

# 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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## NJ TRANSIT BOARD APPROVES CONTROVERSIAL FARE HIKES



Photo By Kristopher Seals

Despite a litany of opposition and hard financial times, the Board of Directors at the state’s preeminent transit authority will be making life a little more difficult - for years to come.

On April 10, the NJ Transit Board of Directors approved several rate hikes. The first one will see fares go up 15% for this year on July 1. Then, on July 1 next year, rates will go up 3% each year. Of the 10 board members, only one voted against it.

Riders can expect the following fare hikes systemwide on NJTransit. (Please note that there are seven different one way base fares among the statewide system’s intrastate bus, interstate bus and light rail lines.)

The proposed one way one zone bus, Newark Light Rail and RIVER Line fare is to go up from \$1.60 to \$1.80. A one

way Hudson Bergen Light Rail Line fare, operated by 21st Century, is to rise from \$2.25 to \$2.55, and the ACCESS Link base fare is to go from \$1.45 to \$1.65.

Its commuter rail lines also get a 15-percent increase. NJTransit used its Northeast Corridor service (Amtrak owns the infrastructure) and Atlantic City Line for sample fare increases.

One way tickets on the NEC from Princeton Junction to New York Penn Station will rise from \$16 to \$18.40. One way riders from Philadelphia to Pennsauken on the ACL will go from \$4.25 to \$4.85.

The FLEXPASS pilot program, where riders could use tickets over a 10-day period, will end July 1. One way commuter rail tickets, July 1 onward, will expire in 30 days.

In trying to justify the  
*(Continued on page 12)*

## SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION RESULTS



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## WILL SHE BECOME THE GREATEST FEMALE ATHLETE OF ALL TIME?



Basketball phenom Caitlin Clark, who broke countless records at the collegiate level. Photo By James Dombrowski

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## THE ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES OF NEPOTISM

EDITORIAL PAGE 2



Primary Care Multi Specialty Group  
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Turn To PAGE 16





**Editorial**

*Dhiren Shah*  
Editor-In-Chief

**Hello Readers,**

Last week, we published a resolution in Orange for anti-nepotism. I received a call stating that the resolution was tabled as I heard. However, we found out that the resolution was not even brought to the floor, because all the other council persons - including the council president - may apparently approve of nepotism. If they do not, then why didn't they second the resolution, and also contact "Local Talk" like their friend or supporter called me.

At this juncture, I thought about writing about the advantages and disadvantages of nepotism. Usually, any act has two sides, and there are some benefits to nepotism as well. Let's first talk about some advantages. For the mayor or the

top administrator, it is easier to communicate, which saves time and gives easier working conditions. They can keep an eye on other employees, as their family and friends become the eyes of the administrator or the mayor.

However, there are far more disadvantages than advantages in my opinion. 1. If you are not in the nepotism "inner circle" then whatever job you need will not get done. 2. Corruption is part of the business. Nepotism itself is corruption and other instances corruption become easier. 3. They work more for the benefit of the mayor or the administrator than the people. 4. Improper promotions and salary raises when they don't deserve it. It's a waste of taxpayer money. 5. If the family or friends are not performing well, they don't get fired and even get a good report by the administrator. 6. If they are absent, they are sometimes counted as present (aka "no show job). 7. The mayor or administrator can force all the council persons to support the mayor, otherwise their family and friends who

were hired may lose their job or get into trouble. 8. The best employees do not get the job, but someone in the family or friends gets the job. 9. The budget directly or indirectly increases, and the taxpayers pays for it. 10. It's disheartening for the citizens.

The Supreme Court is hearing arguments from lawyers about January 6, 2021 riots at the U.S. Capitol building. This became very interesting, due to the case against former president Donald Trump and the rioters. They are arguing about whether or not Sarbanes-Oxley legislation can be used on the accused.

We all are waiting on the outcome of Donald Trump's first criminal case, which started jury selection. On April 16, District Attorney Alvin Bragg filed a motion against Trump for contempt of court. Trump has published three social media posts relating to unknown witnesses in this trial about Stormy Daniels and also Michael Cohen, Trump's former attorney.

The old Stock Exchange, a landmark building in Copenha-

gen, the capital of Denmark, was destroyed by fire. Lately, more and more fires are destroying many monumental buildings. Why all of a sudden are fires sprouting up and hurting us? Is it global warming or something else?

Iran has shown the world that they will do whatever they want. This past weekend, Iran fired several drones and missiles with minimal casualties. Iran became stronger and stronger since Obama delivered \$150 billion cash to Iran in 2016 for them to agree to a 10 year freeze on acquiring nuclear weapons. However, that will be over in two years. Iran does not have nuclear weapons, but yet they were able to fire several missiles and drones. Israel, officially, does not have nuclear weapons, but it is widely believed they do. We all have to wait and watch.

*Have a wonderful week.*

*I'll talk to you next week.*

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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

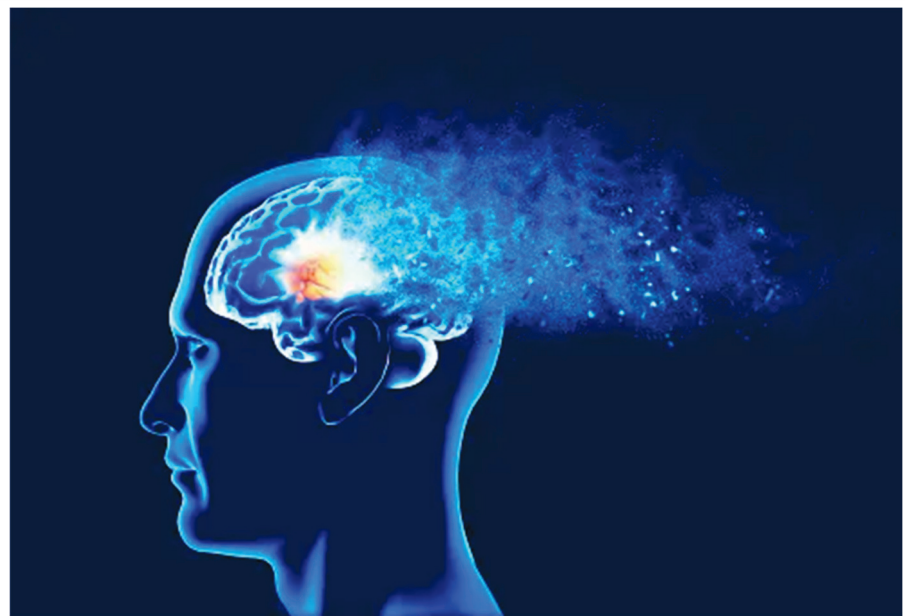
## Healthy Habits Can Help in the Fight Against Dementia

Did you know that someone in the world develops dementia every three seconds? So, in the time you spent reading that, chances that someone somewhere has developed dementia. If you have any idea what dementia is, you will rightfully be worried about this statistic. For full clari-

ty, though, let me briefly walk you through this condition.

