Daibes in exchange for Menendez's agreement to use his official position to protect and enrich them and to benefit the Government of Egypt.

Among other things, Menendez agreed and sought to pressure a senior official at the U.S. Department of Agriculture in an effort



eral's Office related to associates of Uribe, and disrupt a federal criminal prosecution brought by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey against Daibes. Menendez, Nadine Menendez, Hana, Uribe, and Daibes are expected to appear in federal court in Manhattan on Wednesday, September 27, 2023, at 10:30 a.m. The case is assigned to U.S. District Judge Sidney H. Stein.

U.S. Attorney Damian Williams said: "As the grand jury charged, between 2018 and 2022, Senator Menendez and his wife engaged in a corrupt relationship with Wael Hana, Jose Uribe, and Fred Daibes - three New Jersey businessmen who collectively paid hundreds of thousands of dollars of bribes, including cash, gold, a Mercedes Benz, and other things of value - in exchange for Senator Menendez agreeing to use his power and influence to protect and enrich those businessmen and to benefit the Government of Egypt. My Office is firmly committed to rooting out corruption, without fear or favor, and without any regard to partisan politics. We will continue to do so."

FBI Assistant Director in Charge James Smith said: "The FBI has made investigating public corruption a top priority since our founding - nothing has changed. The alleged conduct in this conspiracy damages the public's faith in our system of government and brings undue scorn to the honest and dedicated public servants who carry out their duties on a daily basis. To those inclined to use the status of their public office for personal benefit, or those willing to provide bribes in an attempt to gain influence from a public official, the FBI will ensure that you face the consequences in the criminal justice system for your underhanded dealings."

According to the allegations in the Indictment unsealed today in Manhattan federal court: Robert Menendez is the senior U.S. Senator from New Jersey and currently the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee ("SFRC"). Nadine Menendez began dating Menendez in February 2018, they became engaged in October 2019, and they married in October 2020.



to protect a business monopoly granted to Hana by Egypt, disrupt a criminal case undertaken by the New Jersey Attorney Gen-



Shortly after they began dating in 2018, Nadine Menendez introduced Menendez to her long-time friend Wael Hana, who is originally from Egypt, lived in New Jersey, and maintained close connections with Egyptian

(Continued on page 6)



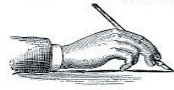
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Editorial

Dhiren Shah
Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

Daylight Savings Time will end on November 5, 2023. America is used to this system and saving money due to daylight savings. The real time is from November to March of every year, which corresponds with the GMT time zone. The Greenwich Mean Time zone was standard from 1884 to 1972 and known as the international time zone. An Englishman came up with the idea of Daylight Savings Time and started calling it UK time. Canada was the first country to start Daylight Savings Time (DST) in 1908. Sir Sanford Fleming, a Canadian engineer, was the first person to propose the use of worldwide time zones back in 1878. His idea was to divide the world into 24 time zones that were each 15

degrees of longitude apart. The reason for this is that the earth rotates 15 degrees every hour, or 360 degrees in 24 hours.

In the US, the Senate voted to keep Daylight Saving Time all year round, in line with Florida's Sunshine Protection Act. However, the House decided not to vote on the measure. So for now, the US will keep Standard Time (November to March) and Daylight Time (the months outside of that). Eventually, the politicians will take the measure that gives the most money, as they usually do.

DST is good for all of us, but it will not correspond with GMT, which is the base of world time. Also, by changing our time to DST time, the whole world has to change just for the USA. That may cost millions or billions of dollars for everyone to change it in every book and every legal record throughout the world. So, I think we should keep one time and forget about DST. We all are human, and our bodies are accustomed to the changes that come in our life.

I came from a hot city in India and am now living in New Jersey. The first year I felt the

difference, but then I got used to it. 44% of Americans like making the early daylight time permanent, 33% want to make standard time permanent, and 21% want to keep it the same way as we are doing now.

The Supreme Court rejected the Alabama Republicans' effort to block redrawing of a district map to accommodate the Black community, which is 27% of the population. Right now, they have drawn only one congressional district for 27% of the population. They are asking for at least two, so more representation is available for the Black community. SCOTUS ordered the committee to redraw the map, which will change the outcome of many other states who have not drawn the map according to the population.

Hunter Biden has filed a lawsuit against former NYC mayor Rudy Giuliani and his former attorney for hacking his information and breaking the digital privacy law. He has filed this lawsuit in the state of California, where the laws are written for the digital privacy. Biden demanded both of them to cease spreading his private information and re-

turn anything sensitive to him immediately.

New Jersey's senior Senator Bob Menendez has been indicted on corruption charges. The FBI found about \$480,000 cash, and even gold bars. However, Menendez claims that he has withdrawn money for the last 30 years for an emergency. I don't think anyone can believe him. Many elected New Jersey Democrats, including US Senator Cory Booker, asked for his resignation. However, I don't think he will resign until he makes some kind of deal with the prosecutor.

Finally, Justice Arthur Engoron of the New York state court in Manhattan has found Donald Trump and his family business liable for fraud in Attorney General Letitia James' civil lawsuit accusing the former U.S. president of illegally inflating his assets and net worth. Instead of a trial, they will now determine how much Trump should pay.

Have a wonderful week.

I'll talk to you next time.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS FOR LOCAL TALK WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

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 Editors: Kristopher Seals • Anuj Shah
 Journalists / Writers: Kristopher Seals • Walter Elliott • Dhiren Shah • Anuj Shah • Akshat Shah • Asha Shah • Kinjal Shah
 Thomas Ellis II • William Hathaway, Jr. • Lev D. Zilbermints • Dr. Robert Kennedy • Dr. Adil Manzoor
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WEATHER FOR THE WEEK

<u>THURSDAY</u>	<u>FRIDAY</u>	<u>SATURDAY</u>	<u>SUNDAY</u>	<u>MONDAY</u>	<u>TUESDAY</u>	<u>WEDNESDAY</u>
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The Doctor Is In



OP-ED BY DR. ADIL MANZOOR

Wildfire Smoke Exposure and Dementia Risk

About a month ago, the sky in many parts of Southern California was as orange as it has ever been due to the unfortunate wildfires in Canada. For people living in and around California, sub-optimal air quality is not a new thing. However, things are different this year, as many regions of the United States with no previous history of dangerous air quality reached a

“code purple” alert. Before you ask, a code purple alert denotes the second worst air quality possible, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency’s Air Quality Index.

To understand how seriously this should be taken, the level just above code purple is code red, and that denotes when air quality is so bad it is treated as an emergency environmental situation. A code red significantly increases the risk of health issues for everyone, with children and older adults being at an extremely high risk of serious health conditions.

When I say many regions of the US are posting historically bad air quality figures, I mean up to 11 states received a code purple for the first time in their history. You can imagine how scary a sight that is for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). But it is an even scarier sight for Physicians nationwide. I will explain why, but first, a short detour into the general effects of wildfire smoke on the environment and the body.

