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25¢

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

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

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THREE STAFFERS STABBED AT NEWARK BETH ISRAEL HOSPITAL

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Photo By Thomas Ellis II

“OCCUPY NEWARK” AT CITY HALL UNDERSCORES HOUSING WORRIES

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KNOW YOUR PRODUCE & FRUITS: WHAT DOES THOSE CODED STICKERS MEAN?

By Dhiren Shah

We buy fruits and vegetables regularly. However, the majority of us buy fruits and vegetables by the looks, sizes and price. We look at the stickers with numbers on it, thinking that these numbers are barcodes for price scanning. However, there is much more to it.

Those little coded stickers on your banana or apple can help you learn more about your fruit: A 4-digit code starting with “3” or “4” means conventionally grown, while a 5-digit

one starting with “8” means it has been genetically modified, and “9” means it’s an organic product.

Most of the time we see 4-digit codes in our grocery stores. According to Consumer Reports, widely sold genetically modified foods are versions of corn, soybeans, canola, cotton, papaya, and squash. Many times, you find products with five-digit code starting with “9” on the grocery stores too, mainly specialty stores only.

LSU's JAYDEN DANIELS WINS HEISMAN TROPHY

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Photo by Marvin Chambers



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Turn To PAGE 9



Editorial
Dhiren Shah
 Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

A Texas district court judge granted a pregnant woman's request to get an abortion in the state of Texas. A Dallas-area mother found out that her fetus has trisomy 18, a genetic condition that can cause stillbirth or the death of a newborn. The court order allows her to end the pregnancy.

However, the Texas Supreme Court got a stay order reversing the district court's Dec. 7 order. Kate Cox is 20 weeks pregnant. The diagnosis is putting her health at risk.

Two times World Series champion, Vic Davalillo, who

spent 16 seasons in the major leagues and became the first Venezuelan-born player to win a Golden Glove, died on Dec. 6. He was 87 years old as per sources. God bless his soul.

They youngest professor in the world is Isaac Bari, originally from Bangladesh and now living in New York with his parents. Bari was born in 1912. He started showing exceptional skills at age 1. At the age of six in 1918, Howard University recognized him as the youngest scientist in the world. In 2021, at the age of 9 he became the youngest professor in the world, joining Ruia College of Mumbai University. Ruia College appointed him as a scientist and visiting professor of Physics.

Right now, at 11 he is still teaching at Ruia College in Mumbai. He is nominated for a

Nobel prize. He said, "My father caught my fascination, and he started teaching me math and science." He further said, "You need to find what you like doing. For me, that was math and science, not other subjects." Isn't this a great story of a gifted and talented child!

Japanese baseball superstar Shohei Ohtani has signed a record-breaking contract of \$700 million dollars for 10 years to play baseball with the Los Angeles Dodgers. The news was broken on ESPN and many whispered, "Wow." Some were happy and some said that it is too much. This is the highest contract for any sport. Someone asked me my opinion. I think he may deserve it. However, giving this large contract means more money out of pocket from the fans. The contracts with the TV channels will

be high, the tickets of the games will be high and the refreshments at the stadium will be costlier. Always indirectly, the fans will end up paying and few sports greats will enjoy their lifetime, even if they fail. Also, the fruits will go to his heirs for a few generations.

Biden vs. Trump contest polls show that Trump is gaining a lead over Biden. A few weeks ago, the average lead for Trump was 1.6 points and now it is 2.4 points according to realclearpolitics.com. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. recently changed for the democratic primary to independent candidate, and might take away a few of Biden's votes.

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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FDA APPROVES FIRST GENE THERAPIES TO TREAT PATIENTS WITH SICKLE CELL DISEASE

FDA - On Dec. 8, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved two milestone treatments, Casgevy and Lyfgenia, representing the first cell-based gene therapies for the treatment of sickle cell disease (SCD) in patients 12 years and older. Additionally, one of these therapies, Casgevy, is the first FDA-approved treatment to utilize a type of novel genome editing technology, signaling an innovative advancement in the field of gene therapy.

Sickle cell disease is a group of inherited blood disorders affecting approximately 100,000 people in the U.S. It is most common in African Americans and, while less prevalent, also affects Hispanic Americans. The primary problem in sickle cell disease is a mutation in hemoglobin, a protein found in red blood cells that delivers oxygen to the body's tissues. This mutation causes red blood cells to develop a crescent or "sickle" shape. These sickled

red blood cells restrict the flow in blood vessels and limit oxygen delivery to the body's tissues, leading to severe pain and organ damage called vaso-occlusive events (VOEs) or vaso-occlusive crises (VOCs). The recurrence of these events or crises can lead to life-threatening disabilities and/or early death.

"Sickle cell disease is a rare, debilitating and life-threatening blood disorder with significant unmet need, and we are excited to advance the field especially for individuals whose lives have been severely disrupted by the disease by approving two cell-based gene therapies today," said Nicole Verdun, M.D., director of the Office of Therapeutic Products within the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research. "Gene therapy holds the promise of delivering more targeted and effective treatments, especially for individuals with rare diseases where the current

treatment options are limited."

Casgevy, a cell-based gene therapy, is approved for the treatment of sickle cell disease in patients 12 years of age and older with recurrent vaso-occlusive crises. Casgevy is the first FDA-approved therapy utilizing CRISPR/Cas9, a type of genome editing technology. Patients' hematopoietic (blood) stem cells are modified by genome editing using CRISPR/Cas9 technology.

CRISPR/Cas9 can be directed to cut DNA in targeted areas, enabling the ability to accurately edit (remove, add, or replace) DNA where it was cut. The modified blood stem cells are transplanted back into the patient where they engraft (attach and multiply) within the bone marrow and increase the production of fetal hemoglobin (HbF), a type of hemoglobin that facilitates oxygen delivery. In patients with sickle cell disease, increased levels of HbF prevent the sickling of red blood cells.