Dementia is not a specific disease itself; instead, it represents a group of conditions characterized by an impaired ability to remember, think, solve problems, and make decisions. People with dementia usually see a steep drop in their social skills as well. Well, you may be thinking that your parents and grandparents often show these symptoms, and heck, even you sometimes! Does that mean you have dementia? Not exactly.

For starters, age is the biggest risk factor for dementia - by a wide margin, too. Below 65, the risk of dementia is less than 1%. However, for every five years after 65, the risk more than doubles. And, by the time you cross the 85-year mark, the risk is a staggering 25%. Despite the crystal-clear picture these figures paint, there are still almost 200,000 Americans below 65 living with dementia. Therefore, if you're younger than 65, your risk for dementia is extremely low,



but never quite zero.

Then, it is worth noting that cognitive function declines naturally with age. So, forgetting where you dropped your car keys as a middle-aged person approaching the last third of your life does not mean you are developing dementia. I promise you. As adults, you should expect a decline in cognition as you age. However, among patients with dementia, the fall is far more significant, and can severely impact their ability to handle routine daily tasks.

With that out of the way, it is also relevant to today's discussion to consider the cause of dementia. This is a tricky area because science doesn't really have all of the answers. However, what we do know for sure is that dementia is caused primarily by damage to the brain and its nerve cells.

The most common disease cause of dementia is Alzheimer's, which you may very well have heard about. Alzheimer's is responsible for up to 80% of dementia cases. There are other dementia-causing conditions, though, like dementia with Lewy bodies and frontotemporal dementia. Don't let me bore you with the complicated science behind these conditions.

For many conditions, discovering its cause is often enough to cure and prevent it. Not dementia. This condition has no cure and cannot be prevented. Of course, this doesn't mean that there aren't management options for dementia. However, all of

these options are geared towards slowing the progression of the condition and improving cognitive function.

Since curing dementia is not really on the cards, managing it has been an area of huge research interest. And now, a recent study has identified five lifestyle changes that are associated with better cognition among adults, even those that show signs of dementia.

This is certainly interesting, considering the programmed overreliance of medications in today's world. These five healthy habits are: diet, late-life cognitive activities, physical activity, smoking cessation, and limited alcohol intake. Let's briefly examine them.

Diet, in this case, involves anti-inflammatory and antioxidant foods that can help prevent oxidative damage to the brain cells. Late-life cognitive activities keep the brain active, and they include reading books, playing games, crafts, and social activities. Physical activity also comes in handy, as it assists healthy aging. The CDC recommends a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week. Then, quitting smoking and limiting alcohol intake will also help preserve vital body organs and limit the harmful substances the body is exposed to.

This study certainly offers a fresh insight into improving cognition while aging. But, don't forget that these lifestyle modifications will not prevent dementia

(Continued on page 7)

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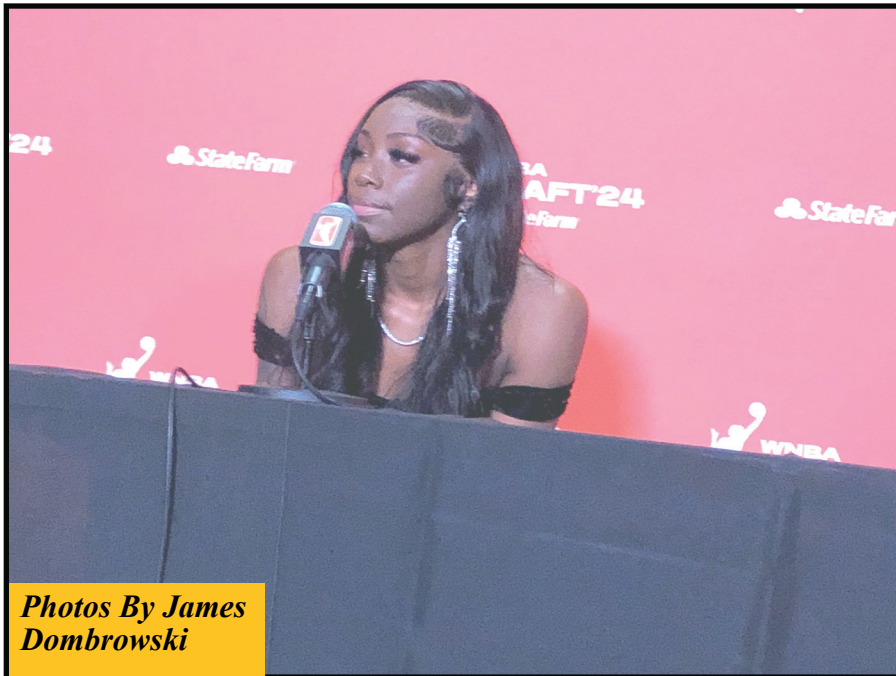


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# SPORTS WRAP



Photos By James Dombrowski

By William Hathaway, Jr.

On April 15 in New York City, the annual WNBA draft was held, with perhaps the best top level draft class in league history. The obvious #1 pick was Iowa's Caitlin Clark, who was taken by the Indiana Fever.

guard Jacy Sheldon, who was taken 5th by Dallas.

Locally, the New York Liberty selected Marquesha Davis from the University of Mississippi with the 11th pick. NY's other selections included Arizona's Esmery Martinez with 17th pick, Mississippi State center



Princeton native Cameron Brink from the University of Stanford was taken 2nd overall by the LA Sparks. Kamilla Cardoso, 2024 Women's NCAA Tournament Most Outstanding Player for the undefeated National Champion South Carolina Gamecocks, went #3 to the Chicago Sky. Chicago also took LSU's Angel Reese with the 7th pick. Rounding out the top five were Tennessee's Rickea Jackson, who went #4 to LA, and Ohio State

Jessika Carter with the 23rd pick, and USC forward Kaitlyn Davis with the 35th pick out of USC.

This draft was historic not just for the incredible players selected, but the fact that it was the WNBA selection special that had paying fans in attendance. Other notable players taken include Niki Muhl from UConn, taken 13th by the Seattle Storm. She will play along Skylar Diggins on the Seattle Storm. Ce-



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leste Taylor from the University of Ohio State was selected by the Indiana Fever to play along top pick Caitlin Clark. Abbey Hsu out of Columbia was taken #34 by the Connecticut Sun. Finally, Jackson State center Angel Jackson taken by the defending champion Las Vegas Aces with the 36th and final pick of the draft.

In other sports news, the New York Jets have announced that they will pivot back to a throw-

back jersey scheme similar to the ones they wore during the New York Sack Exchange era and through the mid-90s.