As you will imagine, the obvious effects of wildfire smoke are irritated eyes and throats, as well as varying levels of breath-

ing difficulties. And everyone feels these effects pretty quickly, too. The effect on the environment is not as immediate but much worse. According to the EPA, wildfire smoke causes particulate matter below 2.5 microns in diameter (PM2.5) to fill the atmosphere. The other common class of airborne particulate matter is PM10, and these describe particles below 10 microns in diameter. These particulate matter are readily inhalable because of their minute size, with PM2.5 being up to 30 times smaller than a hair strand. Those are ridiculous levels of small.

While both inhalable particulate matter are dangerous, PM2.5 has the capacity to go into deeper parts of the lungs than its PM10 compatriot. In fact, the WHO estimates that PM2.5 is linked to the highest proportion of adverse conditions related to air pollution. This is justified by PM2.5’s strong relationship with early deaths, serious respiratory and cardiovascular issues, and an increased frequency of visits to emergency rooms. And all these are just for acute exposure. It gets even worse with long-term exposure. In short, PM2.5 is the bad guy of the air.

Now to why physicians are worried about the increasing PM2.5 levels following wildfire smokes - a comprehensive study has revealed that higher residential PM2.5 levels, particularly from wildfire and agriculture, are associated with higher rates of incident dementia. When I say comprehensive, I mean a study that collected data from close to 28,000 people for 19 years. That’s about as thorough as we can hope for, really.

What’s more, researchers found that lowering the levels of particulate matter in the air may lower the number of older people who develop dementia. I mean, of course!

You may wonder why wildfire smoke is associated with dementia, considering respiratory and cardiovascular issues are the primary culprits. Well, I was too, and apparently, researchers worldwide are, too, so it may be a little frustrating to hear the answer to that question, which is - no one knows. Yeah, that’s it; no one knows for sure why PM2.5 is increasing the risk of dementia in the latter stages of life.

Some postulate that the parti-

cles are sufficiently small to enter the brain and trigger a toxic reaction, while others believe it is a lot more complicated and linked to cardiovascular issues, which in turn increases the risk for dementia. Whichever the case, we can all agree that reducing exposure to PM2.5 is an absolute priority for people living in high-risk regions, like the East Coast and Southern California. How to do this is not as clear.

Experts suggest that smokestacks, air purifiers, and tailpipes may not be enough. Nonetheless, it certainly does not hurt to take precautionary measures, like - hear me out - wearing a mask. Hey, don’t hate me. I am only a messenger of the CDC. And common sense, of course. It is also smart to reduce driving during periods of wildfire smoke and stay indoors as much as possible.

This article was written by Dr. Adil Manzoor DO, a Board-Certified Internist & Board Certified Pediatrician, who works as a Hospitalist, and Emergency Room Physician. He is also the current President of Garden State Street Medicine, a non-profit organization whose sole purpose is to provide free preventive and acute urgent care services for the homeless.

He is also the co-founder of his own unique medical practice Mobile Medicine NJ & House call Doctors. He is also currently pursuing an Executive MBA and a Master's of Science in Healthcare Leadership at Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management and the Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences.

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SPORTS WRAP



Photos By Felicia Laguerre Owens

By William Hathaway, Jr.

The New Jersey high school football season is in full effect, as there was another week of good football by local Essex County area teams. Of course, the surprise team this season is the Orange High School Tornadoes, who have started the season well at 4-1. OHS seems to be the local version of the Miami Dolphins, as they won another high scoring game 50-37 over the previously undefeated Barringer Bears. Senior quarter-

back Maurice Williams, who broke the Orange High for most touchdowns in one game at the start of the season, racked up 326 passing yards and 5 TDs, along with 100 yards on the ground. Senior Makay Acey hauled in 3 TDs.

Weequahic High is an impressive 4-0 record, after a Dolphin-like 69-0 win over Central. Paul Jones was 6-7 in the air for WHS with 145 yards, but it was a group effort all around. Leroy Singleton had a TD, 32 yards, Darrell Barrow had a TD, 43



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yards, Elijah motley had a TD, 51 yards, and Rashawn Marshall had 102 yards.

West Orange has not had the easiest time coming off state honors, with a 35-27 loss to Mount Olive. The Mountaineers are now 1-3 on the season. Meanwhile, East Orange is looking to get back to its dominant ways, as the Jaguars Bloomfield 41-6. Kyree Fisher led the Jags with 197 passing and 2 TDs, along with 108 yards rushing. Shakur Taylor had 116 yards and 2 TDs and Saeed Cole had a TD. East Orange as a team tallied 270 yards on offense.

The Irvington Knights have struggled out of the gate, now sitting at 2-3 after a tough home

loss to Seton Hall Prep 23-12. Prep was led by Michael Dunmore's 100 yards rushing and 2 TDs. Nacir Ransom threw a 46 yard touchdown pass to Zakaa Brown, and later for a 37 yard TD. Sophomore Ransom finished the game 14 of 25 for 225 yards. Meanwhile, Caldwell High is still a juggernaut in Essex County with its 32 game winning streak.

In other sports, the Jets lost a heartbreaker at home to New England 15-10. While Gang Green has trouble scoring, the Miami Dolphins do not, as they beat up Denver 70-20. Finally, New York Liberty star Breanna Stewart has been named 2023 WNBA MVP.



MENENDEZ (Cont. from page 1)

officials. Hana was also business associates with Fred Daibes, a New Jersey real estate developer and long-time donor to Menendez, and Jose Uribe, who worked in the New Jersey insurance and trucking business.

Between 2018 and 2022, Menendez and Nadine Menendez agreed to and did accept hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of bribes from Hana, Daibes, and Uribe. These bribes included gold, cash, a luxury convertible, payments toward Nadine Menendez's home mortgage, compensation for a low-or-no-show job for Nadine Menendez, home furnishings, and other things of value. In June 2022, the FBI executed a search warrant at the New Jersey home of Menendez and Nadine Menendez. During that search, the FBI found many of the fruits of this bribery scheme, including cash, gold, the luxury convertible, and home furnishings.

Over \$480,000 in cash - much of it stuffed into envelopes and hidden in clothing, closets, and a safe - was discovered in the home, as well as over \$70,000 in cash in Nadine Menendez's safe deposit box, which was also searched pursuant to a separate search warrant. Some of the envelopes contained the fingerprints and/or DNA of Daibes or his driver.

During this same search, agents also found home furnishings provided by Hana and Daibes, the luxury vehicle paid for by Uribe parked in the garage, as well as over one hundred

thousand dollars' worth of gold bars in the home, which were provided by either Hana or Daibes.

Promised Actions to Benefit Egypt and Pressure the USDA

Shortly after she began dating Menendez in 2018, Nadine Menendez worked with HANA to introduce Egyptian intelligence and military officials to Menendez. Those introductions helped establish a corrupt agreement in which Hana, with assistance from Daibes and Uribe, provided bribes to Menendez and Nadine Menendez in exchange for Menendez's actions to benefit Egypt and Hana, among others.

As part of the scheme, Menendez provided sensitive, non-public U.S. government information to Egyptian officials and otherwise took steps to secretly aid the Government of Egypt. For example, in or about May 2018, Menendez provided Egyptian officials with non-public information regarding the number and nationality of persons serving at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, Egypt. Although this information was not classified, it was deemed highly sensitive because it could pose significant operational security concerns if disclosed to a foreign government or made public.

