

LOCAL TALK

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OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

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QUANTAVIA HILBERT'S MAYORAL CAMPAIGN IN FULL EFFECT

Photos Courtesy Hilbert Campaign



By Walter Elliott

ORANGE - The 2024 nonpartisan municipal elections for mayor and city council members, set for May 14, kicked into top gear by the official opening of Quantavia Hilbert for Mayor's campaign headquarters here at 170 Scotland Rd. March 16.

"Local Talk" saw Hilbert standing on a temporary stage before dozens of men, women and children in front of 170 Scotland's Suite 1S on a sunny but slightly windy Saturday afternoon. at about 2:30 p.m. The current West Ward Councilwoman noted that Orange, north of 30,000 by the 2010 U.S. Census, had grown by some 10,000 residents in the last 10 years - which means that some city ser-

vices have to grow with them.

"Orange has grown by 10,000 residents," said Hilbert. "That means that we need more police officers and firefighters. We have to look at our Department of Public Works - who are responsible for cleaning our streets and our parks."

One of the priorities Hilbert would put on the municipal workforce is the opportunity to grow their potential. Some of that proposed "uptraining" comes from her career experience.

"I began a logistical and administrative company that went from startup to more than \$15 million," said Hilbert. "One of the things I did for my employees is to offer

(Continued on page 11)

OPEN PUBLIC RECORDS ACT SAFE... FOR NOW

By Lev D. Zilbermintz

TRENTON - A controversial piece of legislation that would have likely made the Open Public Records Act (OPRA) toothless was pulled from the legislative agenda. The move occurred less than an hour before the Assembly Appropriations Committee was to meet, NorthJersey.com wrote in its March 14, 2024 online story.

The decision to pull the bill from the agenda occurred only three days after both the Assembly and Senate held public hearings on the proposed OPRA amendments. According to a March 11, 2024 story in newjerseymonitor.com, under the 29-page bill, "draft" documents would become private; agencies would be able to exempt records and seek court orders against requestors who are deemed to be nuisances; data brokers would be barred from acquiring public documents; and governments could redact more information from records.

An editorial in northjersey.com dated March 14, 2024 implores New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy "not to allow Legislature to decimate transparency, OPRA." The editorial, signed by three different executive



17th Dist. Assemblyman Joe Danielsen (D-Somerset) is the architect of the potential OPRA gutting legislation

editors and three directors representing USA Today Network; NorthJersey.com and The Record; Asbury Park Press; Burlington County Times; South Jersey; MyCentralJersey.com, the Courier News and the Home News Tribune, gives a checklist of what the proposed amendments to the Open Public Records Act would do.

As given, these amendments would:

- Exempt or limit public access to government email, addresses, email addresses, digital calendar, call logs and dog license information.

(Continued on page 7)



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Editorial
Kristopher Seals
 Content Editor

Hello Readers,

Hey, it's Kris again. Let's try this editorial thing once more.

Usually, I expect a little pushback whenever I do one of these. I tend to go a little harder than Mr. Shah does when giving my unfiltered opinions. However, I got no pushback this time, which on hand is pretty cool, but on the other hand, it's scary about the situation we find ourselves in at the moment.

As of this writing, no one has disagreed with my stance on what Democrats are doing. There is a core belief that none of the donkeys (their "corporate logo" is literally a donkey, whereas the GOP has an elephant) are getting the job done. Now, Gov. Murphy could be ready to inconvenience his constituency again, this time by

signing off on legislation that would pump the gas tax for five straight years AND add a fee to electric and non-emission vehicles. The plan is to put money in the Transportation Trust Fund. This comes upon NJ Transit possibly raising fares for multiple years along with toll road hikes.

Now, wait a minute. Chris Christie signed off on something during his time in office to boost the gas tax to help the TTF in exchange for cutting the sales tax. Yet, despite a trigger in the law allowing for increases when collection benchmarks are not met to help the TTF, Democrats still want to increase the gas tax? Oh, and as for their quest to battle climate change, they're going to make green drivers shell out more money? Seriously?! Do yourself a favor, DO NOT vote for Tammy Murphy. Her husband pretty much quit on us, so let's return the favor.

All of this comes after their plan to bury OPRA got forced to the side of the road. However, that car is still running, waiting for you to not pay attention. Keep the pressure on your legislators, and let them know that we need OPRA to properly have civ-

ic involvement in public affairs. If Joe Danielsen doesn't like the inconveniences of OPRA, then he can resign. No one made him take on public service.

Okay, I know that last week was really Trump-ish, but check this out, because it coincides with what I was saying. Remember how Democrats pegged Trump as a "threat to democracy" ad nauseam? Well, they just ran ads in Ohio supporting Trump-supported Bernie Moreno in Ohio for the GOP Primary. The plan is for him to win the primary, and then lose to Democrat Sherrod Brown in the general election. They feel that the Trump candidate would be a better matchup.

This same thing happened two years ago in Pennsylvania, where Josh Shapiro ran ads in support of Trump-leaning Doug Mastriano, with Shapiro winning due to the better matchup. I'm sorry, but if Donald Trump is a "threat to democracy" why are you engaging in a tactic where if you lose, his people get into office and can LITERALLY write laws? That's bull-emoji poop-emoji. I would LOVE to see this backfire on them one day.

Of course, here's the big question: Who wins in November? Here is my thinking: If Biden wins, there will be more GOP bitterness, and a bunch of people jockeying for position after he is term-limited out of office. Some people will back Kamala Harris, but not everyone will. Trump will be out of the picture (hopefully), and it would likely be a contest between Nikki Haley and Ron DeSantis, in which DeSantis would likely win. He might take on Gavin Newsom in the 2028 Presidential Election. Either way, Democrats will go about business as usual.

However, if Trump wins, then things get interesting. It would be akin to Thanos snapping his fingers at the end of "Avengers: Infinity War." Democrats would be shellshocked like the remaining Avengers. While it would not be great short-term, long-term it would force wholesale changes in the Democratic Party, mainly the ouster of the old guard like Nancy Pelosi, Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren and the like. Best of all, there would be less robot behavior, and some lawmakers would

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WEATHER FOR THE WEEK

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



OP-ED BY DR. ADIL MANZOOR

Building Muscles Is Key To Staying Healthy in Old Age

Beyond the age of 65, the risk of many health conditions developing that will make normal living even more difficult arises. Seriously, have you ever lived with an 80-year-old? They require help with a lot of everyday life activities. And that's just on biology. As we age, the body's

cells, tissues, and organs start to deteriorate, impacting overall health.

There have been several insights into how humans can stay healthy as they age, and one thing that keeps popping up is building muscles and exercise. Yes, you heard me right, despite how counterintuitive or ridiculous it may sound. Consider it, many older adults can barely get a shower unassisted, so how would muscle-building activities be possible or even helpful? Well, in several ways, which I will briefly consider.

Living a normal life and being able to perform everyday activities hinges on certain physical attributes, namely cardiorespiratory fitness, flexibility, dynamic balance, and of course, how strong the muscles are.