Finally, longtime New York Yankees radio announcer John Sterling has announced his retirement, effective immediately. The Edgewater, New Jersey native had been with the club since 1989, and even shares his July 4 birthday with legendary Yankee owner George Steinbrenner.





**UNITED STATES**



**BIDEN CANCELS MORE STUDENT DEBT**

On April 12, President Biden announced that 277,000 more Americans will get their student debt canceled, bringing the total debt relief approved by the Biden-Harris Administration to \$153 billion for 4.3 million Americans through various actions.

This latest round of debt cancellation comes on the heels of President Biden announcing new plans that, if implemented, would cancel student debt for over 30 million Americans when combined with actions the Administration has taken over the last three years. This week's announcements reinforce the President's commitment to using every path available to deliver student debt relief to as many borrowers as possible through various actions.

The 277,000 Americans receiving this latest round of debt relief are borrowers enrolled in the SAVE Plan, other borrowers enrolled in Income-Driven Repayment plans, and borrowers receiving Public Service Loan Forgiveness. The Biden-Harris Administration fixed Income-Driven Repayment (IDR) and launched the SAVE Plan last year - the most affordable repayment plan ever.

Already, 8 million borrowers are enrolled in SAVE, 4.5 million of those borrowers have a monthly payment of \$0, and

over 1 million additional borrowers have a monthly payment of less than \$100. And if borrowers took out low balances of loans, the SAVE Plan puts them on a faster path to debt relief after at least ten years of payments.

Since President Biden took office, his Administration has approved over \$54 billion in debt cancellation for 1.3 million borrowers enrolled in income-driven repayment plans, including the new SAVE Plan. This builds on additional actions the Biden-Harris Administration has taken to cancel debt for nearly 900,000 public service workers, 1.3 million borrowers cheated by their schools or borrowers covered by related court settlements, and nearly 550,000 borrowers with a total and permanent disability, including many veterans.

While the Administration continues to cancel Americans' student debt through improving existing forgiveness programs and through the SAVE Plan, the Biden-Harris Administration is also pursuing new plans that, if implemented, would cancel student debt for tens of millions more. Earlier this week, the President announced his Administration's alternative path to debt cancellation in the wake of last year's Supreme Court decision. Learn more about these plans at [StudentAid.gov/DebtRelief](https://StudentAid.gov/DebtRelief).

"Today's announcement comes on top of the significant progress we've made for students and borrowers over the past three years," President Biden said in a statement. "That includes: providing the largest increases to the maximum Pell Grant in over a decade; fixing Public Service Loan Forgiveness so teachers, nurses, police officers, and other public service workers get the relief they are entitled to under the law, and holding colleges accountable for taking advantage of students and families. And, earlier this week, I laid out my Administration's new plans that would cancel student debt for more than 30 million Americans when combined with everything we've done so far.

"From day one of my Administration, I promised to fight to ensure higher education is a ticket to the middle class, not a barrier to opportunity. I will never stop working to cancel student debt - no matter how many times Republican elected officials try to stop us."

**MASS SHOOTING UPDATE**

*Information recent as of 4-16-2024 at 12 p.m.*

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

- Total Mass Shootings: 145
- Total Dead: 214
- Total Wounded: 533
- Shootings Per Day: 1.36
- Days Reached in Year 2024 as of April 16: 107

**MIDDLE EAST**



**IRAN CONDEMNED FOR ATTACK ON ISRAEL**

The people of the Middle East are facing a real danger of a devastating full-scale conflict, António Guterres said on Sunday, urging "maximum restraint" across a region on the brink hours after Iran launched attack drones and missiles against Israel overnight April 13.

"It is vital to avoid any action that could lead to major military confrontations on multiple fronts in the Middle East...Now is the time for maximum restraint," the UN Secretary-General told delegates at the opening of an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council.

Mr. Guterres explained that the emergency session was called by Israel following what it described in a letter as "a direct attack launched by Iran... of more than 200 UAVs, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles towards Israel in clear violation of international law."

The UN chief added that in a separate letter, Iran stated that it had carried out a series of military strikes on Israeli military objectives "in the exercise of Iran's inherent right to self-defense as outlined...in the UN Charter, and in response to...its armed attack on April 1, 2024 against Iranian diplomatic premises" - in Damascus.

According to the latest reports, Iran launched hundreds of drones and missiles from its territory toward Israel, with most intercepted.

Several missiles reportedly struck within Israeli territory, one of which damaged an Israeli military facility in the south of the country.

"And overall, a few civilians were injured," the Secretary-General reported, repeating his strong condemnation of the attacks and his call for an immediate cessation of these hostilities.

Recalling the international community's shared responsibility to engage all parties to prevent further escalation, the Secretary-General added that there was a similar responsibility to secure an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza, the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, and the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid.

There was a further shared responsibility to stop violence in the occupied West Bank, de-escalate the situation along the Blue Line, and re-establish safe navigation in the Red Sea.

"We have a shared responsibility to work for peace. Regional - and indeed global - peace and security are being undermined by the hour. Neither the region nor the world can afford more war," Mr. Guterres concluded.

Israeli Ambassador Gilad Erdan said Saturday night's attacks had been launched from Iranian soil, as well as Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and Iraq.

"Last night the world witnessed an unprecedented escalation that is clear proof of what can happen when warnings are ignored ... (Israel) was not crying wolf; it was trying to wake the world up to the dangers

*(Continued on page 9)*



# SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION RESULTS

By Walter Elliott

**NEWARK** - It appears as of press time that a majority of participating voters have returned incumbents onto their respective Newark and Irvington boards of education April 16.

The Newark Schools Forward team of Helena Vinhas, Vereliz Santana and Dawn Y. Haynes each earned 20 percent of voters. Independent Debra Salters, perhaps benefitting from her dawn 1A ballot placement, received 11 percent of the vote. The other five challengers each received vote percentages in the single digits.

"The Children's Team" of Shante Barr, Annette L. Beasley and John F. Brown each garnered 30 percent or slightly less of the Irvington Board of Education vote. Independent challenger Conrad McPherson received 11 percent of the vote.

The above unofficial tallies, as posted by Essex County Clerk Chris Durkin's Election Division Office 9:34 p.m. Tuesday, came from 179 voting machines of 209 deployed in polling stations in both municipalities plus any Vote By Mail Ballots that have been so far received and recorded.

Essexclerk.com has not posted any votes for prospective write-in candidates.

The results are courtesy from 5,463 registered voters from Newark and Irvington. They amount to 2.77 percent of the county's voting pool of 197,462 among all 22 municipalities.

The results also show that the candidates selected to fill an overall seven BOE seats were on the platforms closely aligned with their political "Moving Newark Forward" and "Team Irvington Strong" tickets shepherded by respective mayors Ras Baraka and Anthony "Tony" Vauss.

