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

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

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THE NEXT EDITION OF LOCAL TALK WEEKLY NEWSPAPER WILL COME OUT ON JANUARY 4, 2024. HAPPY HOLIDAYS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!

NEWARK BUMPED FROM SISTER CITIES OVER UNPAID DUES

By Walter Elliott

NEWARK - New Jersey's largest city appears to be finishing 2023 like it had started the year - with a problem related to Sister Cities International.

When Councilman Luis Quintana received SCI's 2023 Membership Directory, he noticed that Newark, and its partnerships with 15 other international cities, were left out. He asked Municipal Clerk Kecia Daniels to call the Washington, DC-based organization.

Quintana, at the Dec. 6 Municipal Council meeting, said that SCI told Daniels and the councilman that Newark had not paid its annual dues, currently at \$1,380, for 14 years.

"I want to thank her (Daniels) for that because, if not, we would've been thinking we had the sister cities program," said Newark's longest tenured councilman at the meeting. "They said it was because we hadn't paid our dues."

Quintana, as chairman of the council's international relations commission, had been a SCI member since 1994. President Dwight D. Eisenhower created the organization to promote cultural and educational relations among participating cities in the US and around the world.

Newark had been a sister city to 15 others among nine countries - from Azerbaijan to Portugal.

(Continued on page 9)



When it comes to Sister Cities, the city is still feeling embarrassment over getting “catfished” by a fake state

LOCAL TEAMS FACE OFF IN BRICK CITY SHOWDOWN

Photos By Felicia Laguerre Owens



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BELOVED ACTOR ANDRE BRAUGHER (1962-2023)

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To
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Editorial
Dhiren Shah
 Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

A wonderful holiday season to all our readers. At this holy time of year, I must thank all of Local Talk's readers and advertisers for supporting us continuously over the past 23 years. As usual, we will be off for the holidays next week. So, the next edition of Local Talk will be published in January. So once again, have a wonderful time this season and a happy new year.

As you all know, times have changed. We are all connected to our cell phones. It became a necessity in life. Large companies use their resources to advance new age, technology in-

cluding AI (Artificial Intelligence). We get the news and easy communications a lot faster via phones and messages. However, our independent thinking is going down. Our habits are changing. Before, we used to cross the road looking both ways and making sure both sides were clear. However, the new obsession with phones makes us dumb. Now we get so much into it that many times people do not look for traffic before crossing the street. Every year, more and more accidents happen while people are crossing the street, and a few have lost their lives.

In New Jersey Pamela Lampitt (D-Camden) introduced legislation to start charging a \$50 fine for pedestrians who cross the street while texting or being busy with their phones and forget about looking for oncoming traffic. Also, repeat offenders may go to jail for up to 15 days. This is the same penalty as jaywalkers. However, I have not heard

about officers issuing tickets for jaywalkers. Finally, when children are small, it is the responsibility of the schools to teach them how to cross the street. If the children create a good habit, they will follow the system throughout their life. So, there must be some kind of instruction that should be given by the schools in my opinion. Parents are supposed to do this, but they are lacking in this regard.

Gas prices across the world are so far apart country to country. The lowest price per gallon of petrol (gas) is in Iran, which is under 11 cents a gallon. Followed by Libya and Venezuela, which is under 13 cents a gallon. Our main supplier of gas, Saudi Arabia, has about \$2.35 per gallon. The USA is in the middle at #31 with about \$3.45 per gallon. The United Kingdom has about \$6.39, and Israel has about \$7.21 per gallon. And the highest price in the world is Hong Kong with about \$11.26 per gallon. All prices

are based on the US Dollar and the prices comparison is from December 11, 2023.

I was wondering like all of you: Why are gas prices so high in one country compared to the other when the world petroleum market is the same? The main reason for the high prices is taxes. The United States is the highest user of gas using over 19 million barrels per day, followed by China, India, Japan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, South Korea, Germany, and Canada. Some countries use only 50 barrels per day. However, their population and need for travelling is about nil.

I thought about gas usage and prices because of the way the world is turning and how global warming effecting the world.

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>
Sunny	Mostly Sunny	Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	PM Rain	Showers
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The Doctor Is In



OP-ED BY DR. ADIL MANZOOR

The Medical Debt Problem in the United States

News flash - there is a medical debt problem in the United States. Well, to be fair, this shouldn't be all that surprising, considering we have a debt problem in virtually all sectors of our economy. While all types of debt problems are certainly concern-

ing, the medical debt problem is even more disturbing and worrying. Here's why.

A survey from the Urban Institute of close to ten thousand people between the ages of 18 and 64 found that low-income people were affected to a greater extent by overdue medical debts. From the survey data, individuals with incomes at or below the federal poverty threshold had the most debt. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the number of people with overdue medical debts fell as income increased.

Another key aspect of the survey is the race of the people entrenched in this medical debt problem. As you may expect, people of color - particularly Blacks and Hispanics - were more affected than their white counterparts. In fact, the number of black individuals affected by medical debts was more than double that of white people with the same problem.

One last statistic that will interest you from the report is that



most of the medical debts owed were owed to hospitals. And forgive me, but I have another interesting statistic from the report: people who owed hospitals had significantly more debt than those who owed non-hospital providers. To be exact, 71.5 percent of individuals in the survey who owed hospital providers owed more than \$1000, while that figure stood at 32.6 percent for respondents that owed non-hospital providers.

What exactly do these figures mean? Well, for starters, the survey report establishes that we indeed have a medical debt problem in the United States. That scares me, considering just how increasingly difficult it is for Americans to survive on their income. Then, it gets even worse.

Most of the people who are affected by this medical debt problem are people who aren't financially comfortable to start with. So, the medical debts do nothing but compound their already complicated financial problems. Take a moment to consider how dangerous this can be. People with the most medical debts don't earn much to begin with, which means many of them may have to work multiple jobs to support themselves. This leads to them stressing themselves even more, further increasing the risk of getting more medical issues. It's a vicious cycle.

Again, people of color are even more affected than white

Americans. I don't want to bore you with figures and numbers, but people of color in the United States usually bear more of the brunt of economic challenges in the country. So, these people of color aren't in the best position economically to begin with, and then the fact that they suffer more from the medical debt problem only compounds their economic problems.

Aside from working other jobs, people with medical debt problems also have to cut spending on food, clothing, and other basics, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation Health Care Debt Survey. Also, these individuals have used up all or most of their savings, they have delayed purchasing a home or furthering their education, sought aid from charity, and even declared bankruptcy and lost their homes.