Without telling his professional staff or the State Department that he was doing so, on or about May 7, 2018, Menendez texted that sensitive, non-public embassy information to his then-girlfriend Nadine Menendez, who forwarded the message to

Hana, who forwarded it to an Egyptian government official. Later that same month, Menendez ghost-wrote a letter on behalf of Egypt to other U.S. Senators advocating for them to release a hold on \$300 million in aid to Egypt. Menendez sent this ghost-written letter to Nadine Menendez, who forwarded it to Hana, who sent it to Egyptian officials.

At various times between 2018 and 2022, Menendez also conveyed to Egyptian officials, through Nadine Menendez, Hana, and/or Daibes, that he would approve or remove holds on foreign military financing and sales of military equipment to Egypt in connection with his leadership role on the SFRC. For example, in or about July 2018, following meetings between Menendez and Egyptian officials, which were arranged and attended by Nadine Menendez and Hana, Menendez texted Na-

Nadine Menendez a link to a news article reporting on two pending foreign military sales to Egypt totaling approximately \$2.5 billion. Nadine Menendez forwarded this link to Hana, writing, "Bob had to sign off on this."

In exchange for Menendez's agreement to take these and other actions, Hana promised Nadine Menendez payments, including from IS EG Halal Certified, Inc. ("IS EG Halal"), a New Jersey company that Hana operated with financial support and backing from Daibes. However, IS EG Halal had little to no revenue until the spring of 2019, when the Government of Egypt granted IS EG Halal a monopoly on the certification of U.S. food exports to Egypt as compliant with halal standards, despite the fact that neither Hana nor his company had experience with halal certification. The monopoly generated revenue for Hana,



dine Menendez that she should tell Hana that Menendez was going to sign off on a multimillion-dollar weapons sale to Egypt.

Nadine Menendez forwarded this text to Hana, who forwarded it to two Egyptian officials, one of whom replied with a "thumbs up" emoji. Menendez made similar communications over the ensuing years. For example, in January 2022, Menendez sent

through which he paid Nadine Menendez as promised.

Because the monopoly resulted in increased costs for U.S. meat suppliers, in or about April and May 2019, the USDA contacted the Government of Egypt and sought reconsideration of its grant of monopoly rights to IS EG Halal. After being briefed on the USDA's objections to IS EG Halal's monopoly by Hana

(Continued on page 11)

NEWARK BOE GETS BAD NEWS FROM ALL SIDES

By Walter Elliott

NEWARK - The Newark Public Schools Board of Education recently received bad news from above, from below and from its own panel.

School Board President Asia Norton, for example, resigned with immediate effect Sept. 18. Two former School of Global Studies magnet high school teachers filed a tort claim suit against the district and with the New Jersey Division of Civil Rights on "harassment and racial hostility" grounds Aug. 28. That same day, the entered into "a resolution agreement" with NJ OCR and the U.S. Department of Education over sexual harassment and assault claims going back to 2017.

Norton, without stating her reason for resigning, was reported by the Rutgers Law School as taking a job here as law clerk for Superior Court Judge Sheila Venable. The five-year board member had been taking classes at the law school and had graduated in May.

Norton was first elected as board member in 2018 and re-elected in 2021 - both as a member of Mayor Ras Baraka's Moving Newark Schools Forward team. She was succeeded ticket running mate Dawn Haynes as board president by her peers for 2023-24.

Haynes and Valarie Santana, who had been serving as co-vice presidents until Sept. 18, will continue as co-presidents until Norton's board membership vacancy is filled.

They and the board have, by state statute, 65 days to select Norton's successor on their panel - including going over applications of and interviewing prospective candidates. The appointee will likely joining the other three "regular" runners in April's election to complete Norton's term.

Haynes, at the Aug. 24 board meeting, had suggested her colleagues and Central Office officials that the CREED Strategies report on the School for Global Studies' racial and cultural dynamics. The sugges-

tion was not seconded, and the CREED report was discussed in executive session.

Nubia Lumumba, a former 11th-Grade English teacher, and Tammy Davis, who had doubled as an English teacher and Black Student Union adviser, had filed their court claims in July by their attorney Louis D. Balk.

Lumumba and Davis, who respectively resigned March 5 and Feb. 13, said that they had exhausted other avenues of redress. They said they had brought their claims of "harassment and racial hostility by students and supervisors" at the school to the department chairperson, school administrators and the Central Office's Affirmative Action Officer.

In their letter from AAO Dr. Yolanda Mendez, Mendez said: "After a full investigation of your allegations, including interviewing all appropriate parties and review of relevant materials, it doesn't appear that sufficient evidence exists to support a finding of harassment, discrimination, hostile work environment or retaliatory conduct."

"Students shouldn't have to worry that they're going to be made fun of," said Balk, "called monkeys or any such thing."

Lumumba and Davis said they were at the School of Global Studies and BOE's November meetings. Baraka had held a town hall meeting in Municipal Council Chamber March 8 for African American and Latino high school students to air any friction between them, including the School for Global Studies.

The School for Global Studies, where the Central Ward meets Lower Broadway, is in the building formerly occupied by the Church Street School and a junior high school.

Aug. 28's "resolution agreement between NPS and USDOE involves training of students and staff regarding sexual harassment in order to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972. While most familiar as the funding vehicle for women's and girls' sports, Title IX Bars sex (Continued on page 9)



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RETRACTIONS FOR SEPT. 21-27, 2023 ARTICLE: "IS THIS MAN WORTH \$1.6 MILLION?"

proximately 75 minutes before they arrived at the normal public session time.'

The following serves as retractions for the above listed article:

1. In the article, we were told that Board Member Sueann Gravesande did not say "No" to the Superintendent contract, and we reported that she said "Yes." However, she **abstained** on the vote, and did not vote "Yes" as previously indicated.
2. In regard to information on Jessika Kleen, Esq. as stated in the article, this was her response to "Local Talk" on Sept. 22, 2023.

"This is patently false. I spoke to no teachers or staff members regarding this issue whatsoever. I spoke to one member of the public... around 7:30 pm near the Security Desk... She and I spoke, she asked me when the public hearing on the contract would be. I told her, pursuant to the advertised notice, the hearing was held shortly after 6:00 pm and the contract was voted on already. This was the end of our conversation relative to the Superintendent's contract.

"I reiterate, I never told anyone, let alone teachers, staff, or members of the public, that they could not speak."

"Please be advised the undersigned is counsel for the Orange Board of Education. It has come to my attention that your paper published an article in the September 21-27 edition regarding the contract of the Superintendent of Schools. In this article, you advise the public the following occurred:

On the words of Jessika Kleen, Esq. herself, "Local Talk" retracts this statement from the September 21-27, 2023 article.

'But shortly before the meeting reconvened, the board attorney told the teachers, staff and public that they would not be allowed to make any comments about the teacher contract which was approved ap-

If any member of the board wishes to explain the reasoning for his / her vote on the contract, so that there is no confusion as to what happened at the meeting, we will gladly publish it.