Although the BOE teams are non-partisan, their association with their same-town political parties allow them access to the latter's endorsements, "Get Out the Vote" logistics and other resources.

This is also the first time that the respective Newark Public Schools and Irvington Public

Schools budgets were not up for voters' say. The state has allowed public school districts to forgo posting budget questions on the ballot unless the proposed spending will exceed a two percent budget increase cap.

The following figures are unofficial until April 30.

The fortnight is first for any Vote By Mail Ballots that were postmarked or deposited before 8 p.m. April 16 arrive at Essex County's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Justice Complex on or before April 19. The two week pre-certification period is to allow any time for challenges and/or recounts.

### In NEWARK, Three 3-Year Terms

*Newark Schools Forward: (all Incumbents)*

- Helena Vinhas; 2,636 for 22.33 percent of the vote
- Vereliz Santana: 2,619 for 22.09
- Dawn Y. Haynes 2,453 for 20.69

*Saving Our Children*

- Debra Salters 1,342 or 11.32

*Newark Schools Can Be Better*

- Sheila Montague 993 or 8.57

*Listen, Learn, Lead*

- Latoya Jackson 754 or 6.36

*It Takes a Village*

- Muta El-Amin 374 or 3.15
- Che J.T. Colter 356 or 3.0

*Parents Stand on Business*

- Jimmie White 331 or 2.7

*One Unexpired Term*

- NSF - Kanileah Anderson 3,020 or 100 percent

### In IRVINGTON, Three 3-Year Terms

*The Children's Team*

- Shante Barr 691 or 30.82 percent
- Annette L. Beasley 654 or 29.17
- John F. Brown 644 or 28.62

*Persistent, Passionate, Purposeful*

- Conrad McPherson 253 or 11.28



## NJDA SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

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These meals are to be served to 645 children in the Summer Food Service Program, Monday through Friday. Delivery is to be as per bid specifications and contract. Specifications and contract may be obtained as of April 18, 2024 from City of Orange Township - 29 N. Day Street, 3rd Fl. - Room 300. Sealed bids clearly marked on the outside envelope SFSP, along with a sample lunch are to be received by May 2, 2024 at 12:00 pm at The City of Orange Township - 4th Floor, Orange, NJ.

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### THE DOCTOR IS IN

(Continued from page 4)

or cure it. They just help the patient manage it much, much better.

*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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- <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/dementia-redu>
- <https://theconversation.com/aging-with-a-healthy-brain-how-lifestyle-changes-could-help-prevent-up-to-40-of-dementia-cases-211266>
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## WORLD NEWS

(Continued from page 6)

posed by Iran and Its proxies,” he said, adding: “Israel has been sounding the alarm bells.”

Israel’s representative showed a video of what he called an attack on the Temple Mount, and he asked the Security Council: “What have you done to protect the world from Iran?”

He said that Iran’s actions had long been clear, to arm, fund and train its terror proxies across the globe. But the mask of deniability has been removed: Iran had attacked Israel from its own territory; and Israel was surrounded by Iran’s proxies and being attacked on all fronts.

“The mask has come off and so the world’s complacency must also fall. The only option is to condemn Iran...and ensure that it knows that the world will no longer stand idle.”

“This attack crossed every red line and Israel reserves the

right to retaliate,” he stated.

Nearly all of Iran’s attack was thwarted by Israel’s Iron Dome defense system along with aid from the United States, who said that while it would defend the nation against incoming attack, it would not join Israel in an all-out offensive against Iran.

## AFRICA



### 30 YEARS LATER

The UN renewed its commitment to never forget the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda during a candle lighting ceremony on April 12 to mark 30 years since the horrific events there unfolded.

The commemoration in the General Assembly Hall was held

to remember the victims and honor the survivors and those who tried to stop the genocide.

Focus was also on young people who have grown up in its shadow, and on countering hate speech which fueled the killing and has become a growing global concern today.

“The genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda 30 years ago is a stain on our collective consciousness and a brutal reminder of the legacy of colonialism, and the consequences of hate speech,” UN Secretary-General António Guterres said in his opening remarks.

More than a million people - overwhelmingly Tutsi, but also Hutu and others who opposed the genocide - were slaughtered over 100 days, starting on April 7, 1994. Many were hacked to death with machetes.

It was a period when “neighbors turned on neighbors, friends became murderous foes, and entire families were wiped out,” Mr. Guterres recalled.

“The carnage was driven by an explicit intent to destroy members of a group simply because of their ethnic identity,” he said.

The President of the UN General Assembly, Dennis Francis, said the “horror born of a virulent and senseless level of hatred” that engulfed Rwanda three decades ago “should never be allowed to rear its venomous head again in the human conscience and heart.”

He urged people everywhere to learn about the dangerous consequences of hate speech, especially in the era of social media “where unguarded words we utter can spread like wildfire,” as well as the ramification of international inaction in the face of conflict.

“The genocide against the Tutsis had warning signs which were not fully heeded and it unfolded in full view of the global community - which dismally failed Rwanda by not taking

(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** - What would have been the third announcement in a week on the city's annual youth curfew enforcement, supposedly slated between April 15-19, has not been set as of press time.

Mayor Ras Baraka, who had announced its enforcement with Public Safety Director Fritz Frage in advance of the 11 p.m. April 12 start, said he would hold a follow-up conference to discuss curfew details. Baraka, hours before the "Juvenile Safety Initiative" rollout, instead announced that its annual enforcement would be postponed for at least a week.

"This ordinance was enacted by the City decades ago and has been rolled out annually since its inception," said the Mayor that Friday afternoon. "We're once again enforcing an ordinance that already exists and will hold a press conference to explain details of the youth safety measure and other programs to ensure summertime safety and enjoyment."

The curfew, on city books since 1966, keeps unchaperoned people 17 years old and younger off Newark's streets between 11 p.m. and 5:30 a.m. beyond a 100-yard radius of home or work. (100 yards is the length of a North American football field within the end zones.) Exceptions are to be made for those commuting to or from work.

First-time violators are to be escorted home and given a verbal warning. Second-time of-

fenders within six months are to be taken to 43 Dickerson St. The Newark Police Youth Services Section- and their parents or legal guardians called to pick them up. Further violators are referred to the N.J. Department of Children and Families Office of Child Protection and Permanency. No arrests are to be made.

The impending then postponed JSI enforcement did not keep some of the 25 Municipal Council meeting public speakers from decrying the curfew at their April 10 meeting. The speakers asked city elders how the police can tell the difference between "emancipated and unemancipated" juveniles - among other questions.

Similar questions may be brought up again, pending enforcement status, at the council's April 24 meeting.

**IRVINGTON** - Relatives and friends of Valdaishi Simpkins, 27, have been making her funeral arrangements, instead of welcoming her back from Easter break, since April 8.

