

# LOCAL TALK

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25¢

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

### OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

ESSEX COUNTY • EAST ORANGE • ORANGE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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## DEADLINE SET TO FILE MAY ELECTION PETITIONS

**ORANGE** - Residents here and in five other "Local Talk" towns may have already noticed one of the annual advance signs of Spring - prospective candidates asking people to sign their petitions to get onto the April 16 or May 14 elections.

Those petition drives may be getting intense this week because their respective 4 p.m. Feb. 26 and 29 (2024 is a leap year) deadlines to file them with the board of education or municipal clerks to be considered for places on election day ballots.

Those petitions, once received, will have their signatures examined for authenticity. Verified signees will be counted towards a minimum number of registered voters set by Essex County's Board of Elections and the County Clerk's Election Division.

The signature minimum, unless otherwise specified, are 10 percent of those registered voters who have actually voted in last year's or last cycle's election.

In Orange, there appears to be a contest for mayor between the incumbent and a challenging West Ward councilwoman.

By "apparent," there may be other people, incumbent or challenging, who may pass signature verification muster. Those who fail to make the signature minimums - inside or outside of office - may find themselves disqualified from running.

The mayor's office and all three at-large council seats are up for voter approval May 14. Similar offices are up for grabs



in Irvington (all four ward council seats) and Belleville (mayor and the four wards).

All mayoral, council or commissioner seats are up in Montclair and Nutley. While Montclair has separate mayor-council elections. Nutley's commissioners select one of their own as their mayor during their post-election reorganization meeting.

The May 14 election is a nonpartisan municipal one. The candidates do not label themselves as a political party member by name.

The catch here with Orange, Irvington, Belleville and Nutley is that candidates may receive campaign support from the local Democratic or Republican parties. They may receive endorsement from at least the local party chairpersons and a galaxy of

(Continued on page 13)

## NEWARK JOINS LAWSUIT AGAINST KIA & HYUNDAI

*Civil suit seeks to hold automakers accountable for failure to provide engine immobilizers that would prevent thefts and reduce violent crimes and accidents that result*

**Newark, NJ - February 15, 2024** - Mayor Ras J. Baraka has announced that the City of Newark has joined 19 other cities nationwide, including Chicago, Milwaukee, and New York, in suing the automakers Kia and Hyundai for intentionally failing to include engine immobilizers in their vehicles from 2011 to 2021. An engine immobilizer is anti-theft technology that makes a car more difficult to steal.

Newark's suit aims to hold the automakers accountable for the steep rise in Kia and Hyundai thefts - amounting to a 1,246% increase between 2022 and 2023 - directly caused by their failure to install immobilizers. In Newark and elsewhere, the surge in Kia and Hyundai thefts also led to an increase in associated violent offenses like reckless driving and armed robbery.

Newark's complaint alleges that Kia and Hyundai knowingly failed to equip cars sold in the US from 2011 to 2021 with this vital anti-theft technology, which almost all other car manufacturers made a standard feature more than a decade ago. Further, Kia and Hyundai were aware that its security failures were exposed in a viral TikTok in early 2022,



and were aware by mid-2022 that thefts of its vehicles had soared exponentially as a result.

According to the lawsuit, these thefts "inherently endanger Newark citizens and heavily burden Newark's already-strained resources. Yet in face of these harmful impacts, Hyundai and Kia have done nothing. Instead of accepting responsibility for their harmful products through a recall or some other widespread repair program, the manufacturers instead have left it to vehicle owners and local law enforcement to address the problem."

"Kia and Hyundai are neglecting their responsibilities to their customers and our communities when they do not install this critical anti-theft technology," Mayor Baraka said. "And because many of their models are perfect for low-income workers using their car to get to the job, this kind of neglect and indifference really

(Continued on page 5)



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16



*Editorial*  
**Dhiren Shah**  
 Editor-In-Chief

**Hello Readers,**

The 2024 Presidential Election is less than 9 months away, or exactly 258 days away from February 20, 2024. Both front runners have faced negative news. Trump has many cases and many charges. Biden has a bad report about his health and memory. There are no other Democrats who stand out to be a presidential candidate, including Vice President Kamala Harris.

The Republicans have one candidate outside of the frontrunner, Nikki Haley, who seems capable of running the show, but she does not have that charisma to attract people to her side. If she loses in South Carolina, it will be over for her, and it may

be over for her political career as well. She took a big risk to continue, with the hope that Donald Trump may be convicted and cannot run in the election. However, the election laws allow him to run for election even if he is convicted.

There are only a few requirements for someone to run and serve as President. The most important requirement is that person must be a citizen by birth in the United States of America. Also, the person must be 35 years of age before Election Day. Indictments, convictions, and serving jail time does not stop any person from running for president. As long as the person wins by a majority of votes in the Electoral College, they can serve as President.

The 2025 Gubernatorial Election of New Jersey has started to take shape. So far, three people have already announced their intentions. Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop, former president of the NJ

State Senate Steven Sweeney, and now Newark Mayor Ras Baraka. Other politicians have shown interest, including US representative from District 11 Mikie Sherrill, which includes parts of Morris, Essex and Passaic Counties. She had the best rating in the January polls to be the frontrunner in the Democratic Primary. Also included are Josh Gottheimer, an attorney and US representative from District 5, Linden Mayor Derek Armstead, and Montclair Mayor Sean Spiller. There are some more candidates out there, but they have now shown interest yet.

For the first time, a Hindu temple has been built in Abu Dhabi, a stronghold Muslim country in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The best part about the BAPS Temple in Abu Dhabi I like is that they have selected in their construction specialists from different religions, including Hindu, Muslim, Catholic Christian, Sikh, Parsi (from Persian Coun-

tries) and Sheikh. This is an unusual step towards international peace between the religions. I think it's a good start. To bring peace and harmony in this world, we require peace within and starting to learn how to forgive others.

A religion with non-violence theme, Jain Religion, has been taught nowadays at Harvard University since 2017.

Here is an example of the course's description - Nonviolent Communication for Upstanders, School of Public Health Harvard University 2017: Explore manifestations of power dynamics and how to speak up when we observe or experience harmful language, attitudes or beliefs. Learn how to utilize the principles of nonviolent communication that can help us to find the right words when we observe harm that is caused to others.

*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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LO 39	LO 27	LO 24	LO 37	LO 40	LO 50	LO 43

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# FDA APPROVES FIRST MEDICATION TO HELP REDUCE ALLERGIC REACTIONS TO MULTIPLE FOODS

CDC - On Feb. 16, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved Xolair (omalizumab) injection for immunoglobulin E-mediated food allergy in certain adults and children 1 year or older for the reduction of allergic reactions (Type I), including reducing the risk of anaphylaxis, that may occur with accidental exposure to one or more foods.

Patients who take Xolair must continue to avoid foods they are allergic to. Xolair is intended for repeated use to reduce the risk of allergic reactions and is not approved for the immediate emergency treatment of allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis.

Xolair was originally approved in 2003 for the treatment of moderate to severe persistent allergic asthma in certain patients. Xolair is also approved to treat chronic spontaneous urticaria and chronic rhinosinusitis with nasal polyps in certain patients.

“This newly approved use for Xolair will provide a treatment option to reduce the risk of harmful allergic reactions among certain patients with IgE-mediated

food allergies,” said Kelly Stone, M.D., Ph.D., associate director of the Division of Pulmonology, Allergy, and Critical Care in the FDA’s Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. “While it will not eliminate food allergies or allow patients to consume food allergens freely, its repeated use will help reduce the health impact if accidental exposure occurs.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, almost 6% of people in the United States in 2021 had a food allergy and exposure to the particular food(s) to which they are allergic can lead to potentially life-threatening allergic reactions (i.e., anaphylaxis). There is currently no cure for food allergy. Current treatment requires strict avoidance of the food(s) the patient is allergic to, and prompt administration of epinephrine to treat anaphylaxis should accidental exposures occur.