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NEWARK BOE GETS

BAD NEWS

(Continued from page 7)

discrimination at institutions that receive federal funding.

US Education Department Office of Civil Rights New York officer Rachel Pomerantz, on Aug. 28, sent a letter to NPS Superintendent Roger Leon that her office had reviewed 80 complaints of intrastudent sexual harassment and eight complaints between employee and student harassment, including sexual assault between the 2017-18 and 2019-20 school years and found nine Title IX violations.

The New York office found that the designated sex harassment officer had failed to respond to the 88 complaints - that is if students and staff had the training to identify sexual harassment to start with.

The failure includes failing to coordinate investigations and/or failing to maintain records. and/or surveying employees and students on attitudes. Failure to comply meant that NPS was at risk of losing Title IX program funds.

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ESSEX COUNTY LEAF COLLECTION SCHEDULE FOR 2023

ESSEX COUNTY - Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr. announced Essex County's 2023 Leaf Collection Schedule for County Roads. Residents whose properties are on County Roads may place their leaves in biodegradable bags or sweep the loose leaves into piles at the curb.

To organize leaf collection on County roads, Essex County is divided into four sectors. There will be three pickups in each section of the County. DiVincenzo has asked residents on County roads to check the county leaf collection schedule and coordinate their fall cleanup

activities with the County. Leaves should be swept to the curb or placed in biodegradable bags at the curb no more than seven days before the scheduled pickup time. In addition, residents are asked to pile leaves at least 10 feet from a storm drain.

The following schedule lists the four sectors, the municipalities included in each section and the collection times when leaves will be picked up in each section.

- Section I: (Cedar Grove, Millburn and West Orange) Monday, October 23rd to Saturday, October 28th; Monday, November 20th to Wednesday, November 22nd; and Monday, December 18th to Saturday, Decem-

- ber 23rd.
- Section II: (South Orange and Maplewood) Monday, October 30th to Saturday, November 4th; Monday, November 27th to Saturday, December 2nd; and Tuesday, December 26th to Saturday, December 30th.
- Section III: (Belleville and East Orange) Monday, November 6th to Saturday, November 11th; Monday, December 4th to Saturday, December 9th; and Tuesday, January 2, 2024, to Saturday, January 6, 2024 (The last pick up will be made only if it is needed).
- Section IV: (Irvington, Newark and Orange) Monday, November 13th to Saturday, November 18th; Monday,

December 11th to Saturday, December 16th; and Monday, January 8, 2024, to Saturday, January 13, 2024 (The last pick up will be made only if it is needed).

Essex County has entered into shared services agreements with Bloomfield, Caldwell, Essex Fells, Fairfield, Glen Ridge, Livingston, Montclair, North Caldwell, Nutley, Roseland, Verona and West Caldwell. In these municipalities, the local Department of Public Works will collect leaves on County roads. If your property is located on a County road in one of these towns, please consult your municipal Public Works Department for more information or to obtain a schedule.

TOWN WATCH

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

NEWARK - The worst of the beating made by seven men September 2019 on an eighth inmate, rendering him partially incapacitated by mental injury, at the Essex County Correctional Center, will not get out until the year 2113.

Superior Court Judge Ronald D. Wigler, from his Newark bench Sept. 12 added 20 years on to the 70-year sentence of Darryl Watson, 22, of Newark, is currently serving regarding the September 2019 attempted murder of Jayshawn Boyd, 22, of Newark and Elizabeth.

Watson and the to-be-sentenced Byad Lockett were found guilty by a jury here June 16 of attempted murder and aggravated assault of Boyd plus related weapons charges. A third man was convicted on weapons charges but was cleared of attempted murder and aggravated assault.

Watson and Lockett, who were of the seven in the two-minute beating of Boyd in the county jail's C-Pod. The pair had rendered Boyd unconscious from the punching and kicking - but landed the pod's microwave oven, water dispenser and industrial mop bucket on his head.

The injuries put Boyd in a coma for several months. and left him with the inability to perform simple tasks. Boyd, who had been diagnosed as having schizophrenia, was in jail for failing to appear in court.

Watson was serving 70 years after being convicted June 28 in the February 2019 murder of Fred Sims, of Newark.

This may not be the last one reads of this case. Lockett has yet to be sentenced and the dispositions of the other five have not been determined. Boyd's at-

torney, Brooke Barnett, has filed suit against Essex County and particular officials - including County Executive Joseph DiVincenzo.

IRVINGTON - Newark police detectives are investigating the circumstances of how a woman was shot in its Ironbound section - and why she went to an address here Sept. 17.

The Newark part of the story began with callers in the area of streets Pennington Court, East Kinney and Court telling of seven or eight gunshots being fired at around 3:15 a.m. that Sunday.

Responding NPD officers combed the area for any victims and evidence. They would find one victim in Irvington - by the Verizon telephone exchange building at 9 Coit St., later that early morning.

The woman said that one of her feet was shot while she was at Newark's Scott and Mulberry streets - and that she took "a private vehicle" for the approximately two mile west trip.

The victim was taken to a local hospital, where her injury was deemed non-life-threatening. The case remains under NPD investigation.

EAST ORANGE - The Newark police division released a video recording of one of the two suspects whose dispute with the Rev. Timothy Huff there Aug. 24 resulted in the East Orange pastor being critically shot.

The NPD footage, taken from the 40 block of North Fourth Street at about 1:30 a.m., shows a woman standing next to a dark green four-door late model BMW with Nevada license plates. The woman appears to be wearing shoulder-length black hair, a black t-shirt with a printed photo front, white or light blue cutoff shorts and sandals.

It is not known whether the suspect or the second woman with her fired gunshots through Huff's front window and interior wall before the pastor was struck in the stomach while lying on a couch. Nor is it clear as of press time whether either one or both the ones accused of vandalizing a car parked in a gated driveway.

The NPD incident reports that Huff and family members caught the two women taking an outside rear-view mirror of the parked car and confronted them.

They came back to the scene about 30 minutes later, one of whom fired rounds off a handgun.

Huff is Senior Pastor of Green Pasture Missionary Baptist Church, 50 North Maple Ave. on Peck's Ridge. Relatives and congregants have held prayer vigils here and at Newark's University Hospital. A GoFundMe.com page has been established for Huff's medical expenses.

ORANGE - The Orange Fire Department had put out mourning bunting for 30 days for a retired of one of its own - William O'Neill. O'Neill, 86, who was an Orange native for 31 years and an OFD member for 32 years, died at his Livingston home there on Aug. 20.

O'Neill was born in Orange Oct. 22, 1936, was a city product. He joined "Orange's Bravest" in 1967. He had retired from the force in 1991.

"Bill" and his wife, Mary Jane moved to Livingston in 1969 to raise sons Joseph and Willam and daughters Lu Anne Marotta and Darlene Bell. The former Mary Jane Scarone predeceased him. Brother John Edward O'Neill, five grandchildren and a great-granddaughter are also among his survivors.

A memorial visitation was held Aug. 28 at Caldwell's Paul Ippolito-Dancy Funeral Home. (The Ippolito home was also from Orange.), followed by entombment later that day at East Hanover's Gate of Heaven Cemetery.