The N.J. State Police said that Simpkins was driving east on Interstate 80 in her Honda passenger car with an adult male, her seven-year-old child and a three-month-old baby with her at about 8:21 a.m. April 8.

When one of her tires blew out, she pulled over to the right shoulder at Mile Marker .3 in Warren County's Hardwick Township. Although the highway has a right hand shoulder, this stretch of I-80, a former railroad right-of-way hugging the Delaware Water Gap, is narrow and has a 40 mph limit.

Simpkins got out and stood next to her car to inspect the tire's damage - and was struck by an Amazon Volvo tractor-trailer truck that had somehow veered onto the shoulder. She was rushed by EMS to a local hospital but died of her injuries.

The Amazon Volvo driver, who kept going until State Troopers flagged him down, said that he was unaware that he had struck anyone.

Simpkins, said her passengers and relatives, was coming home from an Easter stay in Pennsylvania with her sister.

NJSP Det. Jeffrey Lebron reminds motorists that it is the safest to stay inside a disabled vehicle until assistance comes.

**EAST ORANGE** - ECPO prosecutors, on April 14, have identified the man who was shot dead in broad daylight March 13 in Soverel Park as a local First Ward man.

Amir Giles, 21, was found with multiple gunshot wounds within the city park after 4 p.m. that Wednesday. Giles, of nearby Doddtown's Girard Avenue was rushed to Newark's University Hospital. He was declared dead there at 5:15 p.m.

Witnesses told East Orange police officers that they saw a suspect had fled from the park. Giles' funeral arrangements, as of press time, have not been announced.

### *City Woman Wanted by NPD*

Newark Police Division detectives say they have identified an East Orange woman as a "person of interest" in an April 1 shooting along their own city's major streets.

NPD officers, said Public Safety Director Fritz Frage, met up with a man in University Hospital that Friday who was being treated for a gunshot wound. The man said he was walking west along Springfield Avenue at about 10:30 p.m. when a black SUV pulled up and its passenger fired in his direction and fled. A passing motorist took the victim to the hospital.

Frage has not said how Carissa M. Huggins, 32, of East Orange, is linked to the shooting. The man has been listed in stable condition.

**ORANGE** - A city man has been held in Newark's Essex County Correctional Center since March 16 for domestic violence and assaulting a police officer here at a West Ward residence. The OPD officer meanwhile remains in University Hospital where he was under surgery for severe injuries.

Orange police officers who responded to a domestic violence call from an Ogden Street address at 3 a.m. that Saturday told their supervisors that they had met a man outside who is believed to be the caller's boyfriend. The man appeared to be agitated.

The man - later identified as Mark McCargo, 51 - became infuriated and struck a police

officer several times with a bat or a bat-like object. He then got in his car and ran over the fallen officer.

The officer's colleagues apprehended McCargo and called for local EMS. The policeman was rushed to University Hospital with a broken arm and leg plus facial/cranial fractures.

McCargo, who has ties to Irvington and East Orange, is being held for aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer and related weapons possession and vehicular charges.

March 16 was not McCargo's first encounter with the law. The then-Irvington resident was arrested by the FBI with seven other Essex County men in 2011 for allegedly running a weapons ring. He was accused of selling a rifle while being a convicted felon to an informant from his parked car on an Irvington street.

### *In Memoriam*

April 8 was the 25th anniversary of Orange Police Inspector Joyce Carnegie being fatally shot by an armed robbery suspect on the northeast corner of Freeway Drive West and South Day Street. Carnegie, 38, with four years on the force, was the first OPD officer to die in the line of duty in 35 years. The suspect, who confessed to the shooting, has been serving a life in prison sentence since June 30, 1999.

**WEST ORANGE** - When Gilbert Seltzer was named among those of the "Ghost Army" of World War Two who were receiving the Congressional Gold Medal March 21, son Richard had to stand in for him at the U.S. Capitol ceremony.

G. Seltzer - who died here at 106 Aug. 14, 2021 - was unable to join the three of the seven surviving "Ghost Army" members at the ceremony. He was among some 1,100 architects, artists and engineers who made up the top secret U.S. Army's 23rd Headquarters Special Troops. Their job was to fake placements and movements of their "real army" to fool the German Army in the war's European Theater.

The "23rd" would replace tanks and anti-aircraft batteries with ones made of inflatable rubber or wood. They would set up loudspeakers in the woods to

*(Continued on page 11)*



# U.S. ARMY FINANCIAL COUNSELOR ADMITS DEFRAUDING GOLD STAR FAMILIES

TRENTON - A Monmouth County financial counselor with the United States Army and major in the U.S. Army Reserves admitted on April 16 defrauding Gold Star families and related crimes, U.S. Attorney Philip R. Sellinger announced.

Caz Craffy, aka "Carz Craffey," 41, of Colts Neck pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Georgette Castner in Trenton federal court to the indictment filed against him, which charged six counts of wire fraud and one count each of securities fraud, making false statements in a loan application, committing acts affecting a personal financial interest, and making false statements to a federal agency.

"Those who target and steal from the families of fallen American servicemembers will be held accountable for their crimes," Attorney General Merrick B. Garland said. "Nothing can undo the enormous loss that Gold Star families have suffered, but the Justice Department is committed to doing everything in our power to protect them from further harm."

"Caz Craffy admitted today that he brazenly took advantage of his role as an Army financial counselor to prey upon families of our fallen service members, at their most vulnerable moment, using lies and deception," U.S. Attorney Sellinger said. "These Gold Star families have laid the dearest sacrifice on the altar of freedom. And they deserve our utmost respect and compassion, as well as some small measure of financial security from a grateful nation. We will use

every means at our disposal to ensure that those who defraud our military families are held accountable. Caz Craffy now faces the prospect of years in prison for ripping off these families to line his own pocket."

"Those who prey on the family members of fallen soldiers, will be sought out and held accountable," Special Agent in Charge Joel Kirch, Department of the Army Criminal Investigation Division, Northeast Field Office, said. "The hard work, long hours, and dedication of our partners within the Task Force, from the United States Attorney's Office, Defense Criminal Investigative Service, FBI, Homeland Security Investigations, and our own investigative analyst, resulted in this investigation's swift resolution."

"The families of service members who lost their lives while serving their country deserve to be treated with compassion, dignity and respect by individuals entrusted to assist them in obtaining survivor benefits," said James R. Ives, Principal Deputy Director of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, the law enforcement arm of the DoD Office of Inspector General. "Today's announcement reflects DCIS and our law enforcement partners' steadfast commitment to holding accountable those who use their official positions to take advantage of grieving military families."

"Gold Star families are given a title no one would choose because it means they've paid the ultimate sacrifice for this country," FBI - Newark Special Agent in Charge James E. Dennehy said. "The soldier, sailor,

marine or airman they loved died during a time of conflict - defending this nation. They are given money and assistance to help ease the burden that comes with losing their loved one, but no amount of money can replace what they've lost. Craffey took advantage of his position and defrauded families already going through a tremendous amount of suffering. He is being held accountable, and his victims are seeing justice prevail."