Of course, we can spend all day pointing fingers and trying to figure out whose fault the medical debt problem actually is. But that will change nothing unless it is backed up by action. Actual action from the government, the management of hospitals, insurance companies, and other stakeholders in the health sector. My hopes are not high, though, considering just how capitalistic the United States is.

There seems to be a passion among the very people who can implement a change to suck every last penny in the medical health industry. I am trying my

(Continued on page 7)

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SPORTS WRAP



Photos By Felicia Laguerre Owens



By William Hathaway, Jr.

This past weekend in the city of Newark, the Newark Board Of Education along with sponsor Prudential Financial hosted its first ever Brick City Showdown Basketball Classic at Essex County College. The three day tournament was held from December 15-17th and

ter, beating Lake Minneola from Florida 68-39. Morgan Marshall gave the victorious Lady Phoenix 26 points and 3 rebounds and teammate Paradise Fisher had 14 points. Lake Minneola got 7 points and 5 rebounds from Patricia Casmir.

For Dec. 16-17, the Hillside Comets girls basketball team beat Shabazz 60-27. Leading



featured over 20 high schools and eight Newark schools.

In the first night of boys games, the Newark Tech boys basketball team defeated Caldwell 66-54. Leading Newark Tech was Marcus Bragg with 14 points and Malcolm Bragg with 18 points and 6 rebounds. Caldwell was led by Joe Giannetta's 11 points. In the 2nd game of the night, Montclair beat University 76-49.

In girls competition, the ladies from University fared bet-

Hillside was Precious Onyeagoccha with 21 points while Shabazz was led by Mariener Mateo with 10 points. Saint Francis of Maryland beating Franklin High 49-31, while Lake Minneola rebounded to beat the Newark Central girls 61-58. Casmir had 22 points and Mia Saunders pitched in 18 points. The Blue Devils were led by Dyshanna Austin 15 points and Faith Robison with 24 points in the loss.



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That afternoon, the Newark Central boys team beat Academy Charter School of New York 61-43. Leading Newark Central was Malachi Thomas with 21 points and 6 rebounds and Malik Bass led with 15 points and 4 rebounds. Also, Eagle Academy of the Bronx beat Trenton 94-51. The Weequahic boys defeated Linden 80-40. Riyahd McDonald led the win with 13 points and 12 rebounds and Ty Barlow had 7 points and 5 assists. The last game of the day saw Saddle River Day lose to Elizabeth 55-47. Cameron McRae had 18 points and 5 rebounds and Jordan Torres added 11 points.

In another round of games, St. Francis from Maryland beat Newark Central's girls team 68-41. The Old Tappan girls slipped by Paramus 52-51. In the boys games of the day, St. Peter's Prep beat Payne Tech 71-40. Leading St. Peters was Nico Pena with 25 points and 4 rebounds while Payne Tech got 14

points from Gerald Edwell. Bergen Catholic beat Newark Collegiate 75-39. Leading Newark Collegiate was Najee Graham with 14 points and Bergen Catholic was led by Declan Wuchenfene with 14 points and 4 rebounds. The last game of the night saw the Patrick School beating Roselle Catholic 86-56.





UNITED STATES



MAJOR FOOD WARNINGS

This past week, there were not one, but two, big announcements concerning food that you or your children should not be eating.

On Dec. 15, the Quaker Oats Company announced the recall of specific granola bars and granola cereals listed below because they have the potential to be contaminated with Salmonella, an organism which can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems.

Healthy persons infected with Salmonella often experience fever, diarrhea (which may be bloody), nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. In rare circumstances, infection with Salmonella can result in the organism getting into the bloodstream and producing more severe illnesses such as arterial infections (i.e., infected aneurysms), endocarditis and arthritis.

A list of the products in question can be found at: https://www.quakergranolarecall.com/files/ugd/b51df1_09e6b5962bf2480882147c2b679ca766.pdf

Consumers should check their pantries for any of the products listed and dispose of them. Additionally, consumers with any product noted below can contact Quaker Consumer Relations (9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. CST, Mon.-Fri.) at 1-800-492-9322 or visit www.quakergranolarecall.com for additional information or

product reimbursement.

To date, Quaker has received no confirmed reports of illness related to the products covered by this recall. Quaker informed the FDA of its actions.

Then, on Dec. 18, the FDA announced that “extremely high” levels of lead were found in cinnamon at a plant in Ecuador that made applesauce pouches. The recalled pouches have been linked to dozens of illnesses that have ailed children in the U.S.

Samples taken by the FDA came from ground or powdered cinnamon from Negasmart, an Ecuadorian company that supplied it to Austrofoods, which made the pouches in question. The applesauce pouches were sold under these known brands - WanaBana, Schnucks and Weis. The FDA has noted that lead has not been detected in WanaBana products made without cinnamon and sold in the U.S.

While matters like this are usually accidental, there is concern that this could be intentional, as the sabotage can affect market prices.

Due to the source being in Ecuador, the FDA has said that its enforcement powers are limited when it pertains to Negasmart, but they hope that officials in that country will do something.

MASS SHOOTING UPDATE

Information recent as of 12-19-2023 at 12 p.m.

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

- Total Mass Shootings: 731
- Total Dead: 900
- Total Wounded: 2884
- Shootings Per Day: 2.07
- Days Reached in Year 2023 as of Dec. 5: 353

MIDDLE EAST



HOSPITAL DESTROYED IN MIDST OF WAR

The head of the UN health agency Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has spoken out against the “effective destruction” of a

hospital in northern Gaza by Israeli forces over the weekend, leading to the deaths of eight patients including a nine-year-old child.

Kamal Adwan Hospital was raided by the Israeli military over four days last week and the World Health Organization (WHO) said that many health workers were reportedly detained.

“Gaza’s health system was already on its knees and the loss of another even minimally functioning hospital is a severe blow,” Tedros wrote on social platform X.

Less than a third of Gaza’s 36 hospitals are at least partially functional, including only one in the enclave’s north.

“Attacks on hospitals, health personnel and patients must end. Ceasefire NOW,” Tedros insisted.

The WHO chief said that many patients at Kamal Adwan had to self-evacuate “at great risk to their health and safety” while ambulances were unable to reach the facility.

UN humanitarian affairs coordination office OCHA said in an update that on Dec. 16 Israeli forces withdrew from the hospital and according to media reports “an Israeli military bulldozer flattened the tents of a number of internally displaced persons outside the hospital, killing and wounding an unconfirmed number of people.”

Tedros said on X that WHO is “extremely concerned” for the well-being of those displaced people.