Lyfgenia is a cell-based gene therapy. Lyfgenia uses a lentiviral vector (gene delivery vehicle) for genetic modification and is approved for the treatment of patients 12 years of age and older with sickle cell disease and a history of vaso-occlusive events. With Lyfgenia, the patient's blood stem cells are genetically modified to produce HbAT87Q, a gene-therapy derived hemoglobin that functions similarly to hemoglobin A, which is the normal adult hemoglobin produced in persons not affected by sickle cell disease. Red blood cells containing HbAT87Q have a lower risk of sickling and occluding blood flow. These modified stem cells are then delivered to the patient.

Both products are made from the patients' own blood stem cells, which are modified, and are given back as a one-time, single-dose infusion as

part of a hematopoietic (blood) stem cell transplant. Prior to treatment, a patient's own stem cells are collected, and then the patient must undergo myeloablative conditioning (high-dose chemotherapy), a process that removes cells from the bone marrow so they can be replaced with the modified cells in Casgevy and Lyfgenia. Patients who received Casgevy or Lyfgenia will be followed in a long-term study to evaluate each product's safety and effectiveness.

"These approvals represent an important medical advance with the use of innovative cell-based gene therapies to target potentially devastating diseases and improve public health," said Peter Marks, M.D., Ph.D., director of the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research. "Today's actions follow rigorous evaluations of the scientific and clinical data needed to support approval, reflecting the FDA's commitment to facilitating development of safe and effective treatments for conditions with severe impacts on human health."

Data Supporting Casgevy

The safety and effectiveness of Casgevy were evaluated in an ongoing single-arm, multi-center trial in adult and adolescent patients with SCD. Patients had a history of at least two protocol-defined severe VOCs during each of the two years prior to screening. The primary efficacy outcome was freedom from severe VOC episodes for at least 12 consecutive months during the 24-month follow-up period. A total of 44 patients were treated with Casgevy. Of the 31 patients with sufficient follow-up time to be evaluable, 29 (93.5%) achieved this outcome. All treated patients achieved successful engraftment with no patients

(Continued on page 5)

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SPORTS WRAP



Photos by Marvin Chambers



By William Hathaway, Jr.

Last Saturday, the 2023 Heisman Trophy ceremony took place in New York City with plenty of excitement to determine the best player in college football. LSU quarterback Jayden Daniels overcame being outside the College Football

Jr., while Oregon QB Bo Nix from Oregon finished third and Ohio State WR Marvin Harrison, Jr. was fourth.

The two top collegiate teams in the tri-state went head to head in the annual Hardwood Classic at the Prudential Center. In a Big East vs. Big Ten clash, Rutgers came out the victor at



All four Heisman candidates pose with the trophy

Playoff with a prolific season that Heisman voters could not be ignore. Daniels won the Heisman Trophy, becoming the first player since 2016 to win the award outside of the Playoff.

Daniels received 503 first place votes and 2,029 points overall. The runner up was Washington QB Michael Penix

the end, beating Seton Hall 70-63. Jamichael Davis gave RU with 11 points and 6 assists, Mawot Mag had 8 rebounds and Cliff Omoruyi had 11 points, 13 rebounds and 7 blocked shots and Noah Fernandes led the scoring with 19 points. Leading SHU was Kadary Richmond with 21 points and 9 rebounds.



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SICKLE CELL THERAPY

(Cont. from page 4)

experiencing graft failure or graft rejection.

The most common side effects were low levels of platelets and white blood cells, mouth sores, nausea, musculoskeletal pain, abdominal pain, vomiting, febrile neutropenia (fever and low white blood cell count), headache and itching.

Data Supporting Lyfgenia

The safety and effectiveness of Lyfgenia is based on the analysis of data from a single-arm, 24-month multicenter study in patients with sickle cell disease and history of VOEs between the ages of 12- and 50- years old. Effectiveness was evaluated based on complete resolution of VOEs (VOE-CR) between 6 and 18 months after infusion with Lyfgenia. Twenty-eight (88%) of 32 patients achieved VOE-CR during this time period.

The most common side effects included stomatitis (mouth sores of the lips, mouth, and throat), low levels of platelets, white blood cells, and red blood cells, and febrile neutropenia (fever and low white blood cell count), consistent with chemotherapy and underlying disease.

Hematologic malignancy (blood cancer) has occurred in patients treated with Lyfgenia. A black box warning is included in the label for Lyfgenia with information regarding this risk. Patients receiving this product should have lifelong monitoring for these malignancies.

Both the Casgevy and Lyfgenia applications received Priority Review, Orphan Drug, Fast Track and Regenerative Medicine Advanced Therapy designations.

The FDA granted approval of Casgevy to Vertex Pharmaceuticals Inc. and approval of Lyfgenia to Bluebird Bio Inc.



UNITED STATES



PRESIDENTS OF UNIVERSITIES GRILLED OVER ANTISEMITISM

This past week, leaders of some of the nation’s most prestigious institutions of higher education were called to Capitol Hill, and left with calls for their resignations.

On Dec. 5, the presidents of Harvard, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the University of Pennsylvania spoke before members of the House on why incidents of anti-semitic behavior have exploded since the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks in Israel. Within the line of questions they faced, there was one that produced some baffling answers.

When House Republican Conference Chair Elise Stefanik (R-NY) asked presidents Claudine Gay (Harvard), Sally Kornbluth (MIT) and Liz Magill (UPenn) if statements calling for the genocide of Jews would violate their respective universities codes of conduct, all three refused to say “no” but rather spoke on free speech instead.