"Craffy disgraced his entrusted position to care for our nation's military families when he allegedly took advantage of them during a vulnerable time of grief," Homeland Security Investigations Newark acting Special Agent in Charge William S. Walker said. "No family, especially our Gold Star families, should have to face further heartache after a loved one's death by having their financial security ripped out from under them by fraudsters."

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court: When a member of the Armed Services dies during active duty, his or her surviving beneficiary, now a member of a Gold Star family, is entitled to a \$100,000 payment and the servicemember's life insurance of up to \$400,000. These payments are disbursed to the beneficiary in a matter of weeks or months following the servicemember's death. To assist the beneficiaries in this time of need, the military provides a number of services to the servicemember's family, including the assistance of a financial counselor.

*(Continued on page 13)*

## TOWN WATCH *(Continued from page 10)*

simulate troop movements. Their work helped bring the Nazi war machine to accept unconditional surrender May 7, 1945.

"We concluded that this was a suicide mission," recalled Gilbert at his home after 1996 "We were a small group of soldiers sent to replace a large group that went elsewhere and they wanted them to shoot at us. We are credited with saving the lives of 30,000 men - but if we saved one life, it was all worthwhile."

Lt. Seltzer was able to talk about his unit after "The Ghost Army" was declassified in 1996. He had retired from architecture in 2000. His wife, Molly, died in 1994.

Born Oct. 11, 1914, Seltzer brought his architecture degree from his native University of Toronto to a Manhattan architectural firm when war clouds started forming. He enlisted in 1941 trained at the now-Fort Drum and went to officer candidate school in Belvoir, Va. He resumed his career once he was honorably discharged, designing the East Coast War memorial in Battery Park, the UMDNJ campus plus buildings on Wayne's then-William Paterson College and the West Point Military Academy.

Grandchildren Sarah and Daniel and great-grandchildren Mikey, Julian and Lyla

also survive him. Daughter Joan and brother Clarence also predeceased him. His recollections have been recorded on StoryCorps, the 2013 PBS documentary "The Ghost Army" and the 2015 same named book.

**SOUTH ORANGE** - Village Councilwoman Jennifer Greenberg, on March 22, announced the passing of her father - former attorney and State Senator Martin L. Greenberg, 93 - that Friday at Palm City, Fla., where he had retired since 2013.

The Newark-born Greenberg, was State Senator of the then 28th Legislative District 1974-79, Superior Court-Jersey City 1992-2002 and in between, attorney for the Governor's Office, the Golden Nugget Casino and Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union Local 108. As Senator, he had sponsored legislation for affordable housing, revamping the criminal code, Pine-lands preservation and the Casino Control Act.

Martin was born Feb. 24, 1932 in Brooklyn to father Max Greenberg, who co-founded RWDSU Local 108 in 1938. The Weequahic High School Class of January 1950 graduate left 89 Hedden Terr. to get his bachelor's and law degrees at Rutgers and its law school in 1954 and 1956.

Greenberg and first wife Sondra moved

to South Orange to raise Jennifer, Clifford, Mitchell and Andrew while he practiced labor law. It was while he was at Teltser, Byrne and Greenberg where he struck up a friendship with future Essex County Prosecutor and Gov. Brendan T. Byrne. It was Byrne who recommended Greenberg to then-Gov. Robert B. Meyner for the latter's Assistant Legal Counsel position.

Greenberg successfully ran for 28th District Senator - when it included South Orange, Irvington and Newark's West Ward - in 1973 and was re-elected in 1977. He resigned in 1979 to become the Golden Nugget's general council. Gov. James Florio appointed him in 1992 onto the Superior Court bench as Presiding Chancery Judge in Hudson County's General Equity and Probate until he reached the mandatory retirement age in 2002.

In retirement, Greenberg became RWDSU's International Union Pension Fund General Counsel and had a private practice in Livingston. His 1950 "Legend" yearbook senior photo was captioned: "Serious, sometimes. Humorous, sometimes. Likable, always."

Both wives Sondra and Ginger, sister Marsha Rein and nine grandchildren are among his survivors. His last rites were ar-

*(Continued on page 14)*

**FARE HIKES** (Continued from page 1)

hikes, NJTransit executives said that they have a \$106.6 million deficit on its Fiscal Year 2025 budget and larger deficits in the next year or two ahead. The fare hikes are part of a plan to attain \$119 million for FY25 without cutting services.

The nation's third largest public carrier, in its announcement, gave a background to their need for \$119 million from the farebox:

- \$30 million spent to take up "emergency service" on the former CoachUSA/ Orange-Newark-Elizabeth, Decamp and Jersey Cities A&C bus routes April 7 - Oct. 30.
- Increased costs among its contracted bus and rail services, including the Hudson Bergen Light Rail and RIVER Lines, ACCESS Link (using Uber and Lyft for some runs) and private bus carriers like CoachUSA (for the 709 Bloomfield-Paramus bus route) and Academy (who temporarily filled-in on the former De-

camp Lines and parts of the Morris & Essex commuter rail line).

- Honoring collective bargaining contract agreements with 10,000 of NJTransit's unionized employees. (NJTransit has 12,000 employees.)
- Healthcare and insurance costs are rising by 47 percent.
- 5 percent inflation increase since 2019 on fuel, materials.

The carrier, without elaboration, said it had saved \$44 million in cost reductions and \$55 million in "revenue enhancements." It took a paragraph to list some recent improvements, including graduating 2,500 more railroad engineers, revamping the My-Bus Mobile App, fully activating Positive Train Control in 2020 and expanding NJTransit Police presence.

The July 1 fare increase would be the first since a nine percent hike was approved by the board of directors in 2015. It held off any projected fare increases during the 2020-21 COVID-19 pandemic. Post pandemic rid-

ership, it said, has rebounded to 80 percent of 2019.

It should be noted that NJTransit, like other public transportation carriers, has exhausted their federal COVID funds as of 2022.

The agency has presumed that the state subsidy will remain flat at \$142 million in FY24 for the next several years. That subsidy had fallen from \$457 million given in FY 20. The state subsidy question opens several related ones.

The Regional Planning Association, of New York City, noted that NJTransit is the last public transportation carrier in the nation not to have a dedicated tax for funding. The State of New Jersey, despite claiming that it does not have dedicated taxes, have 23 on the books.

One tax off the books since Dec. 31 is the corporate business surcharge. The surcharge had brought in \$1 billion in annual revenue before Gov. Phil Murphy (D-Rumson) allowed it to expire.

**WORLD NEWS**

(Continued from page 9)

swift action to prevent or stop it," he said.