According to OCHA the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Ramallah has called for an investigation into the incident. OCHA also quoted the Israeli army as saying that it had detained 90 people as part of the operation and “found weapons and munitions inside the hospital.”

Due to a telecommunications and internet blackout in Gaza which started last Thursday and continued into the weekend, OCHA stressed that its latest update on the humanitarian situation in the Strip provided only “limited” information from the past 24 hours.

Gaza’s health authorities have not updated their casualty numbers since the start of the blackout, which at that point

stood at 18,787 fatalities and over 50,000 people injured since October 7.

The UN Office reported continuing “heavy Israeli bombardments” across the Strip over the weekend in particular in Khan Younis in the south and in several areas of Gaza city in the north.

Intense fighting raged between Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups in Khan Younis and Rafah, as well as continued firing of rockets by Palestinian armed groups into Israel, OCHA said.

HAITI



HOPE NOT LOST

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).

“Haiti is not hopeless”, the President of the UN General Assembly said on Dec. 18 during a meeting addressing the multiple crises besetting the Caribbean nation, alongside the presidents of the UN Security Council and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Dennis Francis, a veteran diplomat from Trinidad and Tobago, said he had returned from a visit to Haiti at the end of last month “with hope and the full knowledge that while Haiti is facing extraordinary challenges, its future holds indomitable promise.”

The country has seen almost 4,000 killed and 3,000 kidnapped in gang-related violence just this year, following a political, economic and security crisis that has left much of the country descend into lawlessness.

Driving in the streets of Port au Prince, I saw visible signs of hope – sustained by the undying resilience and perseverance of the Haitian people - who seem to create inventive ways to meet

(Continued on page 13)

BLACK LIVES, ANIMAL LIVES, ALL LIVES MATTER



By Michele Lowe

Hello everyone, I hope all is well. As the new year approaches, I would like you all to keep in mind we must survive out here and stay strong. Do not get discouraged on no ends of matter. Nobody is perfect, so just be yourself. Regardless of what people say, no one can live your life but you. Remember, Michele Lowe said it best.



I've been through so much in my life but keeping it together is what got me here now, mainly for most of the men. Now, when I write to you all, it is from the heart, no fakeness, nothing but straight and real. I'm not perfect in this world, just trying to make something out of life while I'm living. Life we come with a lot of tests in life but hold it together.

People come in and out of life; some are meant to stay, some meant to help us learn a lesson. We have to stop worrying about what people think and say. Remember, people can't count your blessing, nor make your check. Be a bigger person, forget what them folks say. People are going to talk and talk until they die, good or bad. I say all

the time that they need to take look in the mirror, because obviously I must be doing something right that they focus on me and forgot they own life.



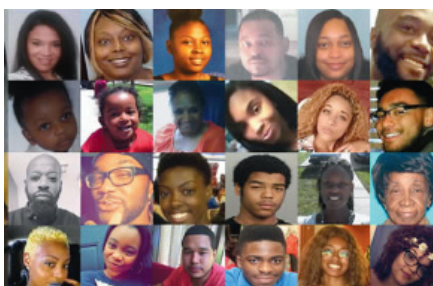
I keep pushing, striving, negativity tries to attack, I know how to get back. Remember, Michele Lowe said it best. So, for those who are being victims to negativity, remember what is said and stay strong, cause those folks out there that may hurt you they are already destroyed. TRUST ME everyone, I know, because I had very bad fake friend in life, and she had to go. Liars is one thing I do not sit well with. In general, before you talk or speak on anything make sure you 100 percent.

The holidays are here, so remember, if you are expecting packages and gifts, keep a close eye on them. There are thieves just waiting to swoop in; nothing is free. If you can't ask, then you can't have.

Keep in mind those who are not with us, those that are missing. We are to be grateful for life. Never forget.

'Til next time, peace and love...

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THE DOCTOR IS IN

(Continued from page 4)

best to restrain from a rant about the medical industry. I can say is this, though - if the medical debt problem in the United States is not addressed soon, we risk entering a full-blown crisis in an already over-inflated medical health industry.

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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NEWARK BUMPED FROM SISTER CITIES

(Continued from page 1)

It announced a sister cities agreement with the southern Ghanaian city of Kumasi in 2017. An artist from the Ashanti region city created a 4,000-square-foot mural above 2 Treat Place on July 30.

A 2021 sister city agreement with San Sebastian, Puerto Rico led to the creation of a 500-foot-long mural on Mt. Prospect Avenue by 2nd Avenue.

Newark was last caught off guard when its city administration signed a cultural exchange agreement with "The United States of ShriKailasa" on Jan. 12 - until Mayor Ras Baraka revoked it Jan. 18.

The city had been "catfished," for Kailasa does not exist.

Although founder Swami Nithyananda proclaimed its creation Dec. 3, 2019, Ecuadorian officials said they never sold the island off their west coast to him. Ecuador does not recognize Kailasa, nor does it assist the swami and his government.

News of the Newark-Shri Kailasa pact and revocation circulated in various Indian and Asian websites and publications. Nithyananda and his "ambassadors" had pulled a similar "agreement" with the Cleveland, Ohio suburb of South Euclid in 2008 and been seeking UN recognition since 2019.

"We can't bring Sister Cities Int'l into an issue where there's such controversy," said Quintana at the time. He was urging stricter vetting of future prospective cities.

Quintana is now asking the city to hit the reset button and take inventory of its until recent sister cities.

"We're going to gather all these sister city programs that we've established and look at which ones are important - which ones we're going to put in the directory," said Quintana. "Again, I was very embarrassed."

That inventory taking includes Rio de Janeiro and four other Brazilian cities, two in Portugal and one each in Azerbaijan, The Bahamas, Cameroon, the People's Republic of China, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria.

The inventory on the 2017 SCI directory

does not include a later exchange agreement with Taoyuan, Taipei-Republic of China.

That 2017 directory also lists Montclair, Manasquan, New Brunswick and Toms Rivers as fellow participating New Jersey cities. The 2023 directory, however, keeps New Brunswick and replaces the other cities with Highlands and Point Pleasant Beach.

Montclair had exchange agreements with four other international cities - including Cherepovets, Russia. Montclair Mayor Sean Spiller, in a March 13, 2022 letter to his counterpart of the Vologda region city, said he was considering "pausing" their relationship for the duration of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Most of the other 67 SCI cities who had agreements with Russian cities - including Chicago, Dallas and Des Moines - have paused or suspended their agreements. A few, like Gainesville, Fla., have kept their agreements in place.