The outrage over the evasive answers was so severe that both Republicans and Democrats began calling for resignations of the three women, and big time donors threatened to pull their funds. Amid the pressure, Gay issued an apology over her remarks, while Magill resigned from her post on Dec. 9. MIT meanwhile has stood behind its president Kornbluth.

Upon Magill’s resignation, Stefanik released the following statement:

“One down. Two to go. This is only the very beginning of addressing the pervasive rot of antisemitism that has destroyed the most ‘prestigious’ higher education institutions in America.

“This forced resignation of the President of Penn is the bare minimum of what is required.

“These universities can anticipate a robust and comprehensive Congressional investigation of all facets of their institutions’ negligent perpetration of anti-semitism including administrative, faculty, and overall leadership and governance.

“Harvard and MIT, do the right thing. The world is watching.

“In the case of Harvard, President Gay was asked by me 17 times whether calling for the genocide of Jews violates Harvard’s code of conduct. She spoke her truth 17 times. And the world heard.

“In the case of MIT, Dr. Kornbluth answered the question. ‘If targeted at individuals’ is dehumanizing the Jewish people in her answer.”

MASS SHOOTING UPDATE

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

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

- Total Mass Shootings: 723
- Total Dead: 882
- Total Wounded: 2867
- Shootings Per Day: 2.09
- Days Reached in Year 2023 as of Dec. 5: 339

MIDDLE EAST



UN STILL SEEKS CEASEFIRE

The UN Secretary-General on Dec. 10 pledged that he would “not give up” on appealing for a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza, adding that inaction on the Security Council was undermining its credibility.

“The preeminent forum for the peaceful resolution of international disputes is paralyzed by geostrategic divisions,” António Guterres told the Doha Forum

taking place in Qatar, following Friday’s meeting in New York during which the United States vetoed a resolution demanding that Israel and Palestinian militants end the intense fighting across the enclave which erupted on Oct. 7 with the Hamas terror attacks.

“I urged the Security Council to press to avert a humanitarian catastrophe and I reiterated my appeal for a humanitarian ceasefire to be declared,” said the UN chief.

“Regrettably the Security Council failed to do it but that does not make it less necessary. So, I can promise I will not give up,” he told delegates to the global platform in Qatar, which brings world leaders together to discuss collective security and other challenges.

He said a sclerotic Security Council where splits between the permanent members, China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the US have produced only one resolution narrowly focused on aid delivery, needed reform.

“We need a serious effort to bring global structures up to date, rooted in equality and solidarity and based on the United Nations Charter and international law,” he said, noting that the Council’s divisions were “undermining solutions from Ukraine to Myanmar and the Middle East.”

The horrific terror attacks by Hamas and resulting “relentless bombardment” of Gaza, have only produced a single resolution “which I welcome. But that delay comes at a cost”, he added. “And the resolution is not being implemented.”

Also addressing the conference in Qatar, the head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said the dehumanization of Palestinians has allowed the international community to tolerate Israel’s continued bombardment of Gaza, which has led to more than 17,000 deaths since Oct. 7.

“There is no doubt that a humanitarian ceasefire is needed if we want to put an end to hell of earth right now in Gaza,” said Philippe Lazzarini.

UNITED KINGDOM TRACKING SWINE FLU STRAIN

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has published its investigation findings on a recent case of influenza A (H1N2)v. The case was detected as part of routine national flu surveillance undertaken by UKHSA and the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP).

The virus was identified by UKHSA on Nov. 23 using genome sequencing, the first time a human case of this particular virus has been confirmed in the UK.

Rapid work has been underway to learn more about the virus and its characteristics, including how it may have been acquired and whether it may have spread.

There remains only one human case of influenza A(H1N2) v in England. The case was an otherwise well person over 75 years of age, who has recovered fully.

Although the virus is similar to those detected in pigs in England and the case lives in a region containing pig farms, no direct contact between the case and any animal was reported.

No further cases have been detected through investigations, including follow-up of contacts to date and enhanced surveillance through local GP practices and hospital trusts.

Enhanced surveillance will continue over the coming weeks as a precaution.

UKHSA Incident Director Dr Meera Chand said: “This is the first time we have detected this virus in humans in the UK. Since the virus was confirmed, we have been working rapidly to learn more about it and how it might have been acquired.

“Investigations to date have not identified any further human cases and sporadic cases of influenza from swine viruses are known to occur.

“The identification of this case highlights the importance of our flu surveillance and genomic sequencing in helping us to identify and learn more about new viruses.”



THREE STAFFERS STABBED AT NEWARK BETH ISRAEL HOSPITAL

By Thomas Ellis II

We are quickly approaching the end of the 2023 year with Christmas coming really soon, and there's already been several violent incidents throughout the city of Newark.

On December 8th close to 7 am, three employees of Beth Israel Hospital in Newark were stabbed by 37-year-old Firdousi A. Abdul-Hakim. She was visiting someone at the hospital when an argument issued. During the dispute, she stabbed two nurses and a male medical worker.

It's not clear where she got the weapon from that was used in the stabbings, or if she brought a weapon or sharp object into the hospital with her during her visitation. Nonetheless, it's heartbreaking when you have hospital staff being injured on the job due to violence or to someone with a violent nature.

One of the things we all have to realize is that violence solves nothing. As a matter of fact, when you commit a violent act, you only make it worst for yourself and the others that you harm.

This past Sunday night, there was a shooting in the Ironbound section. No injuries were reported, but shell casings were recov-

ered by the Newark Police Department.

Another shooting happened in the North Ward around 11:30 pm in the area of 555 Mt Prospect Avenue. The NPD was questioning one person in regard to the shooting incident.

In the South Ward of the city, the police are looking for suspects that strong armed and carjacked the male driver of the after an argument and altercation took place with the suspects physically assaulting the driver and taking his car.