Rwandan song writer and author Claver Irakoze was just a child when the unspeakable violence began. His father taught at a secondary school in Kapagyi, located roughly 40 kilometers southwest of the capital, Kigali, and the family sought shelter there.

Early on the morning of April 28, soldiers came to the school and took away 61 men, including his father, loading them "like cargo" onto a truck.

"That was my last time I saw my father," he said. "I remember him faintly waving good-bye at me, so powerlessly. It is an image that still comes to my mind whenever I think about him."

Mr. Irakoze has since written two children's books to teach lessons of hope and healing. He is also a husband and the father of a boy, 9, and a girl, 11 - the same age he was when the genocide began.

"Our killers wanted us wiped out, but we are here," he said. "And through us and our children, we carry the memory of those we lost."

"Let us always remember that peace requires an active effort - and most importantly, prevention."



New measures laid in the UK Parliament on April 16 will make it easier for police chiefs to "sack" - or fire - rogue officers during misconduct hearings.

Police chief constables will be given the responsibility of chairing the hearings which decide on the removal of officers found guilty of police misconduct.

By giving these powers to chief constables, police leaders will be held increasingly accountable for their own officers and be able to influence any dismissal decisions impacting their own force.

Policing Minister Chris Philp said, "Officers unfit to serve must be rooted out at the earliest opportunity and these changes will ensure chief constables are given greater control over this process.

"The public need greater confidence that the officers who serve their communities are dedicated to keeping them safe.

"We have already made progress in improving the police dismissals process, which in-

cludes the police carrying out the largest-ever integrity screening exercise of their workforce and through strengthened vetting, which will go further in booting out corrupt officers."

In some circumstances, such as where misconduct allegations are more minor, chiefs will be able to delegate their role on the panel to a senior police staff member to ensure best possible use of public and policing resources.

Under the new measures, police and crime commissioners (PCCs) will also have greater responsibility for scrutinizing the decisions made by dismissals panels. Chiefs, or in some cases senior police officers, will need to provide justifications for decisions where requested. For example, where it has been decided that a misconduct hearing should be held in private.

The democratically elected commissioners will be tasked with holding those making dismissals decisions to account. PCCs will choose independent members to form the rest of the panel and sit alongside the chair and supportive legal advisors. This will ensure that any conflicts of interest are avoided to uphold the fairness of any hearings.

Previously these panels were chaired by independent lawyers known as legally qualified

chairs. Legal advisors will remain an important part of hearings but will now be known as a 'legally qualified person' who can provide independent legal advice in a more supportive role. The outcome of the hearings will still be determined by a majority panel decision, and hearings will continue to be held in public to maintain transparency and fairness.

These changes, which will come into force on May 7, 2024, follow a comprehensive review into police dismissals following the conviction of David Carrick, a serving police officer, for numerous sexual offenses.

In February, the government set out further changes to the police disciplinary system which will mean that any officer charged with an indictable offence will be automatically suspended from duty until an outcome is reached, alongside legislation that will make it easier to sack officers who fail to hold basic vetting when re-checked, as well as anyone found guilty of gross misconduct.

The Home Office has also committed to providing funding to develop an automated and continuous integrity screening system of the police workforce to ensure that officers are continuously vetted throughout their career.



**COUNSELOR PLEADS GUILTY**

*(Continued from page 11)*

From November 2017 to January 2023, Craffy was a civilian employee of the U.S. Army, working as a financial counselor with the Casualty Assistance Office. He was also a major in the U.S. Army Reserves, where he has been enlisted since 2003. Craffy was responsible for providing general financial education to the surviving beneficiaries. He was prohibited from offering any personal opinions regarding the surviving beneficiary's benefits decisions. Craffy acknowledged that he was not permitted to participate personally in any government matter in which he had an outside financial interest. However, without telling the Army, Craffy simultaneously maintained outside employment with two separate financial investment firms.

Craffy used his position as an Army financial counselor to identify and target Gold Star families and other military fami-

lies. He admitted to encouraging the Gold Star families to invest their survivor benefits in investment accounts that he managed in his outside, private employment. Based upon Craffy's false representations and omissions, the vast majority of the Gold Star families mistakenly believed that Craffy's management of their money was done on behalf of and with the Army's authorization.

From May 2018 to November 2022, Craffy obtained more than \$9.9 million from Gold Star families to invest in accounts managed by Craffy in his private capacity. Once in control of this money, Craffy repeatedly executed trades, often without the family's authorization. These unauthorized trades earned Craffy high commissions. During the timeframe of the scheme, the Gold Star family accounts lost more than \$3.7 million, while Craffy personally earned more than \$1.4 million in commissions, drawn from the family accounts.

The wire fraud and securities

fraud charges are each punishable by a maximum of 20 years in prison. The charge of submitting a false statement on a loan application is punishable by a maximum of two years in prison. The charges of acts affecting a personal interest and false statements to a federal agent are each punishable by five years in prison. All counts but the securities fraud count are also punishable by a maximum fine of either \$250,000 or twice the gain or loss from the offense, whichever is greatest. The securities fraud count is punishable by a maximum fine of either \$5 million or twice the gain or loss from the offense, whichever is greatest. Sentencing is scheduled for Aug. 21, 2024.

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has a pending civil complaint against Craffy based on the same and additional conduct. Craffy has been permanently prohibited from association with any member of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority Inc. (FINRA).

U.S. Attorney Sellinger credited special agents of the Department of the Army Criminal Investigation Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Kirch; special agents of DCIS, under the direction of Principal Deputy Director Ives; special agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Dennehy; and special agents of Homeland Security Investigations Newark, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Walker, with the investigation leading to the indictment. He also expressed appreciation for the Securities and Exchange Commission, under the direction of Gurbir S. Grewal, Director, Division of Enforcement, and FINRA, under the direction of Head of Enforcement Bill St. Louis.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Martha K. Nye of the Criminal Division in Trenton, and Carolyn Silane of the Economic Crimes Unit in Newark.

**GANG MEMBER ADMITS RACKETEERING CHARGE**

**NEWARK** - A member of the Rollin' 60s Neighborhood Crips gang admitted his role in a racketeering conspiracy, U.S. Attorney Philip R. Sellinger announced April 15.

Elijah Williams, aka "Lil Smith," 24, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Susan D. Wigenton in Newark federal court to a superseding indictment that charged him with Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) conspiracy.

"The defendant in this case today admitted to his role in a criminal enterprise involved in violent crime and drug trafficking," U.S. Attorney Philip Sellinger said. "Williams murdered and injured rival gang members and left a trail of blood. He now faces spending the rest of his life behind bars. This result was achieved through the hard work of many law enforcement partners, and we will continue this cooperative effort as we battle the scourge of drugs and violence on our streets."