SCI participating cities, in the current directory, have 37 agreements with Russian cities. 26 with Israeli cities and five in the "Palestinian Territories."



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.

BELOVED ACTOR ANDRE BRAUGHER (1962-2023)

SOUTH ORANGE - Funeral arrangements, as of Dec. 18, have not been posted for award-winning actor and longtime village resident Andre Braugher. Braugher, 61, according to his publicist's Dec. 12 announcement, died at home from a brief illness - later found to be lung cancer - the day before.

Braugher may be best known for portraying Baltimore police detective Frank Pembleton in the NBC "Homicide: Life in the Street" 1993-98 television series and 2000 movie and NYPD Capt. Ray Holt in the 2013-2021 "Brooklyn Nine Nine" comedy series. He was also known to perform locally, including "Tell Them I'm Still Young," in SOPAC in 2019.

Those are two of over 100 on-screen, on-stage and voiceover performances that yielded the Juilliard-trained Braugher 22 NAACP Image Award nominations plus 11 Emmy and two Golden Globe nods and/or awards.

Born in Chicago July 1, 1962, Braugher first came to Juilliard in NYC with a degree from Stanford University in hand. He and actress wife Ami Brabson, who married in 1991, moved to South Orange in 2000 to raise sons Michael, Isaiah and John Wesley. He was known to be PTA president in their sons'

schools.

"If she (Ami) wants to live here, then I want to live here," said Braugher in 2002. "We have friends who moved here and raved about the town. So she scouted it out and was thrilled about it."

Mother Sally Braugher and brother Charles Jennings are also among his survivors.

NEWARK - A full officer's Funeral Mass was held for Firefighter Rafael Arcangel Padilla here at St. Lucy's Roman Catholic Church, followed by his burial at Bloomfield's Glenfield Cemetery, Dec. 15.

Newark officials - including Mayor Ras Baraka, Public Safety Director Fritz Frage and Newark Firefighters Union President Michael Giunta - announced Padilla's Dec. 5 passing in a local hospital the following morning. One preliminary report had Padilla, 46, having a heart attack after his last shift at Engine 27 on Elm Street over the Dec. 1-3 weekend.

Padilla, who was born here April 17, 1977, had spent his last 10 years as a firefighter at Engine 27 - and his first five at Truck 8 at Chestnut Street - both in The Ironbound. He joined "Newark's Bravest" on April 7, 2008.

"Ralph" was also a Sergeant in the US Army National Guard for 25 years. He was also among the Barringer High School graduating Class of 1995.

Wife Maria Adela Padilla, children Giovanni Lopez. Rafael Arcangel Padilla and Eric Anibal Padilla, brothers Dania and Eric Padilla and mother Daniella Padilla are among his survivors. Father Rafael Padilla predeceased him.

A GoFundMe.com page has been established to help with Padilla's funeral expenses.

IRVINGTON - A township man, convicted of robbing and stripping a fried chicken restaurant customer Jan. 19, 2022, is to be sentenced by Superior Court Judge John Gizzo Jan. 19, 2023.

A jury informed Gizzo Nov. 22 that they had found Ricotosa Dolisca, 35, guilty of first-degree

armed robbery and second-degree conspiracy. The jury - after a two-day trial and two hours' deliberations, also convicted Gary Rhymes, 37, of East Orange, of the same charges.

Dolisca and Rhymes were accused of pointing a gun at a Kennedy Fried Chicken customer and taking his wallet, cell phone and clothes. The ECPO conviction announcement did not say which Kennedy Chicken - Springfield Avenue or Lyons Avenue - was the crime scene.

"Fortunately, the weapon wasn't fired and there were no lasting physical injuries in this case," said ECPO Assistant Prosecutor Joseph Deller Nov. 22. "This verdict wouldn't have been possible but for a brave victim who was willing to come to court and face the individuals who did this to him."

Dolisca had also been charged with second-degree unlawful possession of a weapon, possession thereof for an unlawful purpose, possession of a large-capacity magazine and possession of stolen property.

EAST ORANGE - Tenants of 75 Prospect St. will be sending their rent payments to a court-appointed receiver - and not the property manager or landlord - as of this month. The receiver will use the rent to get repairs made to the 95-year-old landmark building.

A Superior Court-Newark Chancery Division judge had ruled on Dec. 14 that the receiver be immediately appointed - much to the petitioning 75 Prospect Street Tenant Association's pleasure. They and their representatives, the Rutgers Law School Housing Justice and Tenant Solidarity Clinic, had filed papers to the court Nov. 22.

The tenants said that owners Basya and Mordechai Weiss of the Weiss Property Group and property manager Prospect Castle LLC have not made repairs to the Brick Church building that goes as far back as before a previous owner sold the building to the Weisses.

The Rutgers Law School clinic and the 75PSTA brought copies of over 1,000 code viola-

tion tickets from the City of East Orange to the court and the Federal National Mortgage Association, also known as "Fannie Mae." The violations include inoperable elevators, water damage, drafty windows, and mold growth.

The deterioration had grown to where Fannie Mae had filed for foreclosure in Superior Court Nov. 7. Some tenants believe that the neglect is deliberate so that the owners can get them to leave so they can subdivide the apartments.

The tenants can and will remain at 75 Prospect until the Fannie Mae suit against Weiss completes its foreclosure course. The receiver will also remain in place until then.

ORANGE - "Allen Barnhardt was not a perfect man," said Bishop Reginald T. Jackson at the former firefighter's Celebration of Life here at St. Matthew AME Church, "but he was a GOOD man."

Bishop Jackson, formerly St. Matthew's pastor, was presiding over Barnhardt's celebration on June 25, prior to his burial at Orange's part of Rosedale cemetery. The former Orange Fire Director and East Orange Fire Department member had a Wake and Night of Tribute here June 24.

Barnhardt, 73, who had retired to Adams Run SC, had a Memorial Service and Musical Tribute July 9 at Ebenezer AME Church in nearby Charleston. He died there on June 18.

Allen Edward Barnhardt, Jr. was born Jan. 15, 1950 and was raised in East Orange. The East Orange High School Class of 1968 graduate went on to study food science and technology at San Diego Mesa College.