Palforzia (peanut allergen powder) is an oral immunotherapy product approved in patients 4-17 years of age for the mitigation of allergic reactions, including

anaphylaxis, that may occur with accidental exposure to peanut, but its benefits are restricted to peanut allergy. Xolair is the first FDA-approved medication to reduce allergic reactions to more than one type of food after accidental exposure.

Xolair is a drug (in the class of drugs called monoclonal antibodies) that binds to immunoglobulin E (IgE), the antibody type that triggers allergic reactions, and blocks IgE from binding to its receptors.

Xolair’s safety and efficacy in reducing allergic reactions in subjects with food allergies was established in one multi-center, double-blind, placebo-controlled study of 168 pediatric and adult subjects (at least 1 year of age or older) who were allergic to peanut and at least two other foods, including milk, egg, wheat, cashew, hazelnut or walnut. Researchers randomly gave subjects either Xolair or placebo treatment for 16 to 20 weeks. The primary measure of Xolair’s efficacy was the percentage of subjects who were able to eat a single dose (600 milligrams or greater) of peanut protein (equivalent to 2.5 peanuts) without moderate to severe allergic symptoms, such as moderate to severe skin, respiratory or gastrointestinal symptoms, at the end of the 16-to-20-week treatment course.

Of those who received Xolair, 68% (75 of 110 subjects) were able to eat the single dose of peanut protein without moderate to severe allergic symptoms (e.g., whole body hives, persistent coughing, vomiting), compared to 6% (3 of 55 subjects) who received placebo; these results are statistically significant and clinically meaningful for subjects with food allergy. Of note, however, 17% of subjects receiving Xolair had no significant change in the amount of peanut protein tolerated (could not tolerate 100 mg or more of peanut protein). As a result, continuation of strict allergen avoidance is still necessary, despite treatment with Xolair.

The key secondary measures of efficacy were the percentage of subjects who were able to consume a single dose (1,000

milligrams or greater) of cashew, milk or egg protein without moderate to severe allergic symptoms at the end of the 16-to-20-week treatment course. For cashew, 42% (27 of 64 subjects) who received Xolair achieved this endpoint compared to 3% (1 of 30 subjects) who received placebo. For milk, 66% (25 of 38 subjects) who received Xolair achieved this endpoint, compared to 11% (2 of 19) who received placebo. For egg, 67% (31 of 46 subjects) who received Xolair achieved this endpoint, compared to 0% of the 19 who received placebo. As a result, Xolair treatment is approved for certain patients with one or more IgE-mediated food allergies.

The most common side effects of Xolair observed included injection site reactions and fever. Xolair comes with certain warnings and precautions, such as anaphylaxis, malignancy, fever, joint pain, rash, parasitic (worm) infection and abnormal laboratory tests.

In addition, Xolair comes with a boxed warning for anaphylaxis, which can be life threatening, based on pre-marketing and post-marketing reports of anaphylaxis that occurred after Xolair administration. Anaphylaxis has occurred after the first dose of Xolair, but also has occurred beyond one year after beginning treatment. Xolair should only be started in a healthcare setting equipped to manage anaphylaxis. For selected patients who tolerate initial Xolair treatments in a healthcare setting without anaphylaxis, self-administration (or administration by a caregiver) may be appropriate and should be discussed with a healthcare provider.

Patients should not receive Xolair if they have a history of known severe hypersensitivity to Xolair or any of its components.

Xolair is not approved for the immediate emergency treatment of allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis.

Xolair received Priority Review and Breakthrough Therapy designations for this indication.

The FDA granted the approval of Xolair to Genentech.

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# SPORTS WRAP

By William Hathaway, Jr.

This past weekend in Newark, the 77th edition of the boys and girls Essex County Tournament wrapped off. In the first title game of the day, the #1 seed Montclair Immaculate girls' basketball team beat #2 University High 75-65. Leading Montclair Immaculate to the ECT crown was Nila Giraud with a game high 27 points and grabbed 12 rebounds. University was led by Paradise Fisher with 24 points and 9 rebounds along with Morgan Marshall's 16 points. Immaculate has a current record of 22-4, 9-0 in the Super Essex conference, while University is 21-3 overall and 9-2 in conference play.

In the boys' championship game, St. Benedict's Prep beat Montclair Immaculate 57-37. Leading St. Benedict's to victory was Chidi Nwigwe with 20 points and 9 rebounds and David Johnson added 14 points and 7 rebounds. Leading Montclair Immaculate was Kole Grandison with 14 points and 9 rebounds. This was St. Benedict's first Essex County Tournament win since 1993, ending a 31 year drought.

In local college basketball, the Seton Hall men's basketball team won a big road game in the big east conference, beating St. John's at USB Arena 68-62. The Pirates took the W after coming back from 19 points down. Leading SHU was guard Kadary

Richmond with 18 points and 11 rebounds, Al-Amir Dawes with 19 points and 3 rebounds, and Dre Davis with 15 points. Leading St. John's was Danniss Jenkins with 17 points and 9 rebounds and Joel Soriano with 13 points and 12 rebounds.

The Seton Hall women's team won a big home game at Walsh Gym on campus, beating DePaul 91-78. Leading the Lady Pirates in the high scoring game was ShaLynn Hagans with 15 points and 6 rebounds, Micha Gray with 21 points on 8-15 from the field, and freshman Savannah Catalon with 21 points and 7 rebounds. Kae Satterfield added 13 points and 7 rebounds and Azana Baines had 13 points. DePaul was led by Jade Edwards with 11 points and 9 rebounds and Anaya Peoples with 25 points and 10 rebounds.

Finally, the NBA All-Star Weekend was mostly boring instead of great. Team Pacers won the Skills Competition, while Damian Lillard and Mac McClung repeated as Three Point Shootout and Slam Dunk Contest champions respectively. The highlight was Stephen Curry besting New York Liberty guard Sabrina Ionescu in their own Three Point Shootout 29-26.

The All-Star was a no-defense affair, with the East winning 211-186, and Lillard winning MVP honors.

## NEWARK JOINS LAWSUIT

(Continued from page 1)

adds insult to injury to those impacted by the loss of their cars and to other residents who experience a sense of lost security and safety. If Newark doesn't defend itself against these huge corporations, no one will, so we are proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with other cities that have had enough."

"These two colossal automakers have failed to remedy their misconduct, refusing to provide the steering wheel locks and transponder chips demanded by the other suing cities," said Newark Corporation Counsel Kenyatta

Stewart. "Their failure to install these devices is in violation of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 114, which requires vehicles' motor starting systems and steering to be inoperable when the key is removed. Unconscionably, Hyundai and Kia have actually taken further advantage of the crisis by charging consumers for theft security kits. All of their actions are unacceptable in the City of Newark."

The Chicago complaint, filed in August, alleges that Kia and Hyundai deceptively assured consumers that these vehicles possessed "advanced" safety features, despite knowing about this critical defect and its consequences.



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"In 2023, the Newark Police Division reported a 99 percent increase in total auto thefts of all makes and models when compared to the prior year," Public Safety Director Fritz Fragé said. "The influence of a social media car theft challenge, coupled with the gaping anti-theft loophole in certain Kia and Hyundai makes and models contributed to this unconscionable increase in our auto theft stats. Despite deploying our best practices and resources to mitigate this problem, it persists, leading Newark to join other cities in taking legal action that will hold the automakers accountable for the prohibitive costs to law enforcement and public safety."