Let's start with flexibility, dynamic balance, and muscle strength. They, as you may already imagine, help with maintaining balance and maneuvering complicated movements. Unfortunately, as we age, there is an



involuntary loss of the strength, mass, and effective function of the muscles. This is known as sarcopenia.

After your 30th birthday, your muscle mass will reduce by 3 to 8% every ten years. What's more, this decline gets faster the older we get, especially beyond 60 years. The decline also accelerates with a sedentary or physically inactive lifestyle.

Another important physical attribute that determines health as we age is cardiovascular fitness (CRF). This is simply a measure of how effectively the body takes in oxygen and distributes it to muscles and organs during lengthened physical exertion. However, as we age, the heart and its vessels are less effective at circulating blood effectively around the body. As with sarcopenia, while CRF decreases as we age, it gets even worse beyond the age of 70.

When you consider the weakened muscle and the fact that there is less oxygen and nutrients available to this muscle during physical exercise, it makes sense why older adults absolutely detest exercise. Nonetheless, building muscle mass has been found to improve health.

There is a saying popular in the medical world - use it or lose it. This is true with muscle mass, as well. The thing is, you are always going to lose muscle mass as you age, but the rate and ex-

tent of muscle loss will be even higher if you don't actively build muscle mass as you age.

Fortunately, many adults know this and make an attempt to be physically active by doing routine activities like walking. Unfortunately, though, walking alone will not significantly build muscle. The CDC recommends a minimum of "150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity activity or an equivalent combination for more health benefits." So walking here and there is not sufficient.

Then, aside from walking, it is essential to partake in activities that make the muscles stronger, and this includes weightlifting or the use of resistance bands. This should be done multiple times, at least twice a week. It is advisable to start with small weights before progressing to heavier weights. The transition from the smaller to the larger weights should be gentle and smooth to not increase the risk of injury.

To gain even more from these physical activities, practices that improve flexibility and dynamic balance should be encouraged among older adults. Popular examples of such balance activities include yoga and tai chi.

If there are other conditions, like diabetes and hypertension, (Continued on page 13)

Non-healing Foot Wounds? Diabetic Foot Ulcers?



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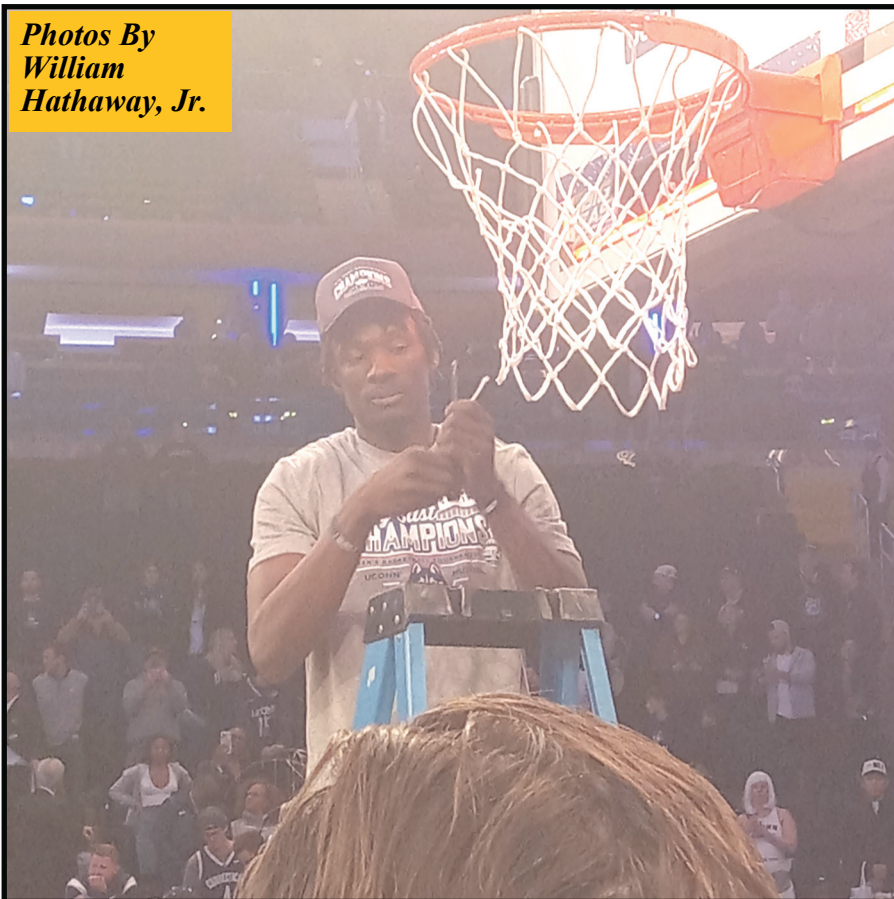


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SPORTS WRAP

Photos By
William
Hathaway, Jr.



By William Hathaway, Jr.

This past week the Big East Tournament took place like always in New York City at Madison Square Garden. In the first round, Xavier beat Butler 76-72 with Desmond Claude leading the winners with 26 points and 9 rebounds while Xavier was led by Dayvion McKnight's 20 points and 9 rebounds. Providence dropped a struggling Georgetown team 74-56 thanks to Josh Oduro's 20 points and 9 rebounds and Devin Carter's 19 points and 9 rebounds.

The quarterfinals saw defending National Champion Connecticut eliminate Xavier 87-60 Donovan Clinger and Tristian Newton both had 13 points and 7 rebounds. Meanwhile, Marquette beat Villanova in overtime game 71-65. David Joplin led his team to the OT win with 14 points and 8 rebounds while Kam Jones had 18 points and 6 rebounds. Leading Villanova was South Orange native Mark Armstrong with 15 points and 3 rebounds.

That same day, Seton Hall lost to rival St. John's 91-72. St. John's got 11 points and five rebounds from Daniss Jenkins. Leading The Hall was Kadary Richmond with 13 points and 5 rebounds and Dre Davis with 8 points and 6 rebounds. Because of the loss, SHU missed the NCAA Tournament and had to settle for a #1 seed in the NIT. In the night session, Providence beating Creighton 78-73 thanks to 22 points and 11 rebounds from Devin Carter. Creighton was led by Ryan Kalkbrenner with 19 points and 12 rebounds.

In the semifinals, Connecticut outlasted St. John's 95-90. Daniss Jenkins gave the Johnnies 27 points and 2 rebounds in the losing effort, while UConn was led by Tristian Newton's 25 points and 6 rebounds. Marquette went over Providence 79-68 thanks to Kam Jones and his 23 points and five rebounds. Carter had 27 points in the loss.

Finally, the Big East final had the UConn Huskies easily beating Marquette 73-57. Tristian Newton earned the Dave Gavitt trophy as the most out-



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standing player of the Big East Tournament. The 2024 All Big East Tournament team included Connecticut's Donovan Clinger, Kam Jones and Oso Ighodaro from Marquette, Devin Carter and Daniss Jenkins.