Barnhardt's next place of study, however, was at Emmetsburg, Md.'s National Fire Academy. He subsequently joined the EOFFD until his retirement - which allowed him to be appointed as OFD's Fire Director. The one-time 192 Oakwood Ave. resident here moved to Adams Run for deep sea fishing, gardening and for pursuing his

(Continued on page 12)

52 ATTORNEYS GENERAL ANNOUNCE NATIONWIDE \$700 MILLION SETTLEMENT WITH GOOGLE

Agreement Resolves Complaint Over Google Play Store, Billing Misconduct

TRENTON - Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin and the Division of Consumer Affairs, together with a bipartisan group of 52 other attorneys general, announced Dec. 19 a \$700 million agreement with Google in their lawsuit challenging the tech giant's anticompetitive conduct in connection with the Google Play Store.

New Jersey and the coalition sued Google in 2021, alleging that Google unlawfully monopolized the Android app distribution and in-app payment processing markets. The states' complaint highlighted several allegedly anticompetitive practices, including Google's use of restrictive contracts to stifle the growth of competing app stores on Android devices, paying off key app developers to dissuade them from creating rival app stores, and Google's use of technological barriers designed to discourage consumers from downloading apps outside of the Google Play Store.

"As we spend increasing

amounts of time on our phones, it is imperative that fair and transparent pricing and consumer choice be just as visible in the digital world as it is when we conduct business in real life, like when you are shopping in your downtown," said Attorney General Platkin. "Going forward, we are requiring Google to reform their business practices so that they can no longer hide behind opaque contracts and pricing."

"Google's conduct kept prices artificially high for Android users and has prevented competition in the digital marketplace," said Cari Fais, Acting Director of the Division of Consumer Affairs. "This settlement makes clear this conduct will not be tolerated, and requires Google to compensate consumers for the harm it caused."

Specifically, Google will pay \$630 million in restitution - minus administrative costs and fees - to consumers who made purchases on the Google Play Store between August 2016 and September 2023 and were harmed by anticompetitive practices. Google will pay the states an additional \$70 million in penalties. Consumers eligible for res-

titution do not have to submit a claim - they will receive automatic payments through PayPal or Venmo, or they can elect to receive a check or ACH transfer.

In addition, Google must reform its business practices in the following ways:

- Give all developers the ability to allow users to pay through in-app billing systems other than Google Play Billing, for at least five years.
- Allow developers to offer cheaper prices for their apps and in-app products for consumers who use alternative, non-Google billing systems, for at least five years.
- Permit developers to steer consumers toward alternative, non-Google billing systems by advertising cheaper prices within their apps themselves, for at least five years.
- Not enter contracts that require the Play Store to be the exclusive, pre-loaded app store on a device or home screen, for at least five years.
- Allow the installation of apps from third-party stores

in addition to the Google Play Store on Android phones, for at least seven years.

- Revise and reduce the warnings that appear on an Android device if a user attempts to download a third-party app from outside the Google Play Store, for at least five years.
- Maintain Android system support for third-party app stores, including allowing automatic updates, for four years.
- Not require developers to launch their app catalogs on the Play Store at the same time as they launch on other app stores, for at least four years.
- Submit compliance reports to an independent monitor who will ensure that Google is not continuing its anticompetitive conduct, for at least five years.

For much of this case, the attorneys general litigated alongside Epic Games and Match, two major app developers. Match announced a separate settlement

(Continued on page 13)

NEWARK MAN CONVICTED OF MURDER FOR STABBING AND STRANGLING GIRLFRIEND

NEWARK - Acting Essex County Prosecutor Theodore N. Stephens, II announced Dec. 15 that an Essex County jury convicted Nasean Torres, 49, of Newark, of murder for fatally stabbing and strangling his longtime girlfriend, Elizabeth Kelley, 55, of Newark.

On July 22, 2022, Newark Police responded to 47 Palm Street, Newark, and found Kelley's body lying on the basement floor of the residence. It was later determined that she had died from manual strangulation and multiple stab wounds.

On Thursday, December 14, following a three-week trial before Superior Court Judge Ronald D. Wigler, the jury took less than an hour to find Torres guilty on three counts: murder, unlawful possession of a weapon, and possession of a weapon for unlawful purpose.

Sentencing is scheduled for February 9, 2024. Torres faces up to life in

New Jersey State Prison and must serve at least 30 years of his sentence before becoming eligible for parole.

"Elizabeth was a mother and grandmother and her family suffered a horrible loss when she was killed," said Assistant Prosecutor Jason Alterbaum, who tried the case with Brianna Sandroni, also an Assistant Prosecutor.

"We hope Elizabeth's family can find some sort of comfort in knowing the individual who murdered their loved one has finally been brought to justice with this verdict," added Alterbaum.

Assistant Prosecutor Sandroni thanked the law enforcement community for their cooperation as well as the brave witnesses who testified at trial. "Without their assistance," she said, "this verdict could not have been possible."

CYCLIST DIES IN COLLISION WITH VEHICLE

ESSEX - Acting Essex County Prosecutor Theodore N. Stephens, II and East Orange Police Chief Phyllis Bindi announced that the Essex County Prosecutor's Crime Scene Investigations Bureau is investigating a vehicle-cyclist collision in East Orange that left the cyclist dead.

On December 15, at 4:15 a.m., police were notified of a collision between a vehicle and an electric bike at the intersection of Main Street and Grove Street in East Orange. The cyclist, Melody Regus, 42, of Newark, was transported to University Hospital, where she was pronounced dead at 4:50 a.m.

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



*From
The
Pastor's
Heart*

OP-ED BY DR. ROBERT KENNEDY

**Do Not Slander
One Another**

It is hard to see how many people's reputations are soiled and careers destroyed these days because of slander. "Slander," making up lies about one another for some advantage, tearing down one another with statements that have no foundation in truth, and getting false witnesses to make up stuff against people profiled as evil. We are in a heightened time when the force of slandering being unleashed has become so powerful that without the protection of the divine it would destroy us all.

Not long ago, one of my friends was kicked out of his pastorate after being called "nasty" names by some of his congregants, who heard of things that others told them he had done. My friend tried to defend himself but with no success. He was forced to resign his position after the scandal grew so loud. Although on further investigation, no one could prove what was reported, my friend's reputa-

tion still needs to be repaired or his career restored.

What a time to live, we might say, when tabloids and social media are spreading so many falsehoods about one another. What a time to live when, in the political world, what is being called "opposition research" and "political speech" can be used to destroy the lives of one another. It has been reported that the British Tabloid and Rupert Murdoch's family are being sued because they hacked the voicemails of thousands of people in the UK - Crime victims, war dead, politicians, sports stars and celebrities. All this has been done to generate headlines, sell papers and inspire cliques.