Once videos posted on social media exposed this defect, thefts of Kia and Hyundai vehicles in Newark surged. Once videos posted on social media exposed this defect, thefts of Kia and Hyundai vehicles in Newark surged. Thefts of these vehicles in the first 10 months of 2023 were 1,678 percent over 2022 statistics. Specifically, a total of 1,956 Hyundais and Kias were

reported stolen in the first 10 months of 2023 while only 110 Hyundais and Kias were stolen in 2022.

In addition, the Newark Police Division was required to dedicate more than 19,824 auto theft suppression overtime hours to address this car theft surge in the first 10 months of 2023. That amounted to more than \$1 million in overtime cost, which was more than the yearly auto theft suppression overtime costs of 2021 and 2022 combined.

Newark seeks damages from Kia and Hyundai for the automakers' fraud, negligence, deceptive marketing practices, sale of defective products, unjust enrichment, and public nuisance, and seeks to reclaim expenses incurred by the city in responding to the wave of thefts caused by their knowing and intentional security failures.

Corporation Counsel Stewart, and Raymond M. Brown and Rachel E. Simon of Pashman Stein Walder Hayden PC are representing the City in the lawsuit.



WORLD NEWS FLASH

**UNITED STATES**



**ADULTS & JUVENILES CHARGED IN KC PARADE SHOOTING**

After a big celebration was marred by yet another mass shooting in the United States, those involved with creating the melee are being held responsible.

On Feb. 14, the Kansas City Chiefs celebrated their victory at Super Bowl LVIII with a parade at Union Square in their hometown. Right after the event ended, gunfire rang out, leaving civilians scrambling for cover. In all, 23 people were shot, including 11 children, and one fatality: Lisa Lopez-Galvan, a 43-year-old radio DJ. Ten others suffered non-gunshot injuries.

In the aftermath, two juveniles were taken into custody. So far, they have only been charged with gun related offenses and resisting arrest.

On Feb. 20, Jackson County Prosecutor Jean Peters Baker announced that Dominic Miller and Lyndell Mays had been charged with second-degree murder, two counts of armed criminal action and unlawful use of a weapon. Both are being held on \$1 million bond. Baker said that a bullet from Miller's gun was the one that mortally wounded Lopez-Galvan.

A motive for the shooting has not been fully confirmed, though it has been said that it stemmed from a disagreement and not terrorism.

Meanwhile, Chiefs quarter-

back and Super Bowl MVP Patrick Mahomes said that he was praying for Kansas City on social media.

Also responding to the tragedy was President Joe Biden, who issued a statement on the day of the shooting.

"The Super Bowl is the most unifying event in America. Nothing brings more of us together. And the celebration of a Super Bowl win is a moment that brings a joy that can't be matched to the winning team and their supporters. For this joy to be turned to tragedy today in Kansas City cuts deep in the American soul.

"Today's events should move us, shock us, shame us into acting. What are we waiting for? What else do we need to see? How many more families need to be torn apart?

"It is time to act. That's where I stand. And I ask the country to stand with me. To make your voice heard in Congress so we finally act to ban assault weapons, to limit high-capacity magazines, strengthen background checks, keep guns out of the hands of those who have no business owning them or handling them.

"We know what we have to do, we just need the courage to do it.

"Today, on a day that marks six years since the Parkland shooting, we learned that three police officers were shot in the line of duty in Washington, DC and another school shooting took place at Benjamin Mays High School in Atlanta. Yesterday marked one year since the shooting at Michigan State University. We've now had more mass shootings in 2024 than there have been days in the year.

"The epidemic of gun violence is ripping apart families and communities every day. Some make the news. Much of it doesn't. But all of it is unacceptable. We have to decide who we are as a country. For me, we're a country where people should have the right to go to school, to go to church, to walk the street - and to attend a Super Bowl celebration - without fear of losing your life to gun violence.

"Jill and I pray for those killed and injured today in Kansas City, and for our country to find the resolve to end this senseless epidemic of gun violence tearing us at the seams."

**MASS SHOOTING UPDATE**

*Information recent as of 2-20-2024 at 12 p.m.*

2024 Mass Shooting Stats: (Source: Mass Shooting Tracker, <https://www.massshootingtracker.site/data/?year=2024>)

- Total Mass Shootings: 67
- Total Dead: 121
- Total Wounded: 221
- Shootings Per Day: 1.31
- Days Reached in Year 2024 as of Feb. 20: 51

**UNITED KINGDOM**



**ALLIES COLLAB TO FIGHT RANSOMWARE**

The U.S. Department of Justice joined the United Kingdom and international law enforcement partners in London Feb. 20 to announce the disruption of the LockBit ransomware group, one of the most active ransomware groups in the world that has targeted over 2,000 victims, received more than \$120 million in ransom payments, and made ransom demands totaling hundreds of millions of dollars.

The U.K. National Crime Agency's Cyber Division, working in cooperation with the Justice Department, FBI, and other international law enforcement partners disrupted LockBit's operations by seizing numerous public-facing websites used by LockBit to connect to the organization's infrastructure and seizing control of servers used by LockBit administrators, thereby disrupting the ability of LockBit actors to attack and encrypt networks and extort victims by threatening to publish stolen data.

"For years, LockBit associates have deployed these kinds

of attacks again and again across the United States and around the world. Today, U.S. and U.K. law enforcement are taking away the keys to their criminal operation," said Attorney General Merrick B. Garland. "And we are going a step further - we have also obtained keys from the seized LockBit infrastructure to help victims decrypt their captured systems and regain access to their data. LockBit is not the first ransomware variant the Justice Department and its international partners have dismantled. It will not be the last."

Additionally, the National Crime Agency, in cooperation with the FBI and international law enforcement partners, has developed decryption capabilities that may enable hundreds of victims around the world to restore systems encrypted using the LockBit ransomware variant. Beginning today, victims targeted by this malware are encouraged to contact the FBI at <https://lockbitvictims.ic3.gov/> to enable law enforcement to determine whether affected systems can be successfully decrypted.

The Justice Department also unsealed an indictment obtained in the District of New Jersey charging Russian nationals Artur Sungatov and Ivan Kondratyev, also known as Bassterlord, with deploying LockBit against numerous victims throughout the United States, including businesses nationwide in the manufacturing and other industries, as well as victims around the world in the semiconductor and other industries. Today, additional criminal charges against Kondratyev were unsealed in the Northern District of California related to his deployment in 2020 of ransomware against a victim located in California.

Finally, the Department also unsealed two search warrants issued in the District of New Jersey that authorized the FBI to disrupt multiple U.S.-based servers used by LockBit members in connection with the LockBit disruption. As disclosed by those search warrants, those servers were used by LockBit administrators to host the so-called

*(Continued on page 9)*

# BLACK LIVES, ANIMAL LIVES, ALL LIVES MATTER



By Michele Lowe

Hello everyone. Proudly to be back. Let me first start off saying, and making myself very clear, I am not perfect and nor do I think or believe I'm better than anyone. I'm human and best believe, I have good days and bad days too. But I do not accept any circumstances of bullying or anything like that. What's right is right and what's wrong is wrong.

I've had my experiences in life, and I can't say I would wanna go back, but now I stand strong and know how to conduct myself and prevent negativity because the devil stays busy.

Another thing is to be yourself; don't change or steal nothing especially. Just to make things clear, my writing is all me and my own brain cells, so I hope that's very understood, and my words are my words, initialed and titled.

I have a good heart and I don't accept the things that have been going on lately. Some folks can just be so wicked. I keep my faith highly in God. This isn't going to end me; it's only going to get better, so thank you people. If I could put their names in this paper I would, but let's stay focused and positive.