As expected, UConn went on to claim the overall #1 seed in the

NCAA Tournament, and are set to defend their crown against fellow #1s Purdue, North Carolina, and Houston as well as the rest of the field. A year after their incredible run, St. Peter's is a #15 seed, playing #2 Tennessee in the Midwest Region.



WORLD NEWS FLASH

UNITED STATES



EPA BANS ASBESTOS

WASHINGTON - On March 18, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a final rule to prohibit ongoing uses of chrysotile asbestos, the only known form of asbestos currently used in or imported to the United States.

The ban on ongoing uses of asbestos is the first rule to be finalized under the 2016 amendments to the nation's chemical safety law, the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), which received near-unanimous support in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate. The action marks a major milestone for chemical safety after more than three decades of inadequate protections and serious delays during the previous administration to implement the 2016 amendments.

Exposure to asbestos is known to cause lung cancer, mesothelioma, ovarian cancer, and laryngeal cancer, and it is linked to more than 40,000 deaths in the U.S. each year. Ending the ongoing uses advances the goals of President Biden's Cancer Moonshot, a whole-of-government initiative to end cancer as we know it.

"The science is clear - asbestos is a known carcinogen that has severe impacts on public health. President Biden understands that this concern that has spanned generations and impacted the lives of countless people. That's why EPA is so proud to finalize this long-needed ban on ongoing uses of asbestos," said EPA Administrator Michael S.

Regan. "Under the President's leadership, EPA has been working expeditiously to put the nation's chemical safety program back on track and finally realize the protections of the 2016 law. This action is just the beginning as we work to protect all American families, workers, and communities from toxic chemicals."

"Asbestos has harmed people across the country for decades, and under President Biden's leadership, we are taking decisive action to ban its use and advance this administration's historic environmental justice agenda," said White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Brenda Mallory. "This action marks a major step to improve chemical safety after decades of inadequate protections, helping advance President Biden's Cancer Moonshot goal to end cancer as we know it."

Chrysotile asbestos is found in products including asbestos diaphragms, sheet gaskets, brake blocks, aftermarket automotive brakes/linings, other vehicle friction products, and other gaskets. The use of asbestos in the United States has been declining for decades, and its use is already banned in over 50 countries.

Although there are several known types of asbestos, the only form known to be imported, processed, or distributed for use in the United States is chrysotile. Raw chrysotile asbestos was imported into the United States as recently as 2022 for use by the chlor-alkali industry. Most consumer products that historically contained chrysotile asbestos have been discontinued.

"Today's rule is a positive first step to give all Americans a future free of exposure to asbestos - a carcinogen that has killed far too many. This dangerous substance has been banned in more than 50 countries around the world, and the United States is finally starting to catch up. An immediate ban on the import of chrysotile asbestos for the chlor-alkali industry is a long overdue step forward for public health. However, it cannot be the end of the road when it comes to phasing out other dangerous asbestos fibers, and Congress has a role to play here when it comes to providing stronger protections for our health," said Senator Jeff Merkley.

"This public health protec-

tion is long overdue. A 1991 court decision that largely struck down EPA's 1989 ban on asbestos and significantly weakened EPA's authority under TSCA to address risks to human health from asbestos or from any other existing chemical. The 2016 amendments to TSCA transformed the law with clear requirements and a mandate to comprehensively prioritize and evaluate the risks of chemicals and put in place strong and timely health protections against any unreasonable risks.

EPA has set compliance deadlines to transition away from each use of chrysotile asbestos, which are as soon as is practicable for each use while also providing a reasonable transition period, which the law requires.

MASS SHOOTING UPDATE

Information recent as of 3-19-2024 at 12 p.m.

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

- Total Mass Shootings: 103
- Total Dead: 172
- Total Wounded: 354
- Shootings Per Day: 1.3
- Days Reached in Year 2024 as of March 19: 79

HAITI



EFFORTS ONGOING TO HELP HAITI

Humanitarians continue to deliver aid in Haiti, where the situation in the capital, Port-au-Prince, remains tense and volatile in the face of escalating gang violence and political instability.

The UN said on March 19 that its children's agency UNICEF and partners have delivered over 242,000 gallons of water since early March, while the World Food Program (WFP) and partners have provided over 146,000 hot meals.

OCHA, the UN humanitarian

affairs office, noted that schools, hospitals and government buildings in the capital continue to be attacked, with many having curtailed their operations.

The public electricity company recently reported that several substations in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area were destroyed, leaving several areas without power.

Meanwhile, the health sector continues to struggle due to the lack of medical supplies, healthcare workers and blood.

OCHA said the Bernard Mevs hospital in Port-au-Prince has gradually resumed its activities, with support from the UN health agency (WHO) and its regional arm, the Pan American Health Organization, in providing medicine and medical equipment.

A stock of anesthetic drugs has been provided to Hospital Universite de Paix and Eliazar Germain Hospital in Petionville, a suburb of the capital.

Some 5.5 million people in Haiti, roughly half the population, need humanitarian aid. However, a \$674 million plan, announced in late February, is just 6.5 percent funded, with \$43 million received.

The plan aims to provide food, shelter, health, education, and protection services for 3.6 million people this year.

WORLD



FIGHTING TB

The UN World Health Organization (WHO) on March 18 called for a funding boost in tuberculosis (TB) screening and prevention programs to protect vulnerable populations and achieve key health goals.

Relatively modest new investment could result in significant health and economic benefits, with up to \$39 worth of benefits for each dollar invested, the UN agency said, announcing the findings of a study conducted in Brazil, Georgia, Kenya and South Africa.

The returns extend beyond monetary, encompassing sub-
(Continued on page 12)

OPRA SAFE FOR NOW

(Continued from page 1)

- Require that requests for email include a "specific subject matter" and a "discrete and limited time period," and they would need to pertain to a specific person, rather than to a job title or government department, as is allowed now.
- Ban the release of metadata information about when electronic files were created and who created them.
- Allow agencies to deny requests judged to lead to possible "harassment". Require the use of official OPRA request forms.
- Allow for delays on requests or data more than a year old.
- Change police related to fees recouped by attorneys who sue for access to records.

Unanswered Questions

It is unclear what would happen if the person filing an OPRA request does not know who the specific person is. Presumably the OPRA request would be denied, as under the proposed amendments, job title or government department would be an OPRA requirement.

Another question is whether "specific subject matter" and "discrete and limited time period" would help or hinder those filing OPRA requests. Who would decide what is harassment and how it pertains to OPRA? All these questions would likely be decided in court cases lasting years.

Two sides to a story

According to newjerseymonitor.com, the bill's supporters say that amendments are needed to update the OPRA, which was passed in 2002. Commercial requesters were blamed for abusing the law in unimaginable ways since its passage in 2002, newjerseymonitor.com wrote.

According to the New Jersey Monitor, Lori Buckelew of the New Jersey League of Municipalities was just one of a handful of people who testified in support of the bill. Ms.

Buckelew said that privacy laws require an update to the Open Public Records Act.