Also, on Saturday night, December 9th there was a shooting in the area of Fairmont Cemetery on South 18th Street. Later that evening, someone entered a hospital with multiple gunshot wounds, believed to have come from the Fairmont Cemetery incident.

These are just a few stories of the violence that has been taking place in the city over the past few days. Please people, be proactive and be safe. Check your surroundings, watch out for one another, and let's begin to enjoy the holidays.

Let's shed tears of joy instead of tears of pain. The tears of joy can make a person's day, while the tears of pain hurts many, many people. BE SAFE.

SNAP AND WFNJ CLIENTS ENCOURAGED TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM ELECTRONIC THEFT

ESSEX COUNTY - Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr. is asking clients who receive benefits electronically through the Essex County Division of Family Assistance and Benefits to be careful when using their EBT cards and protect themselves from having their benefits stolen.

"At the beginning of this month, we have experienced a greater number of clients who are reporting that their benefits have been stolen electronically and requesting a reimbursement. Our Division of Family Assistance and Benefits is reviewing

every claim and re-issuing funds when our investigation concludes the money has fraudulently been taken from their accounts. Our clients depend on these resources to feed their families and we take this process very seriously," DiVincenzo said. The County Executive added that the results of the investigations are shared with Federal and State law enforcement, and those found stealing can face Federal charges.

Clients who have had their New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (NJ SNAP) and/or Work First New



Family Support Organization of Essex County (FSOEC) offers support groups and workshops for parents and caregivers of children with special needs. You're not on this journey alone!

DECEMBER 20: New Family Welcome Group meets 6:30 p.m. monthly on 1st and 3rd Wednesdays is for caregivers to learn their guided journey. We introduce our organization, team, and services.

DECEMBER 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.

JANUARY 2: Nurtured Heart Approach meets 6:30 p.m. monthly on 1st Tuesdays for English and Spanish-speaking parents to connect and address their concerns, questions, and feelings about raising a child with special needs.

JANUARY 9: 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.

Our activities occur on Zoom and in person, visit our website for the details: <https://bit.ly/fsoeevents>

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Jersey (WFNJ) cash assistance benefits stolen electronically and need replacement benefits, must complete a "Request For Replacement Of Electronically Stolen Benefits Form (EBT-20)" and return it to Essex County Board of Social Services/ Division of Family Assistance and Benefits (DFAB). Clients are allowed a maximum of two reimbursements for stolen benefits.

The EBT-20 form can be accessed at <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/dfd/resources/stolen/>

If clients would like assistance to complete the form, they can visit the DFAB office in person at 320-321 University Avenue in Newark or call 973-395-8000.

Clients must complete and return this form to DFAB within 30 days of discovering that their benefits were stolen, and they must immediately change their PIN or replace their EBT card.

DiVincenzo said clients

should protect themselves from becoming victims of electronic theft by:

- Monitoring the balance on their cards
- Frequently changing their PIN and making the new PIN significantly different than the original one
- Not sharing their PIN with anyone else
- Not telling a store clerk or check out person their PIN

If they suspect a business or person is stealing benefits or committing fraud, they can report that to the NJ State Department of Human Services by:

- Calling 800-792-9773 select option 5
- Sending e-mail to DFD-Fraud.Tips@dhs.nj.gov
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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

Two schools were locked down late Dec. 5 while Newark Police directives investigated a shooting that left a woman injured.

The first NPD officer had responded to the intersection of Sussex Avenue and Norfolk Street on a gunfire report there at 3:20 p.m. that Tuesday. Officers found a woman with a gunshot to her leg.

The victim and witnesses said that three males had drawn guns and began firing multiple times before they had fled. Several shell casings were found at the scene.

The woman, who was taken to a local hospital, suffered non-life-threatening injury and is expected to fully recover.

Officers asked the main offices of KIPP: Lab High School, 29 Norfolk St., and the Marion P. Thomas Charter School, 125 Sussex Ave., to lock themselves and their buildings down while they searched for the shooters and conducted their field investigation. Traffic, including buses on NJTransit's No. 99 route, were temporarily detoured.

The gun firing males remain at large.

IRVINGTON

Morris County authorities

said that they had an Irvington woman extradited from Middlebury, Fla. Nov. 2 to the Morris County Jail in connection with an Oct. 18 armed robbery and assault at a Roxbury motel.

Morris County Prosecutor Robert G. Carroll, Morris County Sheriff James Gannon and Roxbury Police Chief Dean Adone said, on Dec. 5, that they have Auraceli A. Maldonado, 24, in custody. They said she was one half of a couple who robbed and shot a man on the Roxbury Motel Oct. 18.

Adone said that his officers were called to the motel at Route 46 and 10 LedgeWood Circle at 8:54 p.m. They met a 36-year-old man with a severe gunshot wound to one of his legs and performed lifesaving first aid.

The victim was admitted to a local hospital for the serious but non-life-threatening injury. The man said he was expecting to meet someone on the lot when a Honda Accord with New York license plates pulled up.

A man and a woman got out of the car - the latter holding "an AR-style rifle." The pair started to rob him, a struggle ensued, and the victim was shot in the leg. Motel video footage identified the New York Honda; Maldonado was linked to the car after an East Hanover camera spotted the easterly Accord on Route 10.

Maldonado has been charged and is being held on first-degree armed robbery and second degree aggravated assault and possessing a weapon for an unlawful purpose. She is to have a pre-trial hearing Jan. 9.

The male in the robbery and assault remains at large. Information may be sent to the Morris County Prosecutor's Office: (973) 285-6200.

EAST ORANGE

An autopsy is being conducted on the body of a city man who was found dead here in Watsessing Park Dec. 7.