Now we have our love for the little furries. We love them very deeply, but we have to keep these streets clean. I mean there is so much mess everywhere it is just outrageous. Why don't folks pick up after their dogs? I wrote

about this before, and now it just becomes more and more on the sidewalk path. Where are dogs supposed to go, in the grass? People don't want to pick up the mess, but you have to be responsible for your pet.

Why should folks walk in crap on their way to work or anywhere? No one wants that accident, and folks have to start looking where they are going. At least when you have to look down sometimes, it can prevent a lot of things from happening.

Still, some of you just don't want to pick it up because you may think that it is disgusting. So people, this image is for you all with pets and it's very easy and you'll have no worries getting rid of the waste. I bought one myself from Walmart for my dog.



Easy to Use

Pull the blue piece open immediately

Okay now, we are coming to my closing, and I hope you all really check out the pooper scoopers. Let's keep our community clean and safe. Also, we must not forget missing people, vanished people, and so on. We are here one day and can be gone tomorrow. Be safe people. Until next time, peace and love. ...

ADVERTORIAL



## American Heart Health Month



Family Support Organization of Essex County offers events and support groups for caregivers of children with special needs. We invite you to join us throughout the month.

**You Don't Have to Take This Journey Alone!**

**FEBRUARY 22:** Better Together Dads meets 6:30 p.m. monthly on 4th Thursdays to give fathers a safe place for connection with other passionate dads. Starting this month, we invite male caregivers to join our 8 Dimensions of Wellness Workshop series with Dr. Henry Clay.

**MARCH 5:** Nurtured Heart Approach meets 6:30 p.m. monthly on 1st Tuesdays for bilingual parents to help develop long-lasting relationships and focus on positive behavior.

**MARCH 6 & 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.

**MARCH 12:** 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.

If you have questions, contact us at (973) 395-1441 or visit our website for the details: <https://bit.ly/fsocevents>

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## Youth Partnership of the Family Support Organization of Essex County Sweetens the Community with Purposeful Bake Sales

East Orange, NJ - On Saturday, February 10, Youth Partnership, a peer support, education, and advocacy group for youth ages 14 to 21, hosted a Valentine's Day Bake Sale to unite generations.

In addition to the bake sale, the youth played BINGO with the residents of Norman Towers Apartments as part of their Generations Unite Initiative. Youth Partnership conceived this initiative to foster social connections and shared learning experiences.

On Monday, February 12, Youth Partnership (YP) moved their bake sale to the Evergreen Business Center located at 60 Evergreen Place in East Orange. The youth along with the staff of the Family Support Organization of Essex County educated visitors about Youth Partnership. Customers received information packets that addressed self-care, stress reduction, and suicide prevention.



Youth Partnership's mission is . . . To educate professionals, families, and peers on mental health issues; and reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues within our communities.

The raised funds will help YP members attend youth-focused, mental health conferences in the future. Youth Partnership's mantra is "Our Voices Will Heard."

Please contact mizraha@mizraha@fsoec.org or call (973) 395-1441, extension 214 for more information about Youth Partnership.

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**WORLD NEWS**

*(Continued from page 6)*

“StealBit” platform, a criminal tool used by LockBit members to organize and transfer victim data.

According to the indictment obtained in the District of New Jersey, from at least as early as January 2021, Sungatov allegedly deployed LockBit ransomware against victim corporations and took steps to fund additional LockBit attacks against other victims. Sungatov allegedly deployed LockBit ransomware against manufacturing, logistics, insurance, and other companies located in Minnesota, Indiana, Puerto Rico, Wisconsin, Florida, and New Mexico. Additionally, as early as August 2021, Kondratyev similarly began to allegedly deploy LockBit against multiple victims. Kondratyev, operating under the online alias “Bassterlord,” allegedly deployed LockBit against municipal and private targets in Oregon, Puerto Rico, and New York, as well as additional targets located in Singapore, Taiwan, and Lebanon. Both Sungatov and Kondratyev are alleged

to have joined in the global LockBit conspiracy, also alleged to have included Russian nationals Mikhail Pavlovich Matveev and Mikhail Vasiliev, as well as other LockBit members, to develop and deploy LockBit ransomware and to extort payments from victim corporations.

“Today’s indictment, unsealed as part of a global coordinated action against the most active ransomware group in the world, brings to five the total number of LockBit members charged by my office and our FBI and Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section partners for their crimes,” said U.S. Attorney Philip R. Sellinger for the District of New Jersey. “And, even with today’s disruption of LockBit, we will not stop there. Our investigation will continue, and we remain as determined as ever to identify and charge all of LockBit’s membership - from its developers and administrators to its affiliates. We will put a spotlight on them as wanted criminals. They will no longer hide in the shadows.”

With the indictment unsealed today, a total of five LockBit members have now

been charged for their participation in the LockBit conspiracy. In May 2023, two indictments were unsealed in Washington, D.C., and the District of New Jersey charging Matveev with using different ransomware variants, including LockBit, to attack numerous victims throughout the United States, including the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Police Department. Matveev is currently the subject of a reward of up to \$10 million through the U.S. Department of State’s Transnational Organized Crime Rewards Program, with information accepted through the FBI tip website at [www.tips.fbi.gov/](http://www.tips.fbi.gov/).

In November 2022, a criminal complaint was filed in the District of New Jersey charging Vasiliev in connection with his participation in the LockBit global ransomware campaign. Vasiliev, a dual Russian-Canadian national, is currently in custody in Canada awaiting extradition to the United States. In June 2023, Russian national Ruslan Magomedovich Astamirov was charged by criminal complaint in the District of New

*(Continued on page 12)*



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

**NEWARK** - A Georgia King Village tenant leader, who got the attention of Newark Police and a USPS-Newark Field Office Postal Inspector, intends to get Municipal Council attention at their Feb. 21 meeting over the Feb. 11 wholesale ransacking of an apartment building mailroom.

Gee Cureton told GKV landlord L+M Development Partners, the USPS Postal Inspection Service and a reporter Feb. 12 that she found the mailroom of 18-story Building No. 250 violated that Sunday.

Although individual mailboxes had been burgled before, the front panel of the communal mailboxes were pried and left open this time. Pieces of mail were left strewn and abandoned on the floor.

"GKV needs to replace all of their mailboxes because they are 40-to-50-years-old," said Cureton Feb. 13. "We need tamper proof mailboxes."

"Based on the boxes' location, they're property; they're private mail receptacles for residents of that address," said postal inspector Greg Kliemisch. "USPS is reaching out to the manager to rectify this issue to ensure mail that's delivered to this address is secure for residents to acquire."

L+M Development spokeswoman Claire Holmes, on Feb. 12, said that management had reviewed and shared local security recordings with NPD. "We've referred last night's inci-

dent to law enforcement and implemented additional security measures around the mailboxes to deter vandalism."

**IRVINGTON** - An NJ Superior Court-Newark jury convicted a Newark man in the second of what authorities said were a string of three sexual assaults and an attempted fourth from June 5 to Dec. 13, 2015.

The jury, on Feb. 7, told Judge Ronald L. Wigler that they found Kervin Joseph-Michel, 43, guilty of six counts: first-degree kidnapping and aggravated sexual assault; second-degree sexual assault and third-degree aggravated assault, criminal restraint and endangering the welfare of a minor.

Joseph-Michel, according to ECPO prosecutors, had tried to strike a conversation with the 21-year-old township woman while she was walking home with her three-week-old son in her arms - but ignored him - Nov. 4, 2015. He followed her to her address' backyard porch, where he drew a knife on her.

County attorneys said that the victim heard her boyfriend's car pulling up and she asked Joseph-Michel if she could quiet her son, who was also on the floor. She scooped up the infant and ran to the boyfriend. Joseph-Michel fled but not before lunging at and struggling with the boyfriend and leaving the disarmed knife behind.