"OPRA was enacted at a time when dial-up internet was cutting edge, Google was in its infancy, and identity theft was your sibling borrowing your driver's license to get into the college bar. Fast forward 20 years, and not a week goes by that you do not hear of a data breach and calls for protection of personal information. Under these bills, those protections are given," Buckelew said during her testimony, New Jersey Monitor reported.

Privacy is one thing. It is a different matter when proposed revisions are fast-tracked by the very politicians that stand to gain from the revisions to the Open Public Records Act.

According to the March 11 issue of the newjerseymonitor.com, state Senator Paul Sarlo (D-Bergen), one the main sponsors of the OPRA amendments, "fled a gaggle of reporters on Monday (March 11) after Monday's Senate vote and (Assemblyman Joe) Danielsen told a New Jersey Monitor reporter that news coverage of the bill has mischaracterized the changes in the bill."

"Over half of them are increasing, creating, or improving access to documents. None of you have the courage to print that, right? It's fake news. As far as I can tell, it's disingenuous, and it speaks to the integrity of every one of those journalists," Danielsen said.

Statement by New Jersey Society of Professional Journalists

Assemblyman Danielsen's statement created a furor among journalists. The New Jersey Society of Professional Journalists Board of Directors issued a statement condemning Danielsen's remarks to New Jersey Monitor. The NJ - SPJ Board of Directors demanded an apology from Assemblyman Danielsen.

"We are appalled that Assemblyman Danielsen has managed to not only attack the integrity of our colleagues, but



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APRIL 2: Nurtured Heart Approach meets 6:30 p.m. monthly on 1st Tuesdays. This bilingual group teaches parents and caregivers the Nurtured Heart Approach® (NHA), to help them raise children with emotional, behavioral, and mental challenges. Per the Founder, Howard Glasser, NHA is a therapeutic method and "behavior inspiration, not management".

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use a well-known trope that is echoed when one does not like the coverage they are receiving.

The reason we know what is in the bill is because journalists across the state read the bill before reporting on it.

Though two committees approved the release of the proposal to the full chamber, it was quite clear on Monday (March 11) that a cross section of New Jerseyans - not just journalists - are against this regressive change to OPRA.

We demand an apology from the assemblyman for his attack on journalists in this state who work hard to uphold our Code of Ethics, which includes verifying information before releasing it.

NJ-SPJ also calls on legislators to share their amendments PUBLICLY before they are even considered by their respective chambers."

Criticism against the OPRA amendments

According to newjerseymonitor.com, "critics challenged claims that

modernization and cost concerns prompted the legislation, accusing lawmakers of fast-tracking the bill to shroud themselves in secrecy.

"Corruption does not always come in the form of gold bars or muscling your way into a Senate primary candidacy. It's when bodies like this act against the public interest. It's very telling, and borderline coordinated that both bodies are doing this at the same time. Let's get something straight: the people in this room own the data," Scott Gawrych, a Woodbridge resident, said, according to New Jersey Monitor.

Charlie Kratovil, a frequent OPRA filer and the editor of the online newspaper New Brunswick Today, made his view known. According to New Jersey Monitor, Kratovil said, "It's great that you have met with the (New Jersey League of Municipalities) League and others, but this process here did not include people who actually file OPRA requests. They were not at the table, and this is being

(Continued on page 14)

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Registration is Underway for Summer I & II Classes at Essex County College

Registration for Summer I & II 2024 classes at Essex County College is underway. The College's Summer I term starts Monday, May 6.

Students may also register for the Summer II Term. Classes for Summer II begin on July 8. Information is available for the Fall 2024 Semester, which begins on September 3.

"Essex County College offers more than 50 Associate degree programs and Academic Certificates in a wide range of disciplines. Essex graduates transfer as juniors to many New Jersey colleges and universities, as well as top schools around the country. Register early to get the classes you want," said Dr. Alvin Williams, Executive Dean of Faculty and Academics.

For more information, please click on this link: <https://www.essex.edu/registration/>. Students may be eligible for scholarships and qualify for the Educational Opportunity Fund program. Additional regis-

tration information is available through the College's Welcome Center, located on the 2nd Floor at the Newark campus, or by calling the Center at 973-877-4477.

"Essex County College has always and continues to provide high quality and affordable educational opportunities. Our Summer terms allow students to complete a semester

in a more compressed time. Our many support services help students stay on track to graduate and realize their dreams," said ECC President Dr. Augustine A. Boakyé.

The College is an open access institution and fully accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.





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 - It looks like the driver accused of hitting an Arts High School cheerleader and driving away here Feb. 4 will be staying at the Essex County Correctional Facility until either she takes a plea bargain or her trial comes up.

State Superior Court Judge Harold W. Fullilove, from his Newark bench March 13, denied bail to Mia'Jah Burton, 33, of Newark, at her detention hearing. Fullilove said Burton, given her evasion of authorities' apprehension March 1, is a potential flight risk.

Burton is accused of driving past a school bus that was discharging AHS Jaguars cheerleaders before their school on 550 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. at about 10 p.m. Feb. 4 and striking an 18-year-old senior. ECPO Crime Scene Investigation Bureau detectives said that they had linked Burton to the Kia Forte that fled the area without stopping.

Burton, who was arrested March 1, is being held on third-degree leaving the scene of an accident that caused serious bodily injury, endangering an injured victim and hindering and fourth-degree assault by auto and making a false report to law enforcement.

The Arts community rallied around the stricken cheerleader, whose team had won the Impact Dance and Cheer Challenge at Toms River that Feb. 4. She was admitted to University Hospital for critical injuries.

Toddler "Stable" After Fall

A two-year-old boy was admitted to University Hospital in stable condition after his March 17 fall from a West Side second floor window. Newark Public Safety Director Fritz Frage said that the mother came with the boy to the NPD West Park Station at 7:25 p.m. that Sunday and officers rushed him to hospital. It is not known as of press time whether the address, along the 100 block of 16th Avenue at South Sixth Street, had a city- and state- required window guard.

IRVINGTON - Mayor Anthony "Tony" Vauss, in a March 12 press release, said that the recommendations made by The Ambrose Group, LLC last year on its police and fire divisions have been implemented - and are producing results.

The Ambrose Group, of Cedar Grove, issued what Vauss called "a comprehensive assessment" report on the Irvington Department of Public Safety late last year. The report, after a year's study, focused on staffing adjustments, facility upgrades, ordinance revisions and introduction of new technology.

IPD, for example, has acquired Mobile Video Recorders, gunshot sound detectors and a neighborhood security camera system to go with additional police cars. The Irvington Public Safety Building at Beasley Civic Square is to get renovated cell block and front lobby.

The Township, in response, created a DPS Deputy Director job title to assist incumbent Tracy Bowers. The Internal Affairs Office is to get revised training to better compliance with New Jersey Attorney General Office policies.