The Essex County Sheriff's Office said its patrol officers were told of a body found in Wigwam Brook near Dodd

Street at 5:38 p.m. that Thursday. County Sheriff's officers patrol Watsessing Park's 69 acres in East Orange and Bloomfield like they do in other Essex County Parks.

Wigwam Brook, whose headwaters is in West Orange, flows through Orange's North Ward and East Orange's Doddtown and Franklin sections before joining Tony's Brook in Bloomfield's part of the park. It becomes The Second River, which continues east through Bloomfield and Belleville before its confluence with the Passaic River.

The body was identified as Frank Vergilio, 68. The State Regional Medical Office, before taking his body to its Newark morgue for autopsy, declared him dead at the scene at 7:24 p.m.

ECPO Homicide and Major Crimes Task Force Detectives did not say at the time whether foul play was involved.

ORANGE

The late civil servant and entrepreneur Maxie McRimmon was eulogized here at Woody's Home for Services Dec. 6 as not being "a perfect man but a good man."

McRimmon, 90, had died here Nov. 26. Born Maxie Andrew McRimmon here Aug. 7, 1933, he had lived here all his life except for his studies at West Virginia State College and his hitch with the U.S. Army.

The Orange High School Class of 1951 graduate also graduated from WVSC in 1955 before serving Uncle Sam. Lt. McRimmon returned to Orange in 1963 and joined the city government as a 23-year Zoning Officer before retiring.

The one time city construction code officer was also appointed at different times to the Orange Board of Education, Orange Housing Authority and Orange Alcohol beverage Control Board.

McRimmon started and ran McRimmon Associates Tax Preparation from 192 Reynolds Terr. and McRimmon & Son

Mason Contractors.

Wife Otris Smith McRimmon, sons Martin and Philip, daughter Pamela, nine grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren are among his survivors. Daughter Maxine and sister Etta had predeceased him.

WEST ORANGE

County authorities have not released the names of the two men who were killed when their utility truck plunged into the Rahway River East Branch here Nov. 28.

Township fire and police crews were dispatched to the culvert north of Northfield Avenue at about 8:17 a.m. that Tuesday. They found a small utility truck from Universal Electric Motor Service, of Hackensack, had fallen head on into the riverbed.

West Orange police officers promptly closed Northfield between Hutton and Rollinson streets for what would be all day. NJTransit's No. 73 buses were among the detoured traffic.

Police also called for the ECPO Accident Investigation Unit. Township firefighters called for Nutley Hazmat and for a contracted heavy duty tow truck.

It is not known when the truck's driver and passenger were declared dead at the scene. An initial investigation has the truck traveling west on Northfield losing control and cutting across 95-99 Northfield's parking lot before crashing through a wooden boundary fence. Some authorities believe that the driver may have had a medical emergency.

There is no mention of the mishap or of the lost employees on Universal's Website or Facebook page.

SOUTH ORANGE / MAPLEWOOD

A South Essex Fire Department engine crew had a busy Nov. 22 morning, beginning with helping pump out water

(Continued on page 12)



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“OCCUPY NEWARK” AT CITY HALL UNDERSCORES HOUSING WORRIES

By *Walter Elliott*

NEWARK - Only time will tell how effective Dec. 1's "Occupy Newark" has had on the discourse and activity on Newark's affordable housing crises.

A handful of activists and protestors encamped on Newark City Hall's front steps at midnight Dec. 1, intending to stay there for a full 24 hours.

"Wake up!" cried one person with a bull horn in the predawn of that Friday morning. "Gentrification is real! Occupy Newark 2023 is on City Hall steps right now. "If we can't live here shut this thing down."

Occupy Newark 2023 organizer Muta El-Amin explained that they were spotlighting housing injustice in New Jersey's largest city. They were taking issue with what Mayor Ras Baraka's administration has cited

as declines in homelessness figures the preceding week.

Their demands included "an immediate meeting" with the Newark Housing Authority and Mayor's Office of Homeless Services Director Luis Ulerio and an updated housing resource packet for those on the verge of eviction or homelessness.

"Us speaking about these issues is the only way we bring about change," said El-Amin, a former sanitation worker, "and the only way this conversation makes it to the dinner table."

Newark Water Coalition Executive Director Anthony Diaz supported Occupy Newark 2023. He said the occupation of city steps came in the wake of the recent protests held on the same steps over the Israeli-Hamas war. Diaz added that Mayor Baraka had the power to reinstate a moratorium on rent in-

creases like he had during the COVID pandemic.

"The housing crisis - brought on by years of gentrification, displacement, overdevelopment - has really pushed the city to a crisis point," said Diaz. "It has pushed many cities into a crisis point. The thing that makes Newark so unique in this situation is we have a Democratic mayor and a Democratic governor."

Diaz, who founded the Newark Water Coalition during the city's 2018-21 lead water pipe replacement crisis, referred to a Nov. 15 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development audit report on the NHA. The report, as presented by NHA Executive Director Leonard J. Spicer at the agency's Nov. 16 Board of Commissioners meeting, found that it had an 87 percent occupancy rate - or 13 per-

cent vacancy rate.

"The housing stock within NHA," said Diaz, "is enough to really house people and house them affordably."

Occupy Newark 2023 is a reminder of earlier occupations, starting with the 2011 encampment in Military Park. That was in turn based on Sept. 17 - Nov. 15, 2011's Occupy Wall Street. OWS, launched by Adbusters, encamped in Zuccotti Park in New York City's Financial Section.

Occupy Newark 2023 was a push back on what city officials consider as a decline on homelessness. Mayor Baraka, for example, said on Nov. 28 that the city's population of "unsheltered" homeless had declined 57.6 percent Oct. 31 from that time last year.

(Continued on page 13)



*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. Im-

agine 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.

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 10)

from Boyden Avenue Elementary School's basement.