ECPO Special Victims Unit detectives - with assistance from Irvington, Newark and East Orange colleagues - tied DNA on the knife to Joseph-Michel. He was arrested Jan. 28, 2016 and was held on an overall \$1.8 million bail: \$750,000 each for the Nov. 4 and 2 assaults and \$300,000 for the June 5 assault of a 13-year-old girl.

The first assault happened at the girl's Newark home and the Nov. 2 assault was of a 29-year-old Irvington woman at her place. The Dec. 13 attempted assault was of forcing himself into a woman's car at a Newark gas station convenience store and driving her to another location.

Joseph-Michel faces 15-to-20 years imprisonment for the Nov. 4 kidnapping and 10-20 years for the aggravated sexual assault at Judge Wigler's April 8 sentencing. Trials on the other

three crimes are to be scheduled.

**EAST ORANGE** - City native Theodore "Ted" Stephens II, as of Feb. 16, can remove "Acting" from his Essex County Prosecutor title.

The former Essex County Surrogate's confirmation was unanimously approved by the State Senate Feb. 12 and sworn in by Superior Court Judge Mark Ali in the county's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. building in Newark Feb. 16. The inauguration also confirmed Newarkers Romesh Sudkhedo as First Assistant Prosecutor and Mitchell McGuire as Chief of Detectives.

Gov. Phil Murphy had named Stephens as acting prosecutor Sept. 4, 2018. Neither the Governor's Office nor the Senate Judiciary Committee have said why it took so long for the former Orange and East Orange municipal judge and former East Orange City Corporate Council to be confirmed.

### "Teen Streets" Fire Moves 12

City fire detectives and the State Fire Marshal are looking for the cause of a fire here at 168 No. 17th St. Feb. 15. The fire forced out its 12 residents into temporary housing.

The first East Orange Fire Department units from the Grove Street Station found heavy smoke coming from the 1930 three story wood frame house's attic at 2:55 p.m. that Thursday, prompting a second alarm. The blaze was quickly contained and firefighters found no one else inside.

**ORANGE** - City officials have been asking the current or recent tenants of 765-787 Vose Ave. since Feb. 13 to get in touch with City Attorney Gracia Robert Montilus as soon as possible.

"Based on the owners' negligent management and maintenance of this property," announced Mayor Dwayne D. Warren, "the City will file charges against your Landlord in Superior Court before (a) presiding Judge. The City will also file to Enforce Tenants' Rights and seek sanctions against your Landlord."

The display advertisement-like posting on the municipal Facebook page names the

mayor, the Municipal Council and "Concerned Orange Tenants and Neighbors" as plaintiffs in the to-be filed civil lawsuit against "Unsafe and Deplorable Living Conditions."

The graphic's "Defendants" list includes: Cindy Phillips, Salah Mekkaway, Joe Friedman and Lyon Bob as officers or general partners; "emergency repair expenditure authorizer" Gene Cooper, "maintenance service provider" Gerard Sivers, "manager" Rich Greco and "title owners of units in building John Does" and Vose Equities.

City inspectors and officials have found that conditions are affecting more than what Magedala Filocsaint and her five children have been suffering. Filocsaint, her children and two relatives entered Warren's City Hall office Nov. 8 and pleaded for help for she was facing eviction from her landlord at 756 Vose that day. She brought a suitcase of zoning violation copies and related notices from her landlord.

Deputy Planning Director Chris Mobley had directed Filocsaint to the county's welfare division TANF Office. She and her children have been spending the winter with their aunt.

All three South Ward properties are owned by Vose Equities. The Brooklyn company bought 756 and 765 Vose in 1987 and 787 Vose in 2020.

A full copy of the city's 39-page, four count complaint is to be found at [www.orangenj.gov](http://www.orangenj.gov).

**WEST ORANGE** - Township police detectives are seeking to trace the calls of those who "Zoom Bombed" the Feb. 13 council meeting with antisemitic and racist speech and insults. The incident prompted condemnation against the callers and support of West Orange's elders from a wide variety of quarters.

Council President Rev. William "Bill" Rutherford, in advance of the Feb. 13 snowstorm, switched what would have been Wednesday's live in-person meeting to a live remote one. They were considering how to fine tune a prospective resolution that would urge a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas War for a later meeting's public hearing and prospective final vote.

(Continued on page 12)



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## SHU UPDATE: MARONI RESPONDS AMID COMPLAINT FROM NYRE'S WIFE

By Lev D. Zilbermintz

Kelly L. Nyre, the wife of former Seton Hall University (SHU) President Joseph Nyre, has filed a lawsuit alleging sexual harassment at SHU. In court papers, Ms. Nyre describes at least two incidents of sexual harassment by Kevin Maroni, the former Chair of the Board of Regents, one of two governing bodies of Seton Hall University. The Board of Trustees is the other governing body of SHU.

### Facts. First sexual harassment incident.

According to court papers, "Plaintiff K. Nyre was, at all times relevant hereto, married to Plaintiff J. Nyre.

"Throughout Plaintiff J. Nyre's employment with Defendant SHU, Plaintiff K. Nyre possessed a Defendant SHU Identification Card and email address, and was called upon to attend and/or host various meetings, fundraisers, events, and appearances in her official capacity as (1) a liaison on behalf of Defendant SHU and (2) the spouse of Defendant SHU's president.

"Plaintiff K. Nyre also regularly met with a University executive assistant to re-

view Plaintiff K. Nyre's University schedule where her presence was needed and/or expected.

"Further, Plaintiff K. Nyre traveled to various events on behalf of Defendant SHU that were funded by Defendant SHU.

"On or about June 9, 2021, Plaintiff K. Nyre attended Defendant SHU's annual Board Dinner on campus in Jubilee Hall.

"At the dinner, seating was organized such that Plaintiff K. Nyre was placed next to Mr. Marino for dinner.

"The reason K. Nyre was sitting next to Mr. Marino was because of a prior phone call between Mr. Marino and Plaintiff J. Nyre on May 20, 2021 wherein Mr. Marino angrily disparaged Plaintiff K. Nyre and falsely accused Plaintiff K. Nyre of 'not spending enough time' with Mr. Marino the prior evening at a fundraising event hosted by Plaintiffs K. Nyre and J. Nyre at their home.

"Accordingly, seating for the dinner was arranged intentionally to sit Plaintiff K. Nyre next to Mr. Marino to ensure he received the 'attention' he previously demanded.

"Then, before sitting down for dinner, Mr. Marino approached Plaintiff K. Nyre, placed his hand on her back preventing

Plaintiff K. Nyre from moving, moved Plaintiff K. Nyre's hair away from her neck with his other hand, kissed K. Nyre on the neck, and whispered into her ear, 'you know I love you.'"

According to court papers, "Plaintiff K. Nyre was deeply humiliated, offended, and uncomfortable by Mr. Maroni's blatant sexual harassment.

"Indeed, for that reason, Plaintiff K. Nyre made an intentional effort to attend far fewer events for Defendant SHU and if she did have to attend same, requested either Plaintiff K. Nyre or another staff member be near Plaintiff K. Nyre at all times in the presence of Mr. Marino.

"Simultaneously, Plaintiff K. Nyre reported the sexual harassment to Plaintiff J. Nyre.

"In connection with Plaintiff J. Nyre's obligation as a mandated reporter under applicable policy and law, and pursuant to the Responsive Action Plan ("RAP") developed in connection with the Cardinal McCarrick investigation, Plaintiff J. Nyre reported the sexual harassment to general counsel and Regent Murray.

"Notably, Plaintiff K. Nyre was, at this

(Continued on page 12)

**SHU UPDATE**

*(Continued from page 11)*

junction, very concerned about retaliation against herself, Plaintiff J. Nyre, and/or their family by Mr. Marino or the Board.