Memorial donations may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105 or stjude.org.

WEST ORANGE / SOUTH ORANGE - The South Orange Public Library Board of Trustees are mulling over how architect Andrew Berman has in mind to connect the current 1968 library building with its predecessor almost next door.

The Connection as Berman, of his self-named New York firm, at the SOPL BOT meeting foresees, is a two-story building connecting the current building with the Connett Memorial Library. The second story is a see-through atrium like ceiling, crowning a first-story housing

library material holdings and special collections.

Berman said that The Connection would double the Children's Library and create "an open, flexible space" for special events. He left open what furniture would exactly go into The Connection outside of a kitchenette.

SOPL, as an institution, will be going full circle, The Connection marks a return of the Connett Library, which had been the EIES books on tape facility for the blind since the new library was opened.

The village has bonded \$16 million for The Connection and related improvements. \$6.5 million comes as an award from the 2021-22 N.J. State Library Construction Bond Act.

The state awards have also fueled the impending move of the West Orange Public Library to a former office building at 10 Rooney Circle - which now has a Nov. 1 public grand opening. Improvements at the East Orange and Newark public libraries are also among the awardees.

SOPL Trustees' next step is to put out a request for construction bids from prospective contractors.

MAPLEWOOD - The South Orange-Maplewood School District's administration has been since Sept. 18 digesting an equity audit commissioned from the Rutgers University Disproportionality and Equity Laboratory.

Called "The Fergus Report" after Rutgers Professor Dr. Eddie Fergus, the document was the result of SOMSD's settlement (before Superior Court Judge John E. Wallace) with the SOMA Black Parents Workshop over racial disparities in June.

The audit, presented by Dr. Fergus himself in a special school board meeting Sept 18, confirmed was some people in the two-town district have been asserting since 2014. There is a disparity between Caucasian and non-white students in taking Advance Placement courses and tests. The current modification and expansion of school buildings will help on a long-term basis.

The SOMSD Board of Education ended that Monday night's report here by extending the district's settlement with SOMA

(Continued on page 14)

MENENDEZ (Continued from page 6)

and Nadine Menendez, on May 23, 2019, Menendez called a high-level USDA official (“Official-1”) and insisted that the USDA stop opposing IS EG Halal’s status as sole halal certifier. When Official-1 attempted to explain why the monopoly was detrimental to U.S. interests, Menendez reiterated his demand that the USDA stop interfering with IS EG Halal’s monopoly. Official-1 did not accede to Menendez’s demand, but IS EG Halal nevertheless kept its monopoly.

After financially benefitting from IS EG Halal’s monopoly, Hana, at times with the assistance of Daibes and Uribe, provided payments and other things of value in furtherance of the scheme. For example, in or about July 2019, after the mortgage company for the residence of Nadine Menendez initiated foreclosure proceedings, Hana caused IS EG Halal to pay approximately \$23,000 to bring the mortgage current. HANA did so after a series of discussions with Nadine Menendez, as well as Uribe and Daibes, about various options for bringing the mortgage current. Later in 2019, Hana and Daibes caused IS EG Halal to issue three \$10,000 checks to Nadine Menendez for a low-or-no-show job. As the scheme continued, including through the additional actions described below, Menendez and Nadine Menendez received additional bribes, including gold and cash.

Promised Actions Seeking to Disrupt the NJAG Criminal Case

Also in 2019, Hana and Uribe offered to help buy a new Mercedes-Benz C-300 convertible worth more than \$60,000 for Menendez and Nadine Menendez. In exchange, Menendez agreed and sought to interfere in the NJAG’s criminal insurance fraud prosecution of an associate of Uribe and a related investigation involving an employee of Uribe. On multiple occasions in 2019, Uribe, Hana, and/or Nadine Menendez briefed Menendez regarding the NJAG’s insurance fraud prosecution and investigation. Following those briefings, and in exchange for the promise of the luxury convertible, Menendez contacted a senior state prosecutor at the NJAG’s Office who supervised the prosecution and investigation (“Official-2”) at least twice. During those communications, Menendez attempted to pressure Official-2 to resolve the prosecution more favorably to the defendant. Official-2 considered Menendez’s actions inappropriate and did not agree to intervene. Nevertheless, the prosecution was ultimately resolved with a plea allowing for no jail time and the investigation never resulted in any charges against Uribe’s employee.

In exchange for Menendez’s actions, Uribe provided Nadine Menendez with \$15,000 cash for the down payment on the luxury convertible in April 2019. After the purchase was complete, Nadine Menendez messaged Menendez, “Congratulations mon amour de la vie, we are the proud owners of a 2019 Mercedes.”

Thereafter, Uribe made monthly payments to Mercedes-Benz for the convertible between 2019 and June 2022. Uribe only stopped making those monthly payments after the FBI approached Menendez, Nadine Menendez, and Uribe in connection with this investigation.

Promised Actions Seeking to Disrupt the USAO-DNJ Criminal Case

In October 2018, the USAO-DNJ charged Daibes with federal criminal charges for obtaining loans under false pretenses from a New Jersey-based bank he founded. Between December 2020 and 2022, Menendez agreed to attempt to influence the pending federal prosecution of Daibes in exchange for cash, furniture, and gold bars that Daibes provided to Menendez and Nadine Menendez.

In furtherance of this aspect of the scheme, Menendez recommended that the President nominate an individual (“Official-3”) as U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey who Menendez believed he could influence with respect to Daibes’s case. Menendez also had direct and indirect contact with both Official-3 and another high-ranking official at the USAO-DNJ (“Official-4”) in an attempt to influence the outcome of Daibes’s case.

Official-3 and Official-4 did not pass on to the USAO-DNJ prosecution team handling the Daibes prosecution the fact that Menendez had contacted them, and they did not treat the case any differently as a result of Menendez’s actions. Daibes’s case was ultimately resolved with a plea agreement that provided for a probationary sentence. In exchange for Menendez’s participation in the bribery scheme, Daibes provided Menendez and Nadine Menendez with multiple things of value, including gold bars.

Robert Menendez, 69, of Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, is charged with one count of conspiracy to commit bribery, which carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison; one count of conspiracy to commit honest services fraud, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison; and one count of conspiracy to commit extortion under color of official right, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

Nadine Menendez, 56, of Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, is charged with one

count of conspiracy to commit bribery, which carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison; one count of conspiracy to commit honest services fraud, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison; and one count of conspiracy to commit extortion under color of official right, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

Wael Hana, 40, formerly of Edgewater, New Jersey, and originally of Egypt, Jose Uribe, 56, of Clifton, New Jersey, and Fred Daibes, 66, of Edgewater, New Jersey, are all charged with one count of conspiracy to commit bribery, which carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison, and one count of conspiracy to commit honest services fraud, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

The statutory maximum penalties are prescribed by Congress and are provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendants would be determined by a judge.

Mr. Williams praised the outstanding investigative work of the FBI. Mr. Williams thanked the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation for its invaluable assistance on the investigation.