Irvington's council had awarded The Ambrose Group a contract to place the group's hearing officer in the Irvington Law Department Oct. 24, 2022. The contract lasted through Oct. 25, 2023 where the township paid the vendor \$250 an hour for no more than \$100,000. It is not known, as of press time, whether The Ambrose Group exhausted the \$100,000 limit.

The Ambrose Group is named after its founder - former Newark Public Safety Director and prior ECPO Chief of Detec-

tives Anthony Ambrose. The retired policeman has been providing agencies law enforcement and management consultant services since April 2021. The group's clients include Essex County on its county jail in 2022 and, for 2023, Bloomfield Township.

The council, "pending receipt of resolution from QPA," had a \$200,000 Ambrose Group hearing officer contract resolution on its March 11 agenda.

EAST ORANGE - There is a reason why an ambulance from outside CareWell Medical Health has been parked by its emergency entrance since March 6 - and why hospital administrators had been working to satisfy the state by the March 20 deadline.

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services gave CareWell a March 20 deadline to correct the unavailable X-ray and/or CT scanning services in its Emergency Ward - or risk making an "emergency divert" of ambulances and/or having the "curtailment of all hospital services."

The state health department had meanwhile ordered an extra ambulance on standby to take emergency patients who need a radiological exam. It is because the DOH has said that CareWell "has failed to ensure critical care transport for ED patients requiring (a) required diagnostic radiologic exam."

That order, as received by a statewide media outlet March 12, said that "the medical center has had ongoing staffing issues pertaining to CT services since Dec, 25. Department surveyors have confirmed that, on various dates and times, there were no CT or X-ray services available."

The hospital was also required to inform DOH of its weekly staffing levels. CareWell, and its 1926-2022 predecessor East Orange General Hospital is the city's largest private employer.

EOGH Acquisition Group bought the hospital from the for-profit Prospect Medical Holdings, of California Jan. 1, 2022 and changed its name at noon Jan. 12. It remains "Essex County's only independent community boutique hospital."

Neither CareWell nor EOGH Acquisition Group have com-

mented on the state's warning as of March 19.

ORANGE - "Orange's Bravest" put out a fire at a South Ward apartment building here the night of March 10.

Firefighters were called to South Orange Towers at 749 Scotland Rd. at 9:53 p.m. that Sunday. They found one second floor apartment "engulfed in flames." Other parts of the eight-story, 108-unit condominium were enveloped in smoke. Residents were promptly and safely evacuated.

OFD personnel got the fire under control and out within an hour. Orange police assisted by detouring traffic, including NJTransit's No. 92 route buses, between Heywood Avenue and South Orange's Montrose Avenue. Injuries were contained to smoke inhalation, which were treated by medics at the scene.

749 Scotland was last in the news when the president of the tenants association came to the Aug. 4, 2021 City Council meeting. The tenants' head complained that Rushmore Management here had not been responding to their and city code enforcement inspectors complaints since 2019. The 1960-build property has since been owned by Goldcrest Properties, of Lakewood.

OFD and ECPO Arson Unit inspectors, as a standard operating procedure, are investigating the fire's cause. Fire damage, as of March 16, appears to be limited to a second floor corner apartment unit.

WEST ORANGE - "Local Talk" has learned that the remains of aspiring rapper Damian Osborne, who died in a Jan. 10 highway crash in Kansas, had returned home for his last rites.

A visitation and memorial service for Damian Garcia Osborne, 24, were held here at the Dangler Funeral Home Jan. 19-20, followed by cremation at Rosville Cemetery. A Celebration of Life service was subsequently held at the West Luxury Apartments, 555 Northfield Ave., Suite 211.

Osborne, who was born Dec. 11, 1999 in Hackensack University Hospital, was a West Orange High School Class of 2018 graduate. The lettered scholar-athlete

(Continued on page 12)



HILBERT

(Continued from page 1)

them the resources so they can start their own businesses."

Hilbert, on her first term in City Hall, openly asked if residents are getting the services for the amount of city property and school taxes they are paying for. Homeowners and renters are also facing rising rent from the taxes and from the growth of apartment buildings within and beyond the state-designated Transit Village Zones.

are residents getting besides apartments? Where are the community centers, recreational opportunities, ways of keeping residents here at their homes?"

Hilbert sees some of Orange's redevelopment is being done with insufficient public input. She pointed to the vacant building shells that used to be Orange Memorial Hospital, closed for 31 years, to the east.

"Did you know that the city just sold that to a developer?" asked Hilbert. "Was the community consulted on what they want



ciency - which brought her to the Orange Water Department and Orange Reservoir.

"Do you know that we're on our third water manager?" asked Hilbert. "The Water Department has a \$15 million budget - we can manage the water department ourselves. We also need to talk with Essex County about their lease of the reservoir - after all, we own it."

The city had negotiated leasing the reservoir to Essex Coun-

she said that other communities make as a contractual condition.

Hilbert is principally vying for the incumbent Dwayne Warren's seat as mayor. Warren, who is seeking his fourth consecutive term, is part of his Moving Orange Forward 2024 team with the three at-large councilmen who are also seeking re-election. (Former councilwoman April Gaunt-Butter had also garnered the sufficient number of registered city voters' signatures to



"When I first moved here, my rent for my one bedroom apartment on Park Avenue was \$700 a month," Hilbert paused. "Now it's \$2,100."

Hilbert compared rising rents to the Payments in Lieu of Taxes given to apartment building developers as a condition to getting those projects. She asserts that those tax abatements come at the price of city services not being fully funded.

"City Hall had been passing long term tax abatements that are now 22 years; it used to be 30," said the councilwoman, "What

there?"

Orange Memorial, for the record, is now on its third developer. The property was returned to the city after the brothers of the previous developer had a falling out with each other, stalling their residential project.

"Orange is the gem of Essex County that has a history and needs polishing," said Hilbert. "I want residents to have everything they need here and not have to go out of Orange to shop."

Part of Hilbert's vision includes looking for in-house effi-



ty in exchange for a 20-year annual payment. The county turned the West Orange property into a recreational area adjacent to the county's other holdings: Codey South Mountain Arena, Turtle Back Zoo and South Mountain Reservation.

Whatever new development or redevelopment is done, Hilbert wants to see them hire 15 percent of their workforce from Orange in contracts - something

run a solo mayoral campaign - but details are unknown as of press time.)

"It is time for a generational change, fresh ideas and a new approach," said Hilbert. "Cultural treatment comes from the top. How many times you came to City Hall with questions - and you got no answers and closed doors?"

(Continued on page 14)

WORLD NEWS (Cont. from page 6)

stantial improvements in public health outcomes and the mitigation of TB's devastating impact on individuals, families and communities.

"The investment case outlines the health and economic rationale for investing in evidence-based, WHO-recommended interventions on TB screening and prevention that can contribute to advancing universal health coverage," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

"Today, we have the knowledge, tools and political commitment that can end this millennia-old disease that remains one of the world's top infectious killers."

While significant strides have been made to combat the disease, with an estimated 75 million lives saved since 2000, TB continues to cause about 1.3 million deaths annually and affects millions more worldwide.