“Plaintiff K. Nyre was never contacted by the University in connection with any investigation into the sexual harassment to which she was subjected by Mr. Marino.

“Thereafter, on December 1, 2022, at the Oread Hotel in Lawrence, Kansas, Plaintiffs J. Nyre and K. Nyre were in the hotel lobby on university business when Regent Murray approached Plaintiff K. Nyre and told her he was aware of issues involving Mr. Marino and advised that he was supposedly taking steps to resolve these issues.

“However, Mr. Marino's campaign of sexual harassment continued.”

**Mr. Maroni's statement to the Setonian**

Here is what Mr. Maroni had to say about the sexual harassment allegations and Dr. J. Nyre's lawsuit. This statement was published in the students' online newsletter, the Setonian, on February 16, 2024.

“Dr. Nyre’s lawsuit, in which I am not a defendant, is rife with false and defamatory statements. I recruited Dr. Nyre to serve as Seton Hall’s President in 2018 and he recruited me to serve as Chairman of the Board of Regents. He and I then worked effectively together for several years before I objected to his gross mishandling of the investigation of an embezzlement scandal at Seton Hall Law School. He hired a friend of his to conduct that investigation - a lawyer fired by the Iona University Board of Trustees - and together they made former Law School Dean Boozang a scapegoat of that scandal although she had nothing whatsoever to do with it.

“When I lodged my objection, Dr. Nyre vowed to have me removed as Chair and proceeded to make a host of false allegations

appeared around January 2020 and, leading into today’s operation, had grown into one of the most active and destructive variants in the world. LockBit members have executed attacks against more than 2,000 victims in the United States and around the world, making at least hundreds of millions of U.S. dollars in ransom demands and receiving over \$120 million in ransom payments.

The LockBit ransomware variant, like other major ransomware variants, operates in the “ransomware-as-a-service” (RaaS) model, in which administrators, also called developers, design the ransomware, recruit other members - called affiliates - to deploy it, and maintain an online software dashboard called a “control panel” to provide the affiliates with the tools necessary to deploy LockBit.

about me to a group of six Regents, centered around the entirely bogus claim that I had a conflict of interest based on my professional relationship with the Dean. In making that claim, Dr. Nyre concealed from those Regents an opinion letter written by the Connell Foley law firm stating, in no uncertain terms, that I had no such conflict. I completed my term as Chair on June 30, 2023, and resigned from the Board in December.

“Dr. Nyre’s wife’s disgraceful claim that I harassed her on two occasions is false in every respect. That never happened, and she knows it. I have provided ample evidence to the EEO Office refuting her baseless accusations, and expect to be fully exonerated when the pending investigation of that claim is resolved.

“Dr. Nyre’s lawsuit is a direct violation of his separation agreement with the University, to which I was not a party, and flatly undermines the statements he made when he left his position. Stated simply, he is attempt-

*(Continued on page 13)*

**WORLD NEWS**

*(Continued from page 9)*

Jersey for his participation in the LockBit conspiracy, including his deployment of LockBit against victims in Florida, Japan, France, and Kenya. Astamirov is currently in custody in the United States awaiting trial.

Kondratyev, according to the indictment obtained in the Northern District of California and unsealed, is also charged with three criminal counts arising from his use of the Sodinokibi, also known as REvil, ransomware variant to encrypt data, exfiltrate victim information, and extort a ransom payment from a corporate victim based in Alameda County, California.

The LockBit ransomware variant first

Affiliates, in turn, identify and unlawfully access vulnerable computer systems, sometimes through their own hacking or at other times by purchasing stolen access credentials from others. Using the control panel operated by the developers, affiliates then deploy LockBit within the victim computer system, allowing them to encrypt and steal data for which a ransom is demanded to decrypt or avoid publication on a public website maintained by the LockBit developers, often called a data leak site.

The FBI Newark Field Office is investigating the LockBit ransomware variant.

An indictment is merely an allegation. Under U.S. law, all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

**TOWN WATCH**

*(Continued from page 10)*

What would become a five-hour meeting started off as a debate over whether West Orange should join other U.S. municipalities in urging a ceasefire or that such a resolution would affect such an international matter. The council, which represents six percent Palestinian residents and nine percent Jewish residents among the 50,000 overall population, had been grappling for fairness regarding Israeli and Palestinian flag raisings and dueling demonstrations since Oct. 7.

The callers using fake names and addresses, however, seemed to be as plentiful as the snowflakes outside. One caller pref-

aced naming certain Biden Administration officials with "Jewish," a second called the 1933-45 Holocaust as "The Holohoax," among other antisemitic slurs.

When a third caller called for building concentration camps for Jews, Rutherford began reminding callers not to use hate speech. The callers frequently responded with racist insults at the reverend. The Council, in a 1-4 straw poll, decided to table the resolution; the meeting's YouTube recording was not aired.

The pro-Palestinian West Orange for Humanity group promptly decried "the depraved, antisemitic hate speech." The 25-year West Orange African American Heritage Organization executive board denounced as

being "appalled by the vile, abusive, insulting and racially offensive epithets spewed by a public speaker at the recent Zoom council meeting and called for "an immediate investigation."

"We reiterate our commitment to do what we can to ensure that racism, sexism, anti-semitism, Islamophobia, homophobia and all forms of hate have no home in our society," said the West Orange Human Relations Commission. "I'm sorry that this event happened to such a great community," added Cong. Donald M. Payne, Jr. (D-Newark), "and I hope that the racist, non-resident attackers are apprehended and quickly brought to justice."

**SOUTH ORANGE / MAPLEWOOD** - The inde-

pendent investigator that the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education had hired Feb. 1 is looking to verify or quash allegations made by students and parents of a Columbia High School special dance instructor.

One CHS parent and student told the SOMSD board Jan. 25 that the teacher has conducted "occurrences of emotional abuse, manipulation and threats" that "have been going on for years."

The student began by recalling that some students had approached her about rescheduling a rehearsal two weeks before a show so they could study for an AP test. The teacher had replied with, "You have destroyed the legacy of the special dance team," and threatened to cancel the show. They are also being

*(Continued on page 14)*

**DEADLINE SET FOR ELECTION PETITIONS***(Continued from page 1)*

same party elected public officials.

A candidate or a slate of candidates may band themselves under a common, single purpose platform or ticket. Recent incumbencies, for example, have made "Team Irvington Strong," "A Better Belleville" and the like familiar names on the ballot and campaign material.

The same is true - or should be true - with campaigning in Newark and Irvington's April 16 board of education and school budget elections. The N.J. State Association of School Boards stress that partisan politics, at least in direct name, be barred from school board elections and campaigning.

The above allows campaign organizers,

including those who have access to party machinery, from working around that rule. "Team Irvington Schools Strong" and "Moving Newark Schools Forward" are examples of tickets whose names are variations of "Moving Newark Forward," Team Irvington Strong" mayor-council team names.

Both Irvington and Newark's registered voters have three school member seats each to fill. One-third of the nine-member boards of education are annually cycled - although Newark Public Schools this year may add a fourth ballot position to fill an unexpired term.

At least Newark and Irvington voters can have an annual say in their respective public school district budgets. Eight other "Local Talk" towns lost that annual choice when they moved their April elections onto the November General Election ballot.

**SHU UPDATE** *(Continued from page 12)*

ing to rehabilitate his tarnished reputation and secure another undeserved payout from the University. I am confident that desperate and pathetic attempt will fail.

"I have loved and served Seton Hall for more than forty years, and will love and serve Seton Hall long after Dr. Nyre's tenure is just a bad memory."