This case is being handled by the Office’s Public Corruption Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Eli J. Mark, Paul Monteleoni, Lara Pomerantz, and Daniel C. Richenthal are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Sen. Menendez, for his part, called the allegations a smear campaign, and mentioned how a previous indictment attempt failed. He has stepped away from his position on the SFRC. On Sept. 25, he held a press conference and vehemently refused to resign from his Senate seat, saying that he would be exonerated.

While Menendez said that he keeps emergency cash at home, he did not comment on the gold bars.



*From
The
Pastor's
Heart*

OP-ED BY DR. ROBERT KENNEDY

Encourage One Another

I do not remember when my parents did it to me, but I recall doing it to our three sons. When they were taking their first steps, I held my hands and told them to step. At times, I stood at a distance and stimulated them to walk towards me. Yes, I can still recall how they fixed their eyes on me and tried to lift one foot after another.

After a while, they did not need me to hold them or stand there; they were walking confidently, running, climbing on chairs to reach what they wanted and getting into mischief. I remember, too, that there were times when they wanted to walk and run in danger zones, and I would tell them not to with emphasis. My Yeses and Nos were lessons in encouragement.

What I am talking about in the comments above is encouragement, the words and actions that we use to inspire, stimulate, persuade, and motivate ourselves and others in the development of learning any habit, ritual, attitude, art, skill, knowledge, relationship, confidence, that we wish to support or discourage. Yes, encouragement is one of the most essential ingredients of life.

We all need it, especially when we are filled with questioning and doubt, such as the circumstances that I named in the opening

paragraph, with the encouragement of our children in taking their first steps. Holding out my hands and standing there, with my eyes focused on them, and sometimes saying, "Come to me," I encouraged them. And when I tried to caution them away from danger, I also encouraged them.

The opposite of encouragement is criticism. That is a penchant that some persons have to disparage, disapprove, denigrate, denounce, criticize and condemn everything said and done by themselves or others. Just imagine how a child must feel as a parent spends all their time depreciating everything they do, every attempt they make to excel. Just imagine how a student feels if a teacher tells them that they do not see any future for them. Just imagine how it is for a spouse who can only hear that everything they do is deplorable. Imagine a worker whose boss decries them. Think of a person in any game being maligned by their coach. Just think of a patient in the hospital, hearing doctors and medical attendants simply standing by their beds and speaking of their death. It must be demotivating.

I read a quote this morning in my devotional that relates to spousal relationships but is appropriate for many situations. The quote goes like this:

Though difficulties, perplexities, and discouragements may arise, let neither husband nor wife harbor the thought that their union is a mistake or a disappointment. Determine to be all that it is possible to be to each other. Continue the early attention. In every way, encourage each other in fighting the battles of life. Study to advance the happiness of each other. Let there be mutual love, mutual

forbearance. Then marriage, instead of being the end of love, will be, as it were, the very beginning of love. The warmth of true friendship, the love that binds heart to heart, is a foretaste of the joys of heaven. (Ellen White, *Adventist Home*, p. 106.)

Although the quote above speaks to how to be effective in marriage relationships, it has relevance to the effectiveness of encouragement in all aspects of life.

Encouragement was one of Jesus's most excellent tools to heal people. To one man crippled for 38 years sitting by the pool of Bethesda, Jesus said, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." (John 5:8-9)

The man did as Jesus said and walked away to tell the story that he was healed. To a man who cried out, "Lord, I want to see." Jesus mixed clay with some spit, put it on the man's eyes and said, "Go and wash in the pool of Siloam."

The man went and washed and received his sight (John 9:7-11). Jesus told a paralytic to "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven" (Matt 9:2). And to a woman whom He healed of a hemorrhage, He said, "Daughter, take courage; your faith has made you well" (Matt 9:22).

In effect, the ministry of Jesus was one of encouragement. He used it most effectively to help people develop their faith and to inspire their hearts.

This simple reflection encourages us to do what the apostle Paul suggests, "Encourage one another" (1 Thessalonians 5:11). This is profoundly valuable in building up one another.

Letter to the Editor

Hello Mr. Dhiren Shah,

I am a parent from Cleveland Street school in Orange, NJ. I understand the District's Superintendent, Dr. Gerald Fitzhugh's contract was extended for another 5 years. I was and am opposed as I have seen no efforts on his behalf nor the Orange School District to push Cleveland's Street School renovation. It has taken more than five with an additional 2 years towards the completion of this renovation for students who are currently at Lady of The Valley in the interim.

My two children along with the rest of the students have been subjected and expected to do their work and succeed academically in a school where the air conditioner and heater stopped working on multiple occasions, making it difficult for students and staff to focus and do their work. Their "playground and gymnasium" is a parking lot where they play and run on pavement, where my children and students have scrapped their body, be mindful of moving

cars and have their "social" time interrupted.

Most recently, my second grader's classroom projector has been malfunctioning and the entire class must work under constant eye restraint because the administrators or district is unable to provide a new one or fix the one they have. They are aware this is a problem and have not provided a date when it will be replaced. Where is the money going to if not to provide the help for students and teachers when they need it?

To make matters worse, this school's curriculum is short on specials. My fourth grader does not even get to have music as a special at all this academic semester due to teacher shortages.

Why is the district short on staff in Cleveland in particular? Is the District unable to hire new teachers or unwilling to pay teachers to benefit the overall wellbeing of the students at Cleveland? So, if the board of education considers that part of the great work Dr. Fitzhugh's has achieved, I beg to differ. I will keep fighting for my children at Cleveland Street school to get what they deserve. All schools should have the same academic and specials across the board, we be-

long to the same district, so why is Cleveland students treated differently?

Parents have traveled across town for the last five years for activities taking place and it is difficult for some parents with no transportation to get there. Students who began their journey at the Cleveland school did not return because they reached graduation and moved on. These children and teachers have endured far too long and continue to wait until 2025 for a process that should have been completed in an estimated time of a two-year period.

As a new parent who enrolled my child in 2019, I never received a letter communicating me of the status and completion of this renovation process including most recently from my requests in April, May and August 2023. This should have been his number one priority since his first year as a Superintendent to ensure students, teachers, and staff were accommodated with adequate and proper resources given their lack of space and unique situation. And now he is moving into his second term without sufficient notification from the Board to the par-

(Continued on page 15)

OFFICIALS REACT TO MENENDEZ INDICTMENT

Booker Statement on Senator Robert Menendez

“For nearly a decade, I’ve worked in the Senate alongside Senator Menendez. As New Jersey’s junior Senator, I imagine that I’ve had more professional experiences with him than most others, and I’ve witnessed his extraordinary work and boundless work ethic. I’ve consistently found Senator Menendez to be intellectually gifted, tough, passionate, and deeply empathic. We have developed a working relationship and a friendship that I value and believe has furthered our effectiveness in serving New Jersey.

“Senator Menendez is again facing a federal indictment, one that contains shocking allegations of corruption and specific, disturbing details of wrongdoing. I’ve found the allegations hard to reconcile with the person I know.

“It is not surprising to me that Senator Menendez is again determined to mount a vigorous defense. And I still believe he, like anyone involved with our criminal justice system, deserves our presumption of innocence until proven guilty. A jury of his peers will make the ultimate decision as to whether he is criminally guilty.