Moreover, multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) is a growing public health concern, with only about two in five people having accessed treatment in 2022.

Progress in the development of new TB diagnostics, drugs

and vaccines remains constrained by the overall level of investment in these areas, WHO said, adding that it is clear more needs to be done to combat TB.

Against this background, its investment case is expected to serve as a vital advocacy tool for securing increased resources for TB screening and preventive treatment, aligning with the commitments made by governments at the 2023 High-Level Meeting on TB.

As the global community prepares to World TB Day on March 24 under the theme "Yes! We can end TB!", the message reiterates the importance of high-level leadership, increased investments and accelerated uptake of important recommendations, WHO said.

"The next five years will be critical for ensuring that the political momentum we have now is translated into concrete actions towards reaching global TB targets," said Tereza Kasaeva, Director of WHO's Global Tuberculosis Program.

"WHO will continue to provide global leadership for the TB response, working with all stakeholders until we reach and save every person, family and community impacted by this deadly disease."

VIOLENCE IN THE STREETS

By Thomas Ellis II

Since Kwanzaa, the ending of Black History Month, and now Ramadan, there's been too much violence in the streets.

Many profess to be about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision, which was about non-violence, but all we see in our communities, and all over is violence.

Violence: Behavior involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something. The unlawful exercise of physical force or intimidation by the exhibition of such force.

A shooting death on the 300 block of South 8th Street around 10:45 a.m. Two people shot near Shabazz High School, both victims with multiple gunshot wounds, and rushed to the hospital. One male shot near South Orange Avenue and St. Paul. Violence in the streets.

A teenager in Newark was caught by Newark Police with a handgun in front of Weequahic High School. Thank God no one

was hurt, seriously injured or killed. In another case, NPD officers were injured while trying to apprehend a suspect.

It's not just Newark. A 13 year old was shot and killed in Brooklyn, a boyfriend pushes his girlfriend on train tracks in New York City. The victim had both her feet amputated, and the boyfriend was arrested. Then to top it off, a former victims' advocate killed his friend, cut off his head, and had it in the refrigerator. That's just plain crazy.

Internationally, gangs in Haiti have committed so much violence that the U.S. has begun an evacuation process of all non-essential Americans. Meanwhile, illegal migrants are robbing and killing U.S. citizens.

Why is there so much violence. That should be the question on everybody's mind. There is so much violence in the streets, this country, this world, and in our communities.

There's a war in Israel, a war in Ukraine, and a war in the streets.

TOWN WATCH

(Continued from page 10)

was in the school's math and Science Institute program and was a member of its football and lacrosse teams.

"Damo" went to Seton Hall University on a scholarship but decided to pursue a career in the music industry. "They Know Dame" had released a music video, featuring local neighborhoods with producer Augy. He meanwhile worked in the Jersey Mike's sub shops here and in Bloomfield for three years.

Osborne was driving towards Garden of the Gods in Colorado when the Kansas Highway Department said his car went off Interstate 80 and struck a highway sign in Leavenworth Jan. 10. He was planning to move to Los Angeles for his career's next stage.

Parents Rose Garcia and Stephen and sister Belen Aurora Osborne and aunt Karen Osborne are among his survivors. A GoFundMe.com page had been set up for his funeral expenses. Augy is working on a memorial CD.

SOUTH ORANGE / MAPLEWOOD - Principal Frank Sanchez - who pleaded not guilty to ECPO charges of second-degree endangering the welfare of a child and disor-

derly persons simple assault March 12 - finds himself at the center of controversy.

Sanchez, who surrendered himself at ECPO's Newark office, was unofficially represented by "Free Frank" supporters who partially occupied the South Orange-Maplewood School District Board of Education Administration Building audience gallery March 14. A GoGetFunding.com page, as of March 15, received \$38,000 in donations for his "legal fees, living expenses or whatever else is needed."

The supporters, many of whom wore red in solidarity, had marched from the Maplewood Municipal Building to the SOMSD Administration Building on Academy Street before the school board's meeting started. Five parents, students and community members spoke in Sanchez's support at the meeting's public comment segment.

SOMA Black Parents Workshop President Walter Fields and attorneys Robert Tarver and James H. Davis III, in contrast, said March 16 that they stand "with the student-victim." While they added "Sanchez will have his day in court," they considered the incident that put the principal on administrative leave and under arrest, "another example of, when Black students or parents speak, their concerns are disregarded."

Sanchez, who was put on paid leave by

Interim Superintendent Dr. Kevin Gilbert Jan. 2 (the first time since November), was involved with breaking up a fight among students sometime in the Spring of 2023. While intervening, Sanchez is accused of restraining a 10th Grade African American girl.

Former SOMSD board member Courtney Winkfield posted on a community message board March 12 that the then-board first learned of the incident from a draft investigation from the board attorney at their December 2023 conference meeting. The attorney said that the report should not be considered since the investigator had not submitted the draft to his supervisors for review and signing. Although the attorney said that no action be taken pending a final report, Winkfield said that "two BOE members said that they would be forced 'to take matters into their own hands.'"

The draft report was taken to the N.J. Division of Child Protection and Permanency Jan. 2 for their review. NJ DCPC, after what Winkfield said was "an external investigation," "found no substantive cause for complaint" or "to take action against Sanchez." Winkfield claimed that another board member brought the draft report to Maplewood Police, who turned it over to ECPO.

(Continued on page 15)

ESSEX COUNTY HOSTS ANNUAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

Newark, NJ - Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr., hosted the County's Annual Women's History Month Program in the Essex County Martin Luther King, Jr. Justice Building on Wednesday, March 13th. The theme of this year's ceremony is "Students Achieving Today - Our Leaders of Tomorrow."

During the ceremony, 2024 Essex County Althea Gibson Leadership Awards were presented to Jaylene Cruz from the Essex County Donald Payne, Sr. School of Technology, Magwrantz Lubin from Essex County West Caldwell School of Technology, Maya Ratzan from Essex County Newark Tech School of Technology and Samirah Scantling from Essex County College.

"Through their academic achievements and contributions to their local communities, these remarkable young women are on the road to success. Each is unique in their own way, having a profound impact on their schools. Striving for their goals and never letting anything stop them is part of what has driven them to reach the level of success that they have achieved thus far in their lives," DiVincenzo said. "These young women have made tremendous contributions and are establishing themselves

as leaders of our future generations," he added.

Maya Ratzan, a senior at Essex County Newark Tech, is enrolled in the Allied Health CTE program specializing as a Medical Assistant, is a TEAL student, and has a GPA of 4.657. Ratzan is a member of Student Government, the softball team, and the debate team, president of the Student Council and HOSA Chapter, Captain of the Girls' Varsity Soccer Team, Captain of the East Side's Swim Team, and serves as a senior peer mentor to students in the freshman class. Ratzan is on a path to earning her associate degree in liberal arts from Essex County College at the same time as her high school diploma and plans to take the medical assistant certification exam this April. She was raised by a single mother who worked as a nurse practitioner at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

She would accompany her mother to work from time to time and, after meeting children battling cancer at the hospital, Maya has made it a goal to pursue a career in nursing. Ratzan volunteers her time in her local parish and hospital, shadowing nurses on their daily routines, supplying rooms and making beds and has accumulated 160

Photo By Glen Frieson



hours of community service by volunteering as a member of the Rapid Response Team and Transport Units at RWJBarnabas Health's Newark Beth Israel Medical Center. Maya works a part time job as a lifeguard at the YMCA of Montclair, spends her summers working as a Camp Counselor to children with cancer, and has served on several boards with the Victoria Foundation and College Board.