**Analysis**

So what can be made out of Mr. Maroni's statements? It is difficult to imagine everything that J. Nyre and Kelly L. Nyre describe is not truthful. Seton Hall University has a reputation for trying to ignore crises. History, however, shows that the Seton Hall administration did nothing to prevent the infamous Boland Hall Fire in 2000. Nor did the university do anything to protect its students against sexual harassment and rape. Protecting Pirates is an off-campus group of alumni and students who are survivors of rape and sexual assault. They have plenty of data about rape and sexual harassment on campus. SHU administration never met with Protecting Pirates.

The lawsuit by J. Nyre mentions harassment of employees by Mr. Maroni. This means that something really serious happened, yet the University is trying to ignore it. All told, it seems like Mr. Maroni is trying to throw mud at Plaintiffs J. Nyers and Kelli L. Nyers. Maroni's response does not explain why the administration did not open an investigation into what was going on.

Having analyzed Mr. Maroni's statement, let us return to what court papers say.

**Second incident of sexual harassment. SHU does nothing.**

According to court papers, "On December 6, 2022, Plaintiff K. Nyre arrived for De-

fendant SHU's Christmas 2022 Board Dinner Reception in the University Center.

"Plaintiff J. Nyre's arrival was delayed due to a Board meeting and, accordingly, Plaintiff K. Nyre was alone greeting guests and welcoming staff members to the dinner. Concerned that Plaintiff K. Nyre would be in Mr. Marino's presence without him or his assigned staff, Plaintiff J. Nyre called Regent Kevin Flood ("Regent Flood") and asked him to stand next to Plaintiff K. Nyre until he arrived.

"At that time, Mr. Marino approached K. Nyre from behind, placed his hands on her shoulders and commented in a lascivious tone, "Look at (Plaintiff K. Nyre) rocking the Loubees," in a reference to Christian Louboutin shoes.

"Fortunately, Regent Flood approached Plaintiff K. Nyre, as requested by Plaintiff J. Nyre, and witnessed Mr. Marino's improper sexual overture. Regent Flood immediately intervened and stood by Plaintiff K. Nyre until Plaintiff J. Nyre arrived.

"Following the event, Mr. Marino's sexual harassment of Plaintiff K. Nyre was reported by Plaintiff J. Nyre to Regents Flood and Defendants Luciola and D'Alessandro. Again, Plaintiff K. Nyre was never contacted by Defendant SHU in connection with same.

"Throughout the Spring and Summer of 2023, Defendant SHU indicated they were initiating an investigation. Plaintiff K. Nyre expected to be interviewed; however, no interviews were ever conducted, and no investigation ever actually began.

"However, on or about November 16, 2023 - nearly one (1) year following the aforementioned incident - Plaintiff J. Nyre received a general notice that Defendant SHU was now conducting an investigation. Said notice requested any supplemental information regarding Mr. Marino, which Plaintiff J. Nyre and Plaintiff K. Nyre provided.

"Local Talk" wrote about Seton Hall

A budget "Yes" vote means that the public school district can apply their proposed spending plan and school property tax rate by July 1. A "No" vote prompts the convening of a joint school board-municipal council board of school estimate to hash out an alternative budget before June 30.

Those who want to register to vote have until March 26 and April 23 to register with the Essex County Clerk. One must show that he or she has lived in the home municipality at least a year beforehand. March 26 and April 23 are also the last dates to transfer their registration to another town.

Details may be found and questions may be sent to [www.essexclerk.com](http://www.essexclerk.com) and/or (973) 621-5030 for the Essex County Superintendent of Elections//Commissioner of Registration.

University students and alumni, victims of sexual assault, in 2021-2023. According to Local Talk's 2021-2023 articles, those that tried to get SHU to investigate sexual assault claims got nowhere.

According to court papers, "Suffice to say, it is clear that the aforementioned actions of Mr. Marino and inaction of Defendant SHU is harassing, discriminatory, and retaliatory on account of Plaintiff K. Nyre's gender and/or sex.

"Plaintiff K. Nyre has been sexually harassed by Mr. Marino on a number of occasions over the course of years and, yet, Defendant SHU has failed to perform any formal investigation into same, let alone take remedial action to put the conduct to a stop.

"Each of the instances of Mr. Marino's sexual harassment of Plaintiff K. Nyre occurred while Plaintiff K. Nyre attended Defendant SHU events in her official capacity as the spouse of Defendant SHU's president, Plaintiff J. Nyre. Accordingly, at all times relevant herein, Plaintiff K. Nyre was an "employee" of Defendant SHU as defined under the NJLAD.

"On the account of the joint and several acts and omissions of Corporate Defendants, Individual Defendants, John Does (1-5), and ABC Corporations (1-5), Plaintiff K. Nyre has been, and continues to suffer economic losses and pecuniary damage in the form of benefits past, present and future.

"On account of the joint and several acts and omissions of Corporate Defendants, Individual Defendants, John Does (1-5), and ABC Corporations (1-5), Plaintiff K. Nyre has been, and continues to, suffer non-economic damages in the form of humiliation, stress, and anxiety, causing her mental and emotional anguish and dysfunction and physical manifestations of same, included but not limited to, inability to sleep, headaches, negative thoughts, nervousness, anxiousness, upset stomach, and stomach pains, all or some of which may be permanent."

The Observation Booth



OP-ED By Andrea Dialect

XOXO

MY BFF

Subjects: Mariah Pinckney & Bailey

I hadn't posed the usual question when I met the two. How do you make such a commitment? This doggie was a cutie, though. But, rain, snow, sleet lol... Mariah lovingly gives us a peek into her world with her BFF.

My favorite part of this love story is the caring and loving gentlemen that Mariah has been blessed with, including Samson. Her father was a Sagittarius man like my dad. I could relate to and clearly understand his beautiful nature. Those Pooches, not so much. But after meeting the two,

I may have to alter my approach when I walk or roll up as crossing paths with those BFFs around the way!

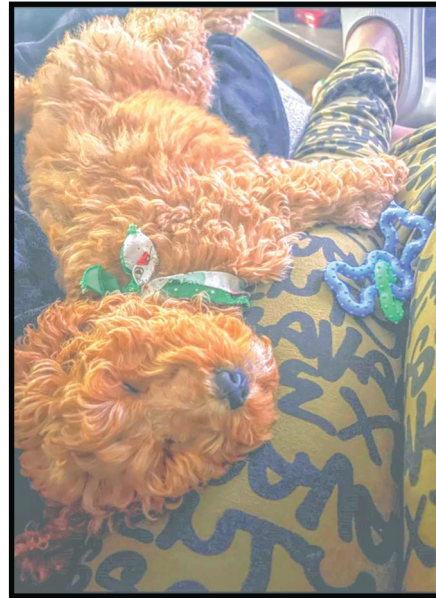
WOOF

Andrea: Why a dog?

**Mariah:** My Fiancé was just like you, Andrea. When I first met him, he said, "I just don't get it." I told him that he had to meet my dog and if he doesn't like you we will not date. When having a dog when they're a puppy, you have to take care of them. Make sure they nap. You have to take care of younger dogs. An older dog can just leave stuff out. It's very much of a nurturing thing, and dogs are very loving. Bailey's independent, but at the end of the day, she wants to be right under you; Companionship,



Photos By Andrea Dialect



comfort, something there that's full of love. There's a bond and a strong connection. To have something love me so much, you can't explain it; And no matter what you do to a dog, they love you, which can be really bad. But no matter what, they still love you!

I was sixteen, and he was four months old when my dad surprised us with Samson (me, my mom, my two sisters, and my grandfather). He was a housewarming gift. My parents had purchased a house in South Carolina on move-in day because we had to get into the house through the garage. When we came through, this little furry thing was weeping in there, and it was him.