“There is, however, another higher standard for public officials, one not of criminal law but of common ideals. As Senators, we operate in the public trust. That trust is essential to our ability to do our work and perform our duties for our constituents.

“The details of the allegations against Senator Menendez are of such a nature that the faith and trust of New Jerseyans as well as those he must work with in order to be effective have been shaken to the core.

“As Senator Menendez prepares to mount his legal defense, he has stated that he will not resign. Senator Menendez fiercely asserts his

innocence and it is therefore understandable that he believes stepping down is patently unfair. But I believe this is a mistake.

“Stepping down is not an admission of guilt but an acknowledgment that holding public office often demands tremendous sacrifices at great personal cost. Senator Menendez has made these sacrifices in the past to serve. And in this case he must do so again. I believe stepping down is best for those Senator Menendez has spent his life serving.”

NJ Governor Phil Murphy’s Statement Calling for Bob Menendez’s resignation:

“The allegations in the indictment against Senator Menendez and four other defendants are deeply disturbing. These are serious charges that implicate national security and the integrity of our criminal justice system. Under our legal system, Senator Menendez and the other defendants have not been found guilty and will have the ability to present evidence disputing these charges, and we must respect the process. However, the alleged facts are so serious that they compromise the ability of Senator Menendez to effectively represent the people of our state. Therefore, I am calling for his immediate resignation.”

Assemblywoman Britnee Timberlake’s Statement Calling for Bob Menendez’s resignation:

“The allegations presented against Federal Senator Robert Menendez, Sr. strike at the core of our responsibilities as public servants. We are entrusted with the faith and confidence of the public, and when that trust is compromised, our ability to serve effectively is compromised as well. While I acknowledge that this indictment is an accusation and not a confirmation of guilt, and that Senator Menendez has the right to defend

ESSEX COUNTY’S RECYCLING DAY

Household Hazardous Waste

Saturday, October 7, 2023

8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Essex County Fleet Management (Public Works)
99 W. Bradford Avenue, Cedar Grove, New Jersey**

ITEMS ACCEPTED:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Herbicides | Automotive fluids (antifreeze, motor oil, steering fluids, etc.) | Mercury and products containing mercury |
| Paint thinners and solvents | Darkroom/Photographic chemicals | Gasoline/Kerosene |
| Oil based paints and stains | Lithium and NiCad batteries | Household cleaning fluids |
| Chemistry sets | Fluorescent light bulbs and ballasts | Car batteries |
| Propane tanks (barbecue type) | | Fire extinguishers (home) |
| Pool chemicals | | Driveway sealer |
| | | Aerosol spray paints |

WE WILL NOT ACCEPT:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| Latex paint | Commercial or Industrial Waste | Household batteries (AA, AAA, C, D, 9V) |
| Unlabeled or Unidentified Materials | Empty Containers | Smoke Detectors and Carbon Monoxide Alarms |
| Asbestos | Explosives, Munitions, Ordnance or Reactive Materials | |
| Regulated Medical Waste or Infectious Waste | | |

Free to all Essex County Residents. Essex County residents must provide proof of residency at the site.

NOT FOR COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES.

- ✓ Do not exit vehicle.
- ✓ Items for disposal to be placed in trunk.
- ✓ NO containers will be returned (gas cans, etc.).

For more information call **973-792-9060** or www.ecuanj.com



“There are some materials that should be removed from our regular waste stream because of their hazardous nature. This collection day provides our residents a place to properly and safely dispose of contaminants, protecting our precious environment for future generations. I encourage residents of all of our communities to come out and participate.” — Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr.

Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr., Essex County Executive, The Essex County Board of Commissioners and the Essex County Utilities Authority



himself against these charges, the allegations outlined in the recently unsealed indictment are of an exceptionally grave nature, and if substantiated, they raise a multitude of deeply concerning questions. Furthermore, this is the second time the Senator is facing federal charges in less than 10 years. I firmly believe it is in the best interest of New Jersey and our nation as a whole for him to step down without delay, allowing us to move forward with ethical transparency and leadership.”

Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin’s Statement on the Federal Indictment of Robert Menendez

“The Office of the Attorney General is aware of the details included in today’s indictment of Robert Menendez, a sitting United

States Senator for this State. The allegations are deeply disturbing to me and my Office, and we are already in the process of reviewing the concerns raised by the indictment.

“As the now unsealed indictment makes clear, there are allegations that Menendez attempted to pressure a senior member of this Office under a prior administration. The conduct alleged in the indictment occurred prior to my tenure as Attorney General, and involved a matter that was resolved prior to my time in office. My Office has cooperated fully with the Southern District of New York’s investigation. We will continue to do so. We are also engaged in our own independent internal inquiry into the allegations set forth in the indictment.

(Continued on page 15)

The Observation Booth



OP-ED By Andrea Dialect

REAL TALK OR ILLUSION?

Aura Cameras capture shots surrounded by aura rendering and by mapping human physical states to beautiful aura colors. As it delves into the very essence of participants, electrophotography dates back to the late 1800s, it is said.

Aura Identity Protection on the store shelves?

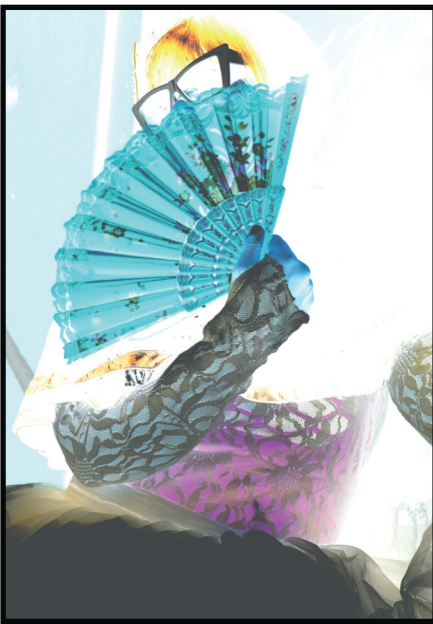
Identity theft is becoming easier among individuals, and your data is constantly at risk. Are your accounts protected? Aura has ID protection, antivirus, credit monitoring, & more! Block Spam Calls. Intelligent digital safety for the whole family, so they say!

INSIDE OUT

Spirit Beings - an incorporeal being believed to have powers to affect the course of human events. Synonym: supernatural being. (Google)

I coined this artistry INDIGLOW because a picture speaks louder. By now, we all certainly should know that. We are Spirit Beings, undoubtedly. But seemingly, a lot of folks don't know that. The first time I saw this effect, it was dead on as I was tweaking my photos. I knew that was what the real me looked like. Do a deep dive into these topics.

Undoubtedly, the photos you see here donning the page are a perfect example of our true image, spirit man. Gaze at them for a while if you'd like. Welcome to our World!



Perspectives

I do see aura. It appears like a really huge egg surrounding a person. It is all vibrating, pulsating with energy. There are also etheric cords; I saw them before I read about them. I can tell there is lots of activity going into one's aura at any time, I can't believe how much energy there is to any person. I can also feel aura with my hands. If you can see aura once - you just know it all exists.