Controlling owner Rupert Murdoch has publicly apologized. His enormous media empire - including Fox News, the New York Post and the Wall Street Journal - has paid more than a billion dollars in handling the claims and legal fees since 2011. Now, his British operations have paid again - this time to the Former Cabinet Minister Chris Huhne, who says his voicemails were hacked not only for a scandalous copy but also as part of an effort to block the company's \$15 billion takeover of a vast European broadcaster.

Part of the accomplishment of Murdoch's family has been built on their capacity for "digging up dirt" on individuals. When they cannot find the dirt, they create it. They make up lies or employ and pay vast sums of money to those experts who make up the lies. The Murdochs are now being partly judged for their actions by being sued. But if they were to ask me, I would like to tell them that is only some of the judgment they will receive. If they continue in their way without repentance, they will have to appear at the judgment seat of Christ to give account for all that they have and are doing (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:10).

What I am stating to the Murdoch family is being stated for all who engage in this trade of slander. A slanderer might not do as egregious as that done by the Murdoch, but it needs to be understood that if one child of God is being destroyed, God is taking account. Why am I so concerned about the current culture of slandering? Because I see that too many innocent persons are being destroyed. And because I am seeing that too many persons who call themselves Christians are so caught up in the culture. I have seen and heard too many Christians joining with those politicians who

are doing all they can to tear down the influence of political opponents. I have seen many persons I once respected participating in destructive lies.

Slander is demonic. It is what was used against Jesus. Throughout His ministry on earth, the religious leaders tried to trap Him and stone Him, and when they could not trap Him, they found a way to pay off one of his disciples to betray Him. Then they arrested Him, and at His trial, they found two liars to slander Him. They used the lies to hand Him over to the Romans for execution, and although Pilate said that he "found no fault in Him," he submitted to political pressure and handed Him over to be crucified. (Read the whole story in John 19).

The point being made is that slandering is cruel. It creates suspicions. It sullies reputations and creates conflicts and divisions. One can never repair the damage done through slander. For this reason, the apostle James says emphatically, "Don't slander one another." (James 4:11). The Apostle's injunction was good then and still applies today. DO NOT SLANDER ONE ANOTHER.

My prayer is, "Lord, please help me to keep my tongue and stop my ears against slandering."

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 10)

family's ties to Accra, Ghana.

Wife Sandra Singleton-Barnhardt, children Kyle and Javia, four grandchildren and brother Bernie Cobbs are among his survivors. Lowcountry Voices, of which Sandra is a member, sang at the Ebenezer July 9 service. The East Orange City Council issued a proclamation in his honor at their July 10 meeting.

WEST ORANGE - Authorities have not released the name of the man killed in a Dec. 15 Pleasantdale house fire here - but are continuing their investigation. It is the second fatal fire in the township after one on Dec. 12 in the Tory Corner section.

Their preliminary findings for the Dec. 15 fire at 2 Kinzel Place is that "the fire appeared to have started in the basement." The fire had spread to the entire building, "compromising firefighter access."

The first WOFD units were called to 2 Kinzel Lane House, "a large wood frame private building," Mutual aid was promptly called; WOPD and Orange Fire Engine 2 were among those who responded.

An investigation to a Dec. 12 fire at 30 Park Drive South, which killed another man, also continues.

Responding firefighters who responded to that blaze encountered heavy flames and smoke at 10:30 a.m. but managed to remove "an elderly man." That man was taken to RWJBarnabas Health Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center - where he was declared dead there at 11:36 a.m.

MAPLEWOOD - Acting South Orange-Maplewood Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kevin Gilbert and Board of Education President Kaitlin Wittleder issued a joint open letter Dec. 15 in response to antisemitic graffiti found the day before in a Columbia High School restroom.

Members of the Maplewood Police Department, said a spokesman, were told of the said graffiti at 1:10 p.m. Dec. 14. Apparently, the person who found the markings in a boys room stall told the CHS Main Office - who in turn called MPD.

MPD detectives have not said what the message or slur was but that they are actively investigating the incident.

Gilbert and Wittleder said they condemn antisemitism and "reject any speech or action that incites violence, threatens safety, harasses, intimidates or bullies anyone. As a District and a Board, we are fully committed to fighting racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, anti-Asian hatred and hatred of any kind."

The Maplewood Township Committee has meanwhile issued a statement condemning the vandalism. It is the first since Cong. Bris Avrohom's front lawn "I Stand With
(Continued on page 14)

GOOGLE SETTLEMENT

(Continued from page 11)

earlier this year, while Epic Games took its case to trial. Last week, a jury unanimously found that Google’s anticompetitive conduct violated federal antitrust laws.

This lawsuit was led by the attorneys general from North Carolina, Utah, Tennessee, New York, and California, and joined by the attorneys general of all remaining states, the District of Columbia, and the territories of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Earlier this year, New Jersey joined seven other states and the U.S. Department of

Justice in a federal lawsuit against Google over its efforts to eliminate competition in the digital advertising marketplace and create a monopoly for the company over all advertising bought and sold on the internet.

A year ago, New Jersey and 39 other attorneys general settled another case with Google resolving a multistate investigation into allegations that the online search engine platform violated consumers’ privacy by misleading consumers about its location data collection practices.

In 2020, New Jersey, along with a coalition of 38 attorneys general, also sued Google for engaging in anticompetitive practices in the general search engine and related

advertising markets. The trial concluded on November 16, and the closing arguments are scheduled for May 2024.

Representing New Jersey in the settlement is Deputy Attorney General Yale A. Leber of the Consumer Fraud Prosecution Section in the Division of Law’s Affirmative Civil Enforcement Practice Group, under the supervision of Assistant Section Chief Isabella R. Pitt, Assistant Attorney General Brian F. McDonough, Deputy Director Jason W. Rockwell, and Director Michael T.G. Long. Former Deputy Attorney General Bryan Sanchez also contributed to this matter.

WORLD NEWS FLASH

(Continued from page 6)

the daily challenges,” Mr. Francis told the meeting.

“There is, in my view, no shortage of potential in Haiti - and it is not too late that, as the international community, we must do something to accompany the Haitian people, further”, he said noting that the most pressing need is for greater security.

“Uncontrollable violence has robbed and continues to rob the Haitian people of their freedoms and rights; and it is stifling the country’s path to sustainable development,” he said.

Around 40 percent of Haiti’s healthcare workers have reportedly left the country, while women and girls have been subject to brutal sexual violence “with many living in a cycle of fear and trauma.”

He said “we cannot be credible, as the UN and the international community, to just look the other way.”

Mr. Francis noted that the much-needed deployment of a Multinational Security Support Mission authorized by the Security Council on Oct. 2, has not materialized.