The first night, they put him in the crate to try to make him comfortable, but he cried all night, so I went down to get him,

and that's when he instantly went from being the family dog to being my dog. That was it. We also had another dog at the time. He was a Jack Russell Terrier, but he was mean. We used to call Samson Shadow because he was behind me from that moment on. He'd been that every step of the way. Literally, if I'd sit somewhere, he's under my leg. If He couldn't sneak in when I went into the bathroom, He'd sit outside the door. ...

Read this article in its entirety at [www.localtalkweekly.com](http://www.localtalkweekly.com) and type The Observation Booth in the search bar. Send questions or comments to [localtalkandrea@gmail.com](mailto:localtalkandrea@gmail.com).



TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 12)

asked to raise \$100 a year as a class assignment.

"For years, students have left the dance room defeated and crying, vowing to quit," said the student. "It's so upsetting that we must be here today publicly begging the board to take years' worth of allegations seriously."

The mother told of the instructor demanding prompt responses to students to her direct emails she sends daily, demands that students miss other classes, have students or supervisors "not approved by the board" lead classes. Students are being rehearsed for 12 straight hours daily, "far longer than what any union would permit professional dancers to be required to dance.

"Is the district okay with administration doing nothing when student after student has told guidance and the principal that they're being bullied, intimidated, scared and not feel safe?" asked the dance mom.

The student and mother spoke without mentioning their names. Neither the special dance instructor under investigation has been named.

**BLOOMFIELD** - The Township Council's newest member, after their Feb. 12 appointment and scheduled Feb. 20 inauguration here, is Monica Charris Tabares.

The council unanimously approved Tabares, a first-term Bloomfield Board of Education member, upon recommendation of the Bloomfield Democratic Committee. She will at least fulfill the 13 months left to now-Interim Mayor Ted Gamble's unexpired term.

About 18.22 percent of participating registered township voters, or 4,362 voters, put Tabares onto the BBOE Nov. 2, 2021. She was the only successful member of the challenging "For Our Kids" slate.

Tabares had run because she wanted the Latinx population here, about 30 percent, to be represented on the school board. Now she

will be the first Latina township councilwoman.

Orange Public Schools parents may remember Tabares when she was a Teacher of The Year there. Tabares holds Preschool-3, Kindergarten-5, Bilingual teaching, Education Supervision and Principal CE licenses. The education doctoral candidate has both a bachelor's degree in English and a master's in bilingual education and educational leadership from Kean University.

The North Hudson County Educator of The Year is North Hudson Community Action Corporation Head Start Program Director. The Barranquilla, Col. native emigrated to Jersey City with her family at three-years-old. She said that she and her husband moved here for the public schools.

Both Tabares and First Ward Councilwoman Jenny Mundell have confirmed that they will run on the BDC June 6 party primary ticket. Michael Venezia, who resigned as mayor Jan. 6 to take up his elected Jan. 9

(Continued on page 15)

**TOWN WATCH** (Continued from page 14)

State Assemblyman seat, remains the township party's chairman. Venezia now bats .500 in having his council colleagues approve party recommendations; the council selected then-at-large councilman Gamble over Mundell.

**MONTCLAIR** - Current Councilman Robert J. "Bob" Russo, on Feb. 14, has chosen to run for at-large May 14 re-election - and not for another mayoral bid.

Russo, a 28-year civic and political servant, has not said why he made his decision. A majority of registered township voters had returned him as an at-large councilman in 2012 and re-elected him in 2016 and 2020. He was also named Deputy Mayor during his latest tenure.

Russo, 76, was first elected here as First Ward Councilman in 1992 and re-elected in 1996 before making his 2000 mayoral run. He was elected over first-term mayor William Farlie by about 325 votes - but finished third in his re-election bid to Ed Remsen in 2004.

Russo had several runs for Essex County now-Commissioner, starting with a District 5 bid in 1978 but lost to Nutley's James Piro by 36 absentee ballot votes. He lost in 1987 to then-incumbent Arthur Clay by 4,000 votes, in 2008 by 300 votes to incumbent Ralph Caputo and in 2011 to Brendan Gill.

The Rutgers-Newark political science graduate came here by way of Newark's Roseville section and Bloomfield - the latter as its Democratic Committee Chairman for five years. He is the son of first-generation immigrant and soda distributor Robert while in Newark.

Russo, who considers himself an independent thinker, looks up to Theodore Roosevelt and Robert Kennedy as his heroes. He is an adjunct political science/public administration professor at Montclair State University. He obtained a master's degree in political science and public administration from Rutgers-Newark in 1968. He was on "The Observer" newspaper staff and a member of Students for Robert F. Kennedy for President.

**BELLEVILLE** - Residents of a Soho/Silver Lake neighborhood and local motorists are hoping that the water woes and detours along the township's part of Watsessing Avenue Feb. 16 and 20-21 are behind them.

The Belleville Water Department posted an advanced note Feb. 16 that its customers there "and surrounding streets" may experience low water pressure and discolored water that Friday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Those were the scheduled days, absent the Presidents Day holiday weekend.

The municipal department explained that its customers were being tied into a

new water main beneath the avenue. That new main's ownership - whether BWD or the Newark Water and Sewer Department - is unclear as of press time.

Drivers taking the Belleville part of the Avenue may have experienced detours those three days.

**New PSE&G Washington Substation**

Public Service Electric and Gas explained at a Feb. 12 Belleville Town Hall meeting that a new electrical substation is being built north of Bowlero and the Belleville ShopRite since the autumn.

The "New Washington Project" will bolster overhead power transmission line towers as well as building a substation to serve 12,000 local customers. It is part of the power utility's drive to upgrade and weather-harden new or existing stations here and in Newark, East Orange, Orange and Bloomfield.

**NUTLEY** - ECPO detectives are still investigating the Feb. 14 Milton Avenue hit-and-run that killed a Paterson man and injured a possible Nutley resident although a suspect had been arrested Feb. 18 and a Feb. 24 funeral set for the deceased in Passaic.

Nutley police and fire units were called to the 100 block of Milton between Linn Road and the Garden State Parkway overpass just after 7 p.m. that Wednesday. They found two people lying in the road beside Milton's north side and a utility pole. There was also evidence of car bumper pieces and other evidence of a vehicle collision.

Authorities said that the man and other person were taken to RWJBarnabas Health Newark Beth Israel Center - where the man, identified as Wiston Perlaa, 22 - was declared dead and the other person treated for non-life-threatening injuries. Nutley first responders and the ECPO Homicide Task Force kept that block closed for their crime scene investigation until dawn Feb. 15.

Erick Ferrer, who identified himself as Perlaza's older brother, told a reporter at the family's Feb. 17 Paterson vigil that Perlaza and his Nutley girlfriend were on a Valentine's Day date when they were hit. Ferrar said that the girlfriend remains in hospital for treatment. He said that Perlaza's covered body remained at the scene until 1 a.m.

Essex County Prosecutor Stevens said that area surveillance recordings led investigators to Dhkir Robinson, 42, of Lumberton, Burlington County, Feb. 15. Robinson is being held in Newark's Essex County Correctional Facility on Nutley and Newark police detainers.

Robinson has been charged with causing a death while driving with a suspended license or being unlicensed, knowingly leaving the scene of a fatal accident, en-


dangering an injured victim, obstruction of law enforcement and tampering or destroying evidence. He also faces a parole violation and two counts of possessing Class I, II and/or IV controlled dangerous substances.


A service for Peralza, who would have been 23 Feb. 19, is set for 4 p.m. Feb. 24 at Funeraria Alvarez, 66 Passaic Ave., Passaic. Ferrer has set up a GoFundMe.com page to pay for expenses.

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