And I still can't believe how real etheric cords are, I can just see them when looking at any person standing in front of me. It is just a truly beautiful experience knowing that there is more to us than just our physical body. The colors of aura to are really rich, some of them. I am just glad that Universe has shown me



Photos By Andrea Dialect

that there is more to this World and hopefully, I can share my experience with others in some way. (Quora.com). ...

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)

BPW for three years. Dr. Fergus or a representative will be meanwhile providing quarterly reports.

BLOOMFIELD - A celebration of Tony-winning actor Michael J. McGrath's life. McGrath, 65, who was a Laurel Avenue resident, suddenly died in his sleep Sept. 14.

McGrath - who was born Sept. 25, 1957, in Worcester, Mass., - appeared in 12 Broadway plays. He won a Tony Award in 2012 for his portrayal of Cookie McGee in "Nice Work if You Can Get it."

He also received notices for his depiction of "Patsy" in Monty Python's "Spamalot" plus similar roles in "Memphis," "Plaza Suite," "She Loves Me," "Tootsie" and "On the Twentieth Century." He also played Martin Short's sidekick in television's "The Martin Short Show." Locally, he played Ralph

Kramden in a 2017 stage revival of "The Honeymooners" at Millburn's Paper Mill Playhouse.

McGrath and wife Toni Di Buono McGrath moved here from metropolitan Boston, in the late 1990s after stints at the Worcester County Light Opera, The Foothills Theatre and Boston Conservatory of Music. He generally took roles befitting what colleague Michael Urbie called his "adorable, mischievous" nature and first took critical notice 2007's revival of "Follies."

"Very saddened to hear that Michael McGrath, our first and most beloved 'Patsy' of 'Spamalot,' has passed away," said Monty Python's Eric Idle. "Warm hugs to all the 'Spamalot' family and very happy memories of a lovely man."

Daughter Katie Claire McGrath, brothers Jay P. and Stephen F. McGrath and sisters Joan M. McGrath and Susan M. Nash are also among his survivors.

MONTCLAIR - The township administra-

tion and council recently received a report from human resources consultant CulturuPT - and if a leaked source to a reporter of the assessment is to be believed, it is not pretty.

CulturuPT, who was proposed by Mary Sean Spiller Oct. 20, 2022 and approved by the council that December, conducted a cultural and climate survey early this year among Montclair's elders, Acting Township Attorney Paul Burr, Acting/Deputy Town Manager Brian Scantlebury and employees in 205 Claremont Ave. The \$15,000 report, made in July, was based on interviews and responses of 140 of Montclair's 430 employees.

Of the responses, 65 percent said they would not recommend the Township of Montclair as a place to work. The respondents added that they feel that the Mayor and Township Council would not protect or trust them to do their jobs and were quick to blame them whenever residents complained.

Responding employees cite a leadership (Continued on page 15)

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 14)

vacuum that had developed around Scantlebury after Tom Manager Timothy Stafford's October administrative leave and April dismissal. They also cited the behavior of Siller and the Township Council in creating "a toxic culture."

Montclair Fire Department employees, who were the largest participating department, cited low morale and worker turnover among their ranks. Some also cited on how the recent promotional process was conducted.

Councilman David Cummings grouped the Cultrupt report with November's O'Toole Scrivo LLC report on racial discrimination accusations in MFD as a report as one commissioned by "the Governing Body with a predetermined outcome." He has supported on Scantlebury.

BELLEVILLE - Belleville Superintendent Dr. Richard J. Tomko confirmed at Sept 18's Board of Education Trustees meeting that his staff are back at 335 Union Ave. after a three month absence.

Tomko added that Belleville Public Schools has paid landlord Michael Melham almost \$12,600 in back rent into September. He did not say whether the staff will honor the lease's life with Melham.

BPS' Board of Education Trustees, in a 4-2 vote with one abstention, had approved leasing 335 Union Ave.'s basement and first floor in January 2021. School administrators moved into the 2.5-story mixed use commercial-residential hose from across School 3 that summer - and moved out, with no explanation given, in June 2023.

It is not known whether BPS' moving back into 335 Union Ave. will quash possible litigation Melham had been pursuing this summer against the school district.

Melham had applied an OPRA request to the Town Clerk's office to solidify a possible breach of lease suit against BPS. That breach was supposedly caused when the district had moved out in June 2023 and when it had supposedly authorized electrical contracting work without Melham's consent.

That construction work, done last summer, was authorized by the Lyndhurst construction code official. Belleville's official could not inspect or approve the work since he has a harassment and retaliation lawsuit against Mayor Michael Melham.

Melham, as "A Better Belleville" campaign manager, had aided in Trustees' Gabrielle Bennett-Meany and Ralph Tuntis's election and had contributed to Frank Velez's campaign. All three approved the lease while colleague Luis Muniz abstained.

Mayor Melham had recommended then-Guttenberg Clerk Albert Cabrera to

the Township Council to become Town Clerk. Private citizen Melham has sued Cabrera for "insufficient" responding OPRA information.

NUTLEY - Nutley Health Department Township Commissioners took another step forward in making the Nutley Health Department independent by Jan. 1 by hiring Michele O'Reilly here Set. 5.

Health Commissioner John V. Kelly III announced O'Reilly's appointment that Tuesday night as "For the first time in over two decades, Nutley now has a health officer."

O'Reilly, until recently, has been Bayonne's health officer for the last 12 years.

Kelly had given the Montclair Health Department its six months' advanced notice of leaving their interlocal shared services agreement June 8.

"We've previously contracted with other municipalities to use their health officer," said Kelly. "With the COVID pandemic, it's just more important than ever that we have our own health officer to really put Nutley first and make sure that Nutley health is a priority."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

(Continued from page 12)

ents on how we feel about his performance.

As a concerned and involved parent, I do not appreciate information being disclosed at the last minute. I have attended and spoken at the Public Board Meetings and one of my concerns for the month of May was omitted, why? Public meetings are information for the public and should be published and posted for the public to see what concerns we have. Is asking questions for him or the Board an inconvenience?

It was not until recently they posted the board minutes per my request; it is September, my questions and concerns were made in May 2023. This is unacceptable and the Board of Education need to do their job better and as head of the district he should set the standard. As a concerned parent, I demand the moving date pushed sooner than 2025 so our children feel safe, where educators can implement their lessons in their own space, welcoming parents who can easily walk to Cleveland Street and attend back to school nights, parent/teacher conference, and all activities they work so hard for us to enjoy. We all deserve that much.

I thank you, and if you need clarification, please feel free to reach out.

*Ms. A.
Orange, NJ*


REACTIONS (Continued from page 13)

"It is a privilege to hold public office in service to the people one represents. Any individual who uses their public office to enrich themselves rather than selflessly serve the public does so at great cost to the public and to all public servants. Self-serving misconduct by a public official betrays a sacred oath, corrupts faith in government, frays the delicate trust the public has in those who serve it, deprives our residents of the honest services to which they are entitled, and dishonors and undermines the good work of the countless dedicated public servants who come to work each day honoring their oaths. Plain and simple, these are not victimless crimes.

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