Maya is excited to announce she will be attending DeSales University in September 2024, majoring in Nursing with a minor in Health Communication. Through her experiences, Maya is excited to one day work in an

Intensive Care Unit aiding those in need through their recovery process and researching public health issues.

"My mother always told me to be a leader not a follower. I am grateful for the opportunities I received at Newark Tech because it has opened doors for my," Ratzan said.

Jaylene Cruz is a senior in the Law and Public Safety Program at Essex County Donald M. Payne Sr. School of Technology. Cruz has been recognized on the honor roll on many occasions and serves as a Senior Mentor helping ninth grade students to make their transition to

(Continued on page 14)

EDITORIAL

(Continued from page 2)

speak for their constituents rather than the party. The reason? The party bosses couldn't justify losing to Trump twice. It seems as if they need to lose for us to win. Then maybe, just maybe, they would understand that the frustration Americans had in 2016 wasn't a fluke, and they have to change how they do business.

Either way, I've got my eyes on filmmaker Michael Moore. While he is no fan of Trump, he will call it as he sees it. As Moore once said, "Dismiss him at your own risk."

One little thing I noticed on immigration. How come Democrats never talk about LEGAL immigrants, who got screened, took the tests, and paid fees? They go so hard to protect

"undocumented" immigrants, but never say anything about those who followed the rules. How is that fair to them? Just saying.

Finally, a lot of people have asked about my stance on the Israel-Hamas conflict. Here it is: I'm staying out of it. If you take one side, you're antisemitic. If you take the other side, you're inhumane. That said, I have a way to solve it. How about this: Hamas agrees to stay out of Palestine, and in exchange, Benjamin Netanyahu is removed from office. Not violent enough? Try this: Israel picks one person; Palestine picks one person. MMA match. WINNER TAKE ALL. Seems silly to you? Yeah, well, it beats thousands of people dying in a seemingly never-ending conflict.

Have a nice week everyone.

THE DOCTOR IS IN

(Continued from page 4)

the decline in muscle mass may be much faster. Also, this may make it more difficult to exercise and lift weights. As such, these pre-existing conditions must be well-managed in addition to other muscle-building activities. Stay safe.

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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WOMEN'S MONTH

(Continued from page 13)

high school easier. She also serves as an Editor of the school's yearbook. She finds these two activities rewarding as they give her an opportunity to serve as a leader and to give back to the school. Cruz participated in the Rutgers Future Scholars Program for many years and she feels fortunate that she will be able to continue her studies at Rutgers University-Newark tuition free. This opportunity holds a lot of significance for her because she will be the first in her family to attend college.

Having the burden of tuition lifted off her shoulders makes the moment even more special, and she is determined to make the best of this opportunity not only for herself but for her family. Family is very important to Jaylene as she is the eldest child in the household and enjoys the time she spends with her two younger siblings. She has decided to pursue a career in the medical field as either a registered nurse specializing in Pediatrics or as a medical technician. One woman who inspires Jaylene every day is her mother who she feels is her backbone and someone who can put a smile on her face every day.

"I am deeply honored to receive this award. I would not be where I am today without my mother. This is another great

milestone in my life," Cruz said.

Magwranz Lubin is a senior at Essex County West Caldwell Tech. Born to immigrant parents who instilled in her the values of hard work and commitment, she embodies these qualities daily in all aspects of her life. After a traumatizing event occurred within her family, she used that as a catalyst to change her life's trajectory. She immediately improved her grades from Cs to become an A student and was accepted to West Caldwell Tech. She made the varsity volleyball team as a freshman without previous experience and made second team All-Conference her sophomore year. She also joined the bowling and softball teams, and she won Most Valuable Player Award for softball during her junior year. She maintains straight As in AP courses and has a 4.9 GPA.

As a sophomore, she was inducted into the National Honor Society. As a member of DECA, she has won regional competitions and serves as an empowering voice within the school as Co-President of the Black Student Union. While she volunteers distributing socks to homeless individuals and food to seniors in marginalized communities, she still finds time to help her sister who has Down syndrome learn to express herself and she is hoping to get guardianship of her paralyzed older brother to help him obtain better treatment.

"My mother is the reason

why I am here today. As an immigrant from Haiti, she show me how to be strong and independent," Lubin said.

Throughout all she has accomplished, she is forever grateful for the Questbridge program and Colgate University for helping her to obtain a full scholarship to Colgate and a start to her Pre-Med journey without financial debt. Her goal is to become an OBGYN, however, she says her purpose is to give back to her community by hopefully opening a non-profit for deaf, single mothers from low-income communities and those who are physically and mentally impaired. She says her childhood trauma is a scar that has taught her to embrace her confidence and that there is nothing she cannot achieve.

Samirah Scantling is a business administration major at Essex County College while also working at Weichert Realtors in Short Hills as a Certified Residential Property Manager. She came to ECC more than 10 years after graduating high school and often spends time as a tutor in the College's Learning Center. Serving as the President of ECC's Alpha Theta Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society since Summer 2023, she has been able to lead by example and encourage others. She believes that making an impact on others' lives is one of the greatest duties she has at ECC.

In her spare time, Scantling serves as a mentor for the Big

Brothers Big Sister Program of Union and Essex Counties. She enjoys adventurous activities, and spending quality time with family and friends. She plans to continue her education at the Rutgers University School of Business in the Fall of 2024 to earn a bachelor's degree in business administration and hopes to open her own Real Estate Brokerage firm toward the end of 2024.

"Thank you for this prestigious recognition. I have honored to be included in this program," Scantling said.

The invocation was given by Rev. Thurselle Williams of New Hope Baptist Church in East Orange. Choral selections were performed by the Essex County Payne School Choir.

The Annual Essex County Althea Gibson Leadership Awards are dedicated to the memory of the late professional tennis and golf legend, who was the first African American to win the Wimbledon Tennis and U.S. Golf Championships. In 1957, Ms. Gibson became the first African American to win the All-England Championship. That same year she became the first black to be voted by the Associated Press as its Female Athlete of the Year. The Althea Gibson Foundation exposes children in the inner city to the game of tennis and golf, and provides recreational activities for students during the summer.

OPRA SAFE

FOR NOW

(Continued from page 7)

rushed through. So, I think the only appropriate course of action is to put the brakes on, to vote no, and to gather input before you take any action," newjerseymonitor.com reported in its online March 11 edition.