The engine crew made the near instantaneous trip from their station at 249 Boyden Ave. to the school at 274 Boyden upon a South Orange-Maplewood School District maintenance worker's 7 a.m. call.

The employee directed the crew to the basement's boiler room. The worker, who had just checked in that morning, found that water runoff from the overnight heavy rain had collected to where it was reaching the room's electrical wiring.

Firefighters and the employee called PSE&E at 7:15 a.m. to cut power to the school building. Acting SOMSD Superintendent of Schools Kevin Gilbert, for the lack of heat and lighting, ordered the Boyden School closed for the day at 7:20 a.m.

The fire engine crew helped pump out

water until an SOMSD Facilities Department -contracted plumbing company arrived and took over the plumbing. The Boyden School reopened for normal classes Nov. 27, thanks to the holiday period work done by Troller Electric, Aramark Custodial Services, United Welding and Plumbing and Kelin Heating and Air Conditioning.

The same engine crew later joined colleagues from Irvington, Newark and Orange in responding to an alarm call from Irvington Housing Authority's Camptown Gardens tower at 624 Nye Ave., Irvington. Although no evacuation was called, the cause of the alarm call and mutual aid has not been stated.

NOTE: The Maplewood Police Department is looking for the person / persons who scrawled graffiti on banners planted on the front lawn of Cong. Beth Ephraim. A worker discovered the vandalism at 113 Parker Ave. at 6:15 a.m. Dec. 8 and called MPD.

BLOOMFIELD

A dog is still alive thanks in part to swift action by first responders from four municipal agencies here at Brookdale Gardens apartment complex Nov. 19.

Firefighters from Bloomfield's Brookdale Fire Station responded to a building fire call from 935 Broad St at about 9 a.m. They found heavy smoke coming out from one of the two-story brick garden apartment buildings set back from the avenue. Its residents had self-evacuated and were accounted for - except for a dog.

The incident commander directed his firefighters to search for the dog while they knocked down the fire. The commander called for mutual aid; Bloomfield Volunteer Fire Rescue 1, Bloomfield police, Belleville and Nutley fire and EMS from Bloomfield and Glen Ridge responded.

(Continued on page 14)

REGISTRATION UNDERWAY FOR SPRING 2024 SEMESTER AT ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE

Registration for the Spring I 2024 Semester at Essex County College is underway. The College's Spring I Semester starts Wednesday, January 10, 2024. Spring I classes run through April 27, 2024. Weekend College classes will be held from January 12 to April 27, 2024.

Classes will be held on both the Newark and recently reopened West Essex (West Caldwell) campuses. There will also be virtual on Zoom, hybrid (a mix of virtual and Zoom sessions), and independent online classes offered.

"We are confident that you will find courses that will fit into your schedule at Essex. One

Great College, Two Great Campuses! Our goal is to offer a variety of courses that allow you to continue your educational pursuits," said Dr. Alvin Williams, Executive Dean of Faculty and Academics.

For more information please click on this link: <https://www.essex.edu/registration/>.

Students may qualify for free tuition through the state Community College Opportunity Grant program. Go to <https://www.essex.edu/tuitionfree/> to see how to qualify. Additional registration information is available through the College's Welcome Center at 973-877-4477.

"Essex County College of-



fers more than 50 Associate degree programs and Academic Certificates in a wide range of disciplines. Essex graduates transfer as juniors to many New Jersey colleges and universities, as well as top schools around the country. Register early to get the classes you want," stated Dr. Williams.

"Essex County College is celebrating 55 years of student success as we provide high quality and affordable educational opportunities. Our many support services help students stay on track to graduate and realize their dreams," said ECC's President, Dr. Augustine A. Boakye.

OCCUPY NEWARK

(Continued from page 11)

The city's figures have 3,841 unsheltered people - those who live on the streets or have no addresses - from Oct. 31, 2022 down to 1,627 on the same date this year.

Homeless Services Director Ulerio, sometimes called "Newark's Homelessness Czar," said that the figures came from the state's Homeless Management Information System. Ulerio, on Nov. 29, said that he was extracting a total number of Newark's homeless from the state's figures.

Although agencies who provide from the homeless across the state use HMIS data, it is not known whether they use figures from Essex County's annual survey. That overnight census consistently ranks Newark as having 1,000-plus homeless - far and away above the county's other 21 municipalities.

Newark having that dubious top rank makes sense when one considers the city's size. It is New Jersey's largest municipality in terms of its 280,000 population. Its 26 square miles is the largest Essex County town. It would therefore have more resources than its county sister towns and cities.

Baraka, Newark Economic and Housing Development Deputy Mayor Alison Ladd and members of the Mayor's Public Information Office credit the following for their part of the homelessness decline:

- Creating the Office of Tenant Legal Services to provide legal representation in landlord-tenant evictions and in combating corporate LLCs from buying houses for rental conversion.
- Ensuring that new developments include affordable housing units with the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance.
- Offering residents first choice the first 90 days new affordable housing is offered.
- Allowing residents' use of Section 8 Homeowners Conversion Program rental vouchers to buy homes.
- Selling homes from the city's Land Bank for \$1.
- Providing buyers of homes to be rehabilitated with low-cost mortgages

Ladd, on Nov. 28, advised residents to visit City Hall Room 111.

"Come to City Hall. We can help you person-to-person," said Ladd. "You don't have to use the Internet if you don't want to."

There may be more improvements from the NHA, depending on how they respond to the USHUD audit.

NHA Executive Director Spicer, who came aboard Oct. 30, said that USHUD gave a zero score on its management. The federal agency was looking for a 93-percent occupancy rate.

"We need to make sure we're leasing our units," said Spicer. Having 87 percent occupancy isn't acceptable in a community

where we have thousands of people who need housing."