It is “awaited with great urgency by many in Haiti,” with 80 percent of the capital under gang control and spreading further afield into rural areas, he said.

He expressed “deepest thanks” to Kenya for “demonstrating leadership of this critical mission”, as well as all other countries that have pledged or are planning to contribute.

According to news reports, despite political and legal setbacks the first group of Kenyan

officers are due to be deployed early next year.

“I encouraged the authorities, as well as representatives of Haiti’s political parties and civil society representatives, to surmount their differences - emphasizing that every stakeholder has a duty to work for the interests of the country and the people.”

He called on political elites in Haiti to abandon their self-centered pre-occupation and to prioritize their constituents “who have endured too much turmoil and who deserve to be given a chance, to succeed. I emphasized that Haiti belongs to them too and that it is their responsibility as elites seeking office to fix the country so that young Haitians would be guaranteed a life chance.”

HAITI



OVER 250 TRAFFICKERS ARRESTED

An INTERPOL-coordinated operation against people smuggling and human trafficking across the Americas has led to 257 arrests, the rescue of 163 potential victims and the detection of nearly 12,000 irregular migrants from 69 different countries.

During Operation Turquesa V, authorities in 33 countries carried out more than 850,000 checks at major transit points to disrupt the transnational organized crime groups profiting from smuggling routes to the

USA and Canada.

Throughout the five-day operation (Nov. 27 - Dec. 1), INTERPOL set up an Operational Coordination Unit in Costa Rica. Officers from the Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants unit were also deployed to the land border in Tabatinga, Brazil, and to the Darien Gap between Colombia and Panama, where they used INTERPOL Mobile Devices to perform live checks against its global databases.

Since 2019, Operation Turquesa has provided a snapshot of migration trends in transit countries across South and Central America, allowing destinations further north to monitor changes in migration flows.

Preliminary results of this year’s edition show a marked increase in trans-continental flows, particularly from China, which was the third most detected country of origin among irregular migrants, behind Venezuela and Ecuador.

During interviews, smuggling victims provided valuable insights on recruitment methods, travel conditions and costs. Migrants reported paying between USD 2,700 and upwards of USD 20,000 depending on the journey.

Jürgen Stock, INTERPOL Secretary General said: “The number of nationalities detected during Operation Turquesa V demonstrates how this major migration corridor, once considered a route reserved to the Americas, has become the target of organized crime groups from around the world.

“They are making enormous profits by smuggling vulnerable migrants and exploiting men, women, and children along the way. As law enforcement, we

must form a united, global front by sharing more information across borders to empower front-line officers.”

In Curaçao, a passport check flagged an inbound passenger from the Dominican Republic as a potential migrant smuggler. Though he claimed to be part of a softball team travelling for a tournament, his luggage contained no equipment or uniforms, nor did his ‘teammates.’ They were deported to the Dominican Republic where the man was arrested on arrival.

Thanks to information provided by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS), authorities in the Bahamas detected a group of 18 Ecuadorian irregular migrants, pointing to a potential new route through the Caribbean.

The majority of victims identified during the operation had been trafficked for sexual exploitation. Dozens of underage victims were rescued, including 12 children in Honduras, the youngest of which was six years old.

After identification of three victims of sexual exploitation and nearly 200 irregular migrants, Chile’s Policia de Investigaciones arrested three suspected members of an organized crime group linked to the Tren de Aragua. At the request of Venezuela, INTERPOL published five Red Notices for additional members of the group.

In a rare case, Brazilian authorities were alerted by hospital staff to a man who had made two separate paternity claims for abandoned newborns in less than one month. They later found that the 49-year-old had recently traveled to Portugal with a new-

(Continued on page 15)

The Observation Booth



OP-ED By Andrea Dialect

WOULD'VE, COULD'VE, SHOULD!

BOSS MOVES

Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned... again! Hey you, I'm dotting my forehead, crossing my chest as I tap below because I did it again. 2023 will be flat-lining, and it's fading fast. Sadly, I can't recall what I said I'd accomplish when 2023 came on the scene. I can't recollect those so-called resolutions, so I dropped the ball again. I've finally come to realize that the wish list should come with a clause. 2024 can be seen around the bend, and those numerals sound futuristic. How the heck did we get here in 2024?

This year, I'll pull on my big

girl sweats and be bold enough to embrace the power and beauty of not knowing all the details and asking God for guidance. So, I'll digress back to the Numero Uno when embarking upon 2024. I don't know where I'll be growing, but I look forward to falling in line as I walk down that road as I follow God's lead.

Just like one of those youngins trailing behind a teacher when leaving the classroom and heading for lunch; Quiet, hungry, and compliant. Yep, that's going to be me this year, believe me you. That's where and how I'll grow and where I will go. Wherever he leads, mouth shut, eyes open, back erect, arms dangling at my side. What about you? Where are you growing, and where will you be going? Whatcha gonna do in 2024?



Captured in the short below is one of the things that I have been prompted to do. I wanted to share it with you this week. Enjoy!

Happy New Year's People. Health, happiness, love, peace, and prosperity to you and yours always. Be blessed!



Photos By Andrea Dialect

VIRAL VIDEOS

Age and a strong physique were his only sins. He'd been taken out of school a couple weeks shy of his twelfth birthday, and although he yearned to go, he knew that the show of emotion brought about grave consequences. So when that little, old, rickety bus was seen coming up that back road to collect his younger siblings (the females, having been the right gender, and the others, males of the proper age), he hid himself. Past occurrences always reminded him that he'd made that mistake before . . .



(Do You Know Someone In Crisis? - Be A Lifeline - Call Or Text 988)

ONE IN THE BUSH

When numbers of surplus spilled off the lips of others as a means of support, I'd shun the whispers of sarcasm that were playing in my head, while gripping my stomach to buffer the tickles of a painful humor.

Certainly, there would be a time when the little eyes that gazed up at me in total dependency would grow up. ...

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)

Israel" signs were painted over with a Palestinian flag and "Free Gaza."

BLOOMFIELD - A Newark woman - who had posted bail from Newark's Essex County Correctional Facility by Dec. 1 and had been part of a 2017 Newark robbery with a Belleville man - still has to return to municipal court here to answer to theft charges in the Halcyon Park area going back to Nov. 6.

The Bloomfield Police Department, responding to a porch package theft in Halcyon Park Nov. 27, set up an undercover stake-out Dec. 3-4. They witnessed a woman stealing a package from a porch and made a neighborhood computer check on the suspect.