Even though the amendments to the Open Public Records Act (OPRA) were pulled from the legislative agenda, the danger to OPRA still remains. The anti-OPRA legislation could still be introduced at a later date. First Amendment activists and allies will be keeping a watchful eye on any legislation that would seek to undermine the New Jersey Open Public Records Act.

HILBERT *(Cont. from page 11)*

Hilbert, who also appealed for Get Out The Vote volunteers, turned the PA microphone to Patrick Reid, one of her campaign managers, and stood to one side for photo opportunities with audience members.

GOTV is a priority at least in the Hilbert campaign. A majority of participating registered West Ward voters, in 2022, gave Hilbert 61 percent of the vote over three other challengers for the open seat.

The 2022 Orange ward council candidates, however, drew sub-1,000 vote totals. 2020's six mayor candidates garnered 3,260 votes among them;

the 11 council candidates collectively received 7,495.

There was no headquarters ribbon cutting. People walked in and out of Suite 1S while East Orange singer Jean-Claude Jean performed a two-song set and, later DJ Empower, of Orange, spun records.

"Local Talk," after waiting its turn among those having catered snacks and picking up voter registration forms, entered 1S - and had deja-vu. It was the first time being there in 20 years, when it was the "Orange Transcript's" last editorial office here.

170 Scotland may be best known for the late Family Connections office. Hilbert had con-

verted her JMJB Film Production studio at 1S into campaign headquarters.

"Local Talk" asked her about being part of Emerge New Jersey, who had named her and 16 other women as its Class of 2024 Feb. 24. The Brielle-based Democratic Party outfit trains up-and-coming women in networking, fundraising and preparing for higher political office. There are Emerge programs in 36 other states.

"I learned about Emerge from (State Senator) Britnee Timberlake (D-East Orange) and (Congresswoman) Mikie Sherrill (D-Montclair)," said Hilbert. "They both encourage and challenge you."

TOWN WATCH

(Continued from page 12)

BLOOMFIELD - Pastor Nelson Oyola gave a final blessing to the remains of Michael Zurlo - surrounded relatives, friends and Bloomfield Fire Department members - on the front steps of Sacred Heart Church at 11:01 a.m. March 9 before its final journey by the O'Boyle Funeral Home.

BFD Engine 1 and Engine 5, respectively from Headquarters and Station 4, and a battalion chief's car were parked across Broad Street from the church. Michael Francis Zurlo, Sr., 83, who died March 3, was a 30-year officer, retiring as Captain.

Zurlo, who was born in Montclair May 1, 1940, was also a 40-member of Scouting Troop 28. The avid gardener, when off duty or retired, was known to drive his red Jeep about town as a "Mr. Fix It."

Wife Joanna V. Zurlo, sons Mike, Jr. Jeffrey, Dominick and Steven and daughters Ann Willey, Christina Zurlo-Harvey and Joanna L, nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren are among his survivors. Daughter Mary Rafanelli predeceased him.

Zurlo's visitation was held at O'Boyle's March 8. Memorial donations may be made to the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and/or the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

MONTCLAIR - Federal investigators from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights have been on Montclair Public Schools property, including the Charles H. Bullock and Edgemont Montessori elementary schools, since March 4.

The OCR probe is in response of discrimination allegations, filed on Feb. 25, 2022, regarding class placement in the Bullock School and restraint in the Edgemont School. The office had recently confirmed their investigation to Susan Magaziner, of Essex, Conn., who had filed the complaint.

Magaziner, a civil rights education consultant and "board-certified education advocate" on Montclair State University Child Advocacy staff, had complained that MPS had conducted "restraint, seclusion and racial bias of Black male students of disability."

Magaziner claims that Bullock administrators had discriminated against disabled African American boys while determining who would be included in the school's Montclair Achievement Program. MAP is a behavioral and therapeutic service at Bullock.

She further asserted that those in the Edgemont School had been using "seclusion and restraint" against disabled boys. The controversial use of seclusion, as defined by US DOE, involuntarily confines

a student in a room. Restraint is defined as a "physical restriction that reduces a student's ability to move his or her torso, arms, legs and/or head freely."

"The Board and Administration complies with federal and state laws and Board policy to treat all people fairly, suitably and with respect," said MPS Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jonathan Ponds March 11. "The District does not/can not comment on pending litigation and legal matters."

BELLEVILLE - Belleville Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Richard J. Tomko, after 10 years here, will be graduating with the Belleville High School Class of 2024.

A March 13 press release from Garfield Board of Education President Jorge Ramos announced that Tomko will take over that district's reins July 1 from Interim Superintendent Nicholas Perrapato. Tomko, whose resume was unanimously approved by that city's school board at their March 12 special meeting, will be periodically visiting some 4,713 Kindergarten-12th Grade students and 12 buildings through June 30.

Tomko is returning to Bergen County after a decade's absence. He was Elmwood Park's super 2010-15 before he made an unsuccessful bid for state senate.

The Seton Hall University Master of Educational Administration and Supervision and Doctor of Philosophy in Education Leadership, Management and Police came to Belleville Feb. 1, 2015 when the district was \$4.2 million in debt. The state had assigned a monitor, who is still in place, and loaned it money to plug that deficit.

Tomko had sought getting full potential and efficiency from the staff, starting with developing an avenue for employees who had the experience but not the certifications for advanced jobs.

He bought two single family houses for conversion into skill centers for 18-21-year olds with disabilities. The centers help reduce sending 130 students out of the district at \$100,000 to 50.

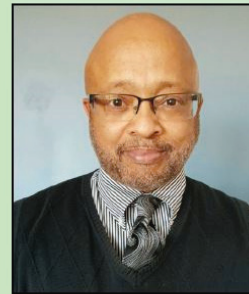
Tomko had shepherded two out of three bond issues in his time here, starting with a \$48.5 million bond issue in 2017 to revamp Belleville's 12 school buildings. He and Mayor Michael Melham put through an \$11.9 million "shared services" issue that bought the former VFW Hall/Eastern International College and King Windows/Doors south of Belleville Middle School for more space and for a to-be-built parking garage. Tomko may have sent his resume to Garfield before Melham and the Township Council denied a \$3.75 million bond issue request Jan. 23.

NUTLEY - A township man, who was arrested for attempted burglary and

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flight in Haledon March 9, may not be coming home for some time.

Haledon Deputy Police Chief George Guzman, Jr. said that Off. Nasir Mora spotted "a bicyclist in dark clothing yanking on a car handle" while it was parked along Roe Street by East Barbour Street that Saturday.

The suspect tried to flee but was apprehended by Mora and Corp. Andrea Boos. The man, said Guzman, was found with burglary tools, drug paraphernalia, loose change, a credit card in another person's name, 20 Clonazepam pills and a large dagger on him.

The man in question was identified as Michael Scalici, 35. He was arrested and charged at Haledon Police Headquarters for three car burglary attempts plus possession of burglary tools, controlled dangerous substances and a weapon.

Although Scalici was arrested in a Passaic County suburb of Paterson, he was remanded to Hackensack's Bergen County jail.



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