NHA also received a zero score in finance for failing to send USHUD its audits in a timely manner, causing the former to ask for filing extensions. The feds, indeed, may be coming to NHA's 500 Broad St. headquarters in January to see the audits for themselves.

NHA scored five out of 10 points in capital funds - where it needed to pass at 60 percent. The agency was found to not spend its federal grant funds in a timely manner.

"You've two years to obligate the money," said Spicer, "and another two years to actually spend the money."

The NHA scored 22 out of 40 points in physical conditions. The federal focus was on unit interiors, including plumbing and electrical systems.

"We're going to have to invest capital dollars into ensuring that we've preventative maintenance plans, that our property managers as well as our maintenance staff are doing annual inspections," said Spicer.

The NHA is the city's largest public housing agency with considerable clout. It houses 40,000 people - slightly more than to Newark Public Schools' student enrollment - or 16,000 families.

Only 25 percent of Newark's residents, however, are homeowners. The City, under the Baraka Administration, has been attracting luxury apartment construction with 30-year Payments in Lieu of Taxes or tax abatements. Developers are required

to meet affordable housing and inclusionary zoning conditions.

The luxury housing boom has increased the median sale price from \$180,000 in 2015, according to the Redfin real estate website, to \$433,000 in May. The median gross monthly rent, however, has gone up 24 percent from 2011 to \$1,167 in 2021.

A 2021 Rutgers Law School Center on Law, Inequality and Metropolitan Equity found that the median affordable housing unit is going for \$763 per month - \$600 less than what USHUD considers fair market value.

"We're stronger today," said Ladd, "but we have to be more equitable and inclusive."

Community activist Munirah El-Bomani considers the week of data, "Putting a Band-Aid on a deep cut.

"You've got to go to landlord-tenant court," said El-Bomani. "People are being put out every day."

The county's filings for its landlord-tenant court here had 3,119 filings in August, more than doubling the 1,510 filings in August 2022. Part of the increase is in the wake of the state's lifting of eviction and foreclosure filings once the COVID pandemic subsided. It takes about two years for foreclosure and eviction processes to run their courses.

Listed above figures do not take into account inflation, increases in mortgage rates and USHUD's withdrawal from constructing public housing.

(Continued on page 15)

The Observation Booth



OP-ED By Andrea Dialect

DON'T START NUTHIN, WON'T BE NUTHIN!

For survival tactics, stay on them toes like a ballerina does. Grab naughty & hug em' so tight that they pant for air. Even better, give them a welcome like you just set eyes on kin returning home from a year's journey, and don't ya take no for an answer! You'll watch their plans go right out of the window. If not, you'll have plenty of time to peep them out and/or do a quick dip. Be sure to wave goodbye during the getaway. I'm just saying. Lol!

(OBSERVANT - QUICK TO NOTICE THINGS.)

WHERE'S THEIR HEADS AT?

"What would you do if the person attempting to murder you in your home at that moment was your own child?" I asked my audience. Would you protect yourself, and how would you defend yourself if it meant the death for either of you? If you could have only seen the looks that donned those faces. The response I got was shocking. But their rebuttal goes beyond even that & darling, that's another story! My response? "Be rational!"

YOU WON'T BELIEVE THIS ONE

You will not believe what happened that evening during my stroll. So, there I was, walking and humming along, doing my usual me thing, when I spotted a car sitting on the corner. I give it a once over and a continuous glance back a few times before turning that corner.

When I get around the corner, I notice two people walking



Photos By Andrea Dialect



ahead. Both were moving at a somewhat slow pace. The guy stops short, bends down, and fiddles with his shoe. I noticed he hadn't done anything to his shoe besides moving his fingers across them several times. How did I know? Because I was watching him.

As I passed, I said, "Heeey!" He says, "Hey!" When in front of him as he's getting up. As I looked back, I said, "You alright?" He says, "Yeah!" I smile, and I smile again. Then, as I walked at a faster pace, I passed the woman who had been ahead of the both of us. I looked back several times afterward, and both were lagging quite a distance.

Shortly after, I heard a scream! The woman had been robbed at knifepoint by Mr. Mister. His getaway? The person in the car that was parked around the corner. The woman told me that she was okay. She said that she didn't know that he was there. She said that she wished I had told her. "ME" I asked. (Mind you, this woman is around sixty, give or take.)

How do you walk around in today's world with all that's go-

ing on and not pay attention to what's going on around you? I asked. When you walk, you should constantly look around you. When people approach from behind, either cross the street or stop and let them pass, depending on the circumstances. That being location, time, distance, if you are alone, if they are with someone or several others. Suppose it's late, super early. No one in sight for miles, etc.! ...

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 12)

BFD Fire Chief Louis Venezia said that firefighters found the canine in a second floor apartment. They brought it outside and, with a pet mask, administered oxygen. The dog was then taken to an emergency vet, where it is recovering.

Although fire damage was quickly contained to the affected building, neighboring apartments suffered some smoke damage. The cause is being investigated by BFD.

Brookdale Gardens, built in 1950, is a series of two-story buildings holding 459 apartments.

MONTCLAIR

Montclair may have been unique in "Local Talk" land for allowing their part-time colleges to be enrolled for full-time

health benefits - but a Dec. 4 report has the township not unique statewide.

Readers may recall that Montclair CFO Padmajo Rao had inquired with then-Town Manager Timothy Stafford in 2021 on whether its mayors and council members elected after the township joined the State Health Benefits Program in 2017.

SHBP, since its 2010 creation, allows elected officials to join the program so long as the said officials work at least 35 hours a week. Municipalities were providing up to \$35,000 coverage for an official's family or, should an individual decline, get a check for up to \$5,000. They cannot come aboard SHBP if their job descriptions make them part-time or volunteer.