The check found video recordings of a woman who had shoplifted from the nearby Stop & Shop, near the Belleville-Silver Lake

border, on Nov. 6, 9 and 10 - and identified her as Genesis Bonano, 26. Bonano was arrested and charged for theft and shoplifting Dec. 6.

Bonano most likely was not living at the North Newark address Nov. 4-Dec. 7 where her daughter's father was at New Year's Eve 2016. Newark police had listed her as an Elizabeth resident when they accused her of arranging a Belleville man and three other men to rob him before his place in Newark Dec. 31, 2016.

Adner Oquendo, 21, and Bonano were charged Jan. 5, 2017 with carjacking, robbery and conspiracy.

Bonano was remanded to the county jail Dec. 6, 2023 until she had posted bail.

MONTCLAIR - The wide regard for the late retired Montclair Public Safety Director Thomas J. Russo, 86, who had died here Dec. 7, was evident by his Noon Dec. 12 fu-

neral procession from Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church to Immaculate Conception Cemetery from Pine Street and west along Bloomfield Avenue.

Russo's last ride was escorted by 26 police motorcycles and followed by 36 cars - some of whom were from local police departments. Montclair, Newark, East Orange, Orange, West Orange, Caldwell, West Caldwell, Millburn, Montclair State University, Essex County College and NJTransit police were represented as well as the Essex County Sheriff's Office.

Six fire engine crews - including one each from Orange and Bloomfield - saluted in full dress while Russo's procession passed the Montclair Fire Headquarters.

Russo, who was born here April 8, 1937, was an honorably discharged U.S. Navy sailor in 1958 when he joined MPD in 1960. He rose through the ranks to become Chief of

(Continued on page 15)

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 14)

Police in 1993 and, after his 2001 retirement, Montclair's civilian Public Safety Director. The Fourth Ward boy wrote his autobiography, "Street Kid to Top Cop" in 2005.

Russo - a football, basketball and baseball MHS Class of 1955 graduate - was a lifelong Montclarion with some notable exceptions. Besides his 1955-59 USN tour of duty on the USS Dash, he was a graduate of the FBI Academy, of Quantico, Va. and Enforcement Executive Development Association and Secret Service Dignitary Protection Program - both of Washington, D.C. He also attained a now-MSU B.S. degree in certified public management while a police officer.

Wife Imelda, daughters Dawn Donohue and Diane Mautone and six grandchildren are among his survivors. sister Nina Ofsak (who was married to the late Essex County Deputy Police Chief Charles Ofsak) and daughter Donna Russo predeceased him.

GLEN RIDGE - The Glen Ridge Board of Education will announce the results of their respective Nov. 30 - Jan. 3 "Help Wanted" ad and Nov. 30 - Dec. 18 online resident survey for its next school superintendent at their Jan. 4 reorganization meeting.

Glen Ridge Public Schools Superintendent of Schools Dirk Phillips, after eight years at the helm, told Board President Elizabeth Ginsburg Nov. 7 that he will be retiring June 30. He will be leaving with four years left on his 2022-27 contract.

Phillips will be ending a relationship with GRPS since his hiring as a Glen Ridge High School mathematics teacher - which was what he was instructing at East Orange Campus High School - in the 1990s. He also took on being the GRHS Ridgers' wrestling coach. He was soon recognized as teacher and coach of the year and was promoted as Mathematics Department Chairman.

Phillips was later promoted to Ridge-wood Avenue Upper Elementary School Principal and, on Jan. 1, 2010, GRHS Principal. He was appointed schools super Aug. 30, 2015, overseeing the repurchase and remodeling of the central (elementary) School and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Ohio native, father of three and husband of a teacher, had been recognized by the Essex County Association of School Administrators Sept. 1 as its 2023 superintendent of the year. The frequent GRHS sports spectator is Essex County School Administrators President and a member of the Glen Ridge Association of Special Educators and the Glen Ridge Rotary.

BELLEVILLE - ECPO's Homicide/Major Crimes Task Force detectives are looking for the man who shot a resident and one of his sons in broad daylight here Dec. 16.

Witnesses told county and Belleville Police detectives and a television reporter that Frances Medina, 37, was in front of an apartment complex along the 100 block of Mill Street when a black Chevrolet Equinox pulled up at about 2 p.m. Saturday.

A passenger got out of the SUV, fired 10 to 13 gunshots at Medina and his sons, got back in and fled. A neighboring witness said she carried the two boys to her place while Medina cried, "My sons, my sons; be careful my sons!"

The six-year-old boy, who was hit in one of his legs, was taken to RWJBarnabas Health Clara Maass Medical Center. He was listed in stable condition Saturday night with the non-life-threatening injury.

Medina was taken by responding police and ambulance crew to Clara Maass. He was pronounced dead at 3:17 p.m.

An all points bulletin helped Paterson Police find the suspected SUV on their 10 block of Jasper Street, in the Great Falls section, that Saturday night.

Medina's obituary has not been posted as of 9 a.m. Dec. 18.

NUTLEY - The Nutley Board of Education is accepting resumes through the Holidays from those who want to succeed the resigned Kenneth Reilly.

Reilly announced his stepping down from the panel he once presided over during their Dec. 11 board meeting. He leaves with a full year left to his term.

Reilly, who has 12 years service with NBOE, did not say he is resigning. There are observers who say they had a sense of deja vu from this.

The former Nutley American Red Cross director had first resigned in 2012 before running again in 2017. He had later attempted to run for a seat on the Nutley Board of Commissioners in 2021.

It is not known as of press time whether Brenda Sherman has expressed interest. Sherman had been appointed to fill Steve Rogers' school board seat in 2012. Rogers successfully ran for Commissioner; Sherman was elected to two terms before she herself resigned in 2018.

The school board could consider appointing Stephen Gilberti, who finished fourth in a Nov. 8 race for three seats. Whoever is selected would have the option to run for election next year for a term that starts in January 2025.

WORLD NEWS FLASH

(Continued from page 13)


born, but returned to Sao Paulo alone. Following extensive cooperation between both countries, the baby girl was safeguarded in Portugal and international child trafficking investigations are ongoing.

With organized crime groups becoming increasingly digital, most trafficking victims reported being recruited via messaging apps and social media platforms. In Brazil, the Federal Police froze USD 286,000 in criminal proceeds belonging to an organized crime group running cyber scam centers in Cambodia. More than 100 Brazilians had been promised cryptocurrency jobs through social media ads offering generous wages, productivity bonuses, food, and lodging. Once they arrived, however, they were held against their will and forced to carry out online investment scams.

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