Rao alerted Stafford that eight of Montclair's elected officers either accepted payments in lieu of declining to join SHBP or for signing on - even though they were or are part-timers. SHBP, she calculated, had

paid \$454,000 in benefits since 2017.

The overall \$454,000 went out to former and current mayors Robert Jackson and Sean Spiller, former councilmen Peter Yacobellis and Richard McMahon and current councilors Lori Price Abrams, David Cummings, William Hurlock and Robin Schlager. (Spiller was later elected NJEA teachers union president as his full-time day job.)

The report found Montclair and 11 other New Jersey municipalities (out of 564 compiled by the N.J. Department of Community Affairs) forking over \$3.2 million since 2014 to 32 current or former officials. Montclair is second to Clark, which paid almost \$550,000 last year. Avalon, Long Beach, Roxbury, Elizabeth, Bridgewater, Roselle, Old Bridge, Ship Bottom, Maple Shade and Deptford (at under \$25,000) rounded out the list.

Rao's alter led to a harassment suit in Oc- (Continued on page 15)

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 14)

tober 2022 against Stafford over her whistleblowing. The Township Council fired Stafford in April. Her case is being processed in State Superior Court-Newark.

GLEN RIDGE

Former borough councilwoman Carolyn Ferguson, after a Jan. 6 memorial service, will join her beloved husband Bruce here in the Glen Ridge Congregational Church's Garden of Memory.

Carolyn Ferguson, 78, who was councilwoman 1998-2003, lost her lengthy health battle Nov. 15. Born Carolyn House Feb. 9, 1945 in Vandalia, Ill., Ferguson and her husband moved to the borough in 1979, and her own retirement from CBS News in 1984, to raise daughters Alissya Phillips and Blythe Emigholz.

Carolyn was involved in her daughters' activities, including leading the local Girl Scout troop to GRCC youth groups. She joined the Glen Ridge Volunteer Ambulance Squad, rising to the rank of Captain. The one-time Glen Ridge Police Commissioner became a one-term councilwoman and launched a borough-oriented newspaper.

Carolyn House came to New York City with a B.A. in English from the University of Illinois in 1967 to start her journalism career. She worked through the ranks and through several glass ceilings to become Executive Producer of "CBS Morning News," working with the likes of Dan rather, Diane Sawyer and Charles Osgood.

House and Bruce Ferguson at a company softball game in 1970 and married in 1971. B. Ferguson, who was production supervisor of "The Evening News with Walter Cronkite," switched to cable; CNN, The Bravo Network and DG Systems. He too was a Borough Councilman 1992-97 and on the Glen Ridge Board of Education 1981-84.

Six grandchildren and sister Carla Johnston are among her survivors. Bruce died in 2013 after a 13-year battle against mantle cell lymphoma. Memorial donations may be made to the Glen Ridge Volunteer Ambulance Squad, 195 Ridgewood Ave., www.grvas.org/donate and/or Stand Up To Cancer, File 1224, 1801 W. Olympic Blvd. Pasadena, Calif. 91199-1224.

UPDATE: Hackensack Meridian's Mountainside Hospital, as of Dec. 4, has been welcoming all incoming ambulances. It and Ardent Health Services, however, are still recovering from the Nov. 23 ransomware attack.

BELLEVILLE

Motorists and pedestrians who use the intersection of Greylock Parkway and Nolton Street may have noticed that the crossroads have become a four-way stop sign intersection since Dec. 5.

The Belleville Police Department had posted photos of what the township's public works department had installed on its own Facebook page that Tuesday.

"This is now a four-way stop intersection," said a BPD announcement. Please be cautious and aware when approaching this intersection and come to a complete stop."

Should one encounter more than one stopped vehicle in that intersection, state MVC law requires that the first vehicle yield to the other vehicle on one's right hand side.

BPD, also on Dec. 5, announced that parking meters along Washington Avenue are suspended for holiday shopping Dec. 11-Jan. 1. Township-wide alternate street parking has been suspended "until Spring."

NUTLEY

Township residents who want to ask questions or have a say about a proposed senior citizens apartment building that would go up on the former Diamond Springs Restaurant and Beach Club property will get an online chance with the Nutley Planning Board Dec. 18.

Diamond Spring Real Estate Investment LLC, of Florham Park, started its preliminary and final site plan application for 35 Evergreen Ave. before the planning board Dec. 6. They had filed their plans Nov. 14.

DSREI wants to build 85 housing units on Block 7400's Lost 1 and 17. The 85 include 75 two bedroom units and 10 one-bedroom units. All but three units are for people at least 55-years-old; three will not be age-restricted.

The LLC, on Dec. 6, said they were asking for zoning variations on curb cuts and elevator shaft height. The swim club, which has been closed since 2017, had been the focus by township elders as a redevelopment site in 2021.

35 Evergreen used to be Le Terrace swim club run by Patrick and Rae Nardone until 2003. Pat Nardone sold the club and, in 2004, paid a \$1 million discrimination suit filed by the ACLU-NJ for a Bloomfield family from an incident in June 2002.

OCCUPY NEWARK

(Continued from page 13)

The Dec. 1 Occupy Newark physically did not last 10 hours.

City workers were using the ground floor and Green Street side entrances, like they normally do, when Newark Police Division officers began approaching the steps protesters at 9:30 a.m. They were advised that they needed a permit to continue and it was time to leave.


"Why is this time different?" said Diaz. "Why, this time, do we need a permit? We were just here two weeks ago with the Palestinian protest."

DPW workers then took protesters' possessions off the steps. Unlike the other Occupy endings, the items were brought to Diaz's NWC truck for loading.

"I'm calling on people," said El-Bomani, "to occupy council meetings, school board meetings, freeholder meetings, NHA meetings and the Statehouse."

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