"The guilty plea from a member of the Rollin' 60s Neighborhood Crips gang is a result of the collaborative effort DEA New Jersey has with our law enforcement partners effectively targeting those organizations and individuals poisoning and destroying our communities," Special Agent in Charge Cheryl Ortiz of the DEA New Jersey Field Division said. "Removing these individuals and their illicit narcotics saves lives and prevents deaths."

"This investigation is an example of ATF's dedication to working with our state, local and federal partners in identifying, targeting,

and investigating violent criminals who prey upon our citizens and lessen the quality of life of our communities," Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Special Agent in Charge Bryan Miller said. "We will continue to work with our partners to impact the violence of gangs, drug-related activity, and criminal organizations. Our neighborhoods deserve to exist without fear and intimidation inflicted by these violent offenders."

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court: From 2015 through Sept. 22, 2022, Williams was a member of the Rollin' 60s Neighborhood Crips, a criminal enterprise responsible for acts of violence and the distribution of controlled substances in the District of New Jersey and elsewhere. On Sept. 25, 2018, in Newark, Williams attempted to murder rival gang members and associates by shooting at four individuals, one of whom was paralyzed. On March 20, 2019, in Irvington, New Jersey, Williams fatally shot another person, in retaliation for the murder of a member and associate of the Rollin' 60s.

The defendant faces a maximum sentence of life in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentencing is scheduled for Sept. 4, 2024.

U.S. Attorney Sellinger credited special agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Cheryl Ortiz; special agents of IRS - Criminal Investigation, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Jenifer L. Piovesan; special agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

(ATF), under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Bryan Miller; investigators of the U.S. Marshals Service, under the direction of Marshal Juan Mattos; the Irvington Police Department, under the direction of Police Division Director Tracy Bowers; the Essex County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Acting Prosecutor Theodore N. Stephens II; the Newark Police Department, under the direction of Public Safety Director Fritz Fragé; the Bloomfield Police Department, under the direction of Director of Public Safety Samuel A. DeMaio; the Essex County Sheriff's Office, under the direction of Sheriff Armando B. Fontoura; the East Orange Police Department, under the direction of Chief Phyllis L. Bindi; the Elizabeth Police Department, under the direction of Police Director Earl J. Graves; the Edison Police Department, under the direction of Chief of Police Tom Bryan; the New Jersey State Police, under the direction of Col. Patrick J. Callahan; the Union County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor William A. Daniel; the Spotswood Police Department, under the direction of Chief Philip Corbisiero; and the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation Fugitive and Missing Person Task Force, which includes members of the FBI, with the investigations leading to the charges in the Rollin' 60's Neighborhood Crips investigation.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Francesca Liquori of the Special Prosecutions Division.



# The Observation Booth



OP-ED By Andrea Dialect

## PUPPET MASTERS SERIES

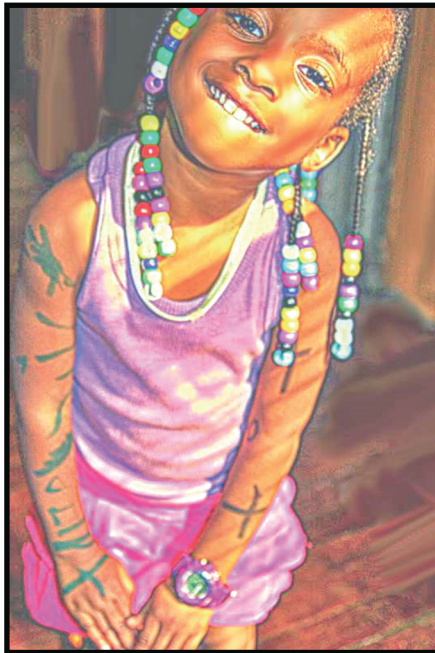
*"Due to the continuous disregard for those who have come before us; and the sheer negligence in revering them with simple gestures such as opening doors, giving up our seats, and lending a hand, as addressing them respectfully at passing and acknowledging their presence with eyes of respect. Our elders, with those ethical codes openly displayed, who were once greatly depended upon to ensure that legislation was enforced and essential services stayed in place. Now find it more rewarding to shun the doors of city hall, likely opting instead to spend the remainder of their precious moments at the table*

*of the bingo hall. What a price we pay." Andrea Dialect said that!*

### KIDDIE RAP

Yo... All those unwelcoming looks, that vulgar script and the negative language; the body gives off as a message repels positive human exchange and experience. Know that a sparse vocabulary and/or a combative disposition is a recipe for disaster. Simply put, the blatant disrespect or disregard towards others. Which says that everyone is to be subjected to scrutiny and or every one is a threat ain't good. This makes for a tiny world for them to live in.

Gazing upon all those little ones out there walking around



Photos By Andrea Dialect

who are quite young or even those that are being pushed around in strollers. Whom by disposition they're lookin' like they're D-Dog from D-Block because their innocence has been stumped out by perhaps, daddy, mama, the both or some other. ...



Read this article in its entirety at [www.localtalkweekly.com](http://www.localtalkweekly.com) and type The Observation Booth Andrea in the search bar. If you have any questions, send them to [localtalkandrea@gmail.com](mailto:localtalkandrea@gmail.com).



### TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 11)

ranged by Bernheim-Apter-Kreitzman Suburban Funeral Home, of Livingston. Memorial donations may go to the Alzheimer's Foundation of America, 322 Eighth Ave. - 16th Flr., NYC 10001.

**MAPLEWOOD** - There is a treason for increased police presence on and around Columbia High School since the on campus assault of a student here April 9.

Maplewood police, the South Essex Fire Department and local EMS were summoned to the school soon after that Tuesday afternoon's dismissal. They also met a student who was being treated for his injuries by a school nurse.

The victim said that he was assaulted by one or more students "from another local high school." His treatment for minor injuries was completed by a local hospital after his SOFD transportation - with a relative present.

Interim Principal Ricardo Pedro said that he has asked for additional MPD patrols. Pedro added that he will be talking with public safety representatives and first responders.

"I take the safety of all students very seriously and have no intention of tolerating such incidents at CHS," said Pedro. "This is why I will increase the number of security personnel and administrative staff outside the building during dismissal."

The Maplewood Police Youth Aid Bureau is leading the investigation. They are also reviewing an on-campus video recording.

**BLOOMFIELD** - The township lost its third Armino resident in five months with the April 3 death of family patriarch Michael S. Arminio, Sr. Arminio's wife, Dolores, 93, died in Dec. 30. Son Michael S. Arminio, Jr., 63, died Jan. 3.

Michael, Sr. and Delores had raised Michael, Jr., and daughter Leanora in Montclair

before retiring to Bloomfield. Michael, Sr., a Korean War-era U.S. Army veteran, was a versatile tradesman who worked with the Lionetti Fuel Oil Company, of Newark, until his retirement.

The talented landscaper and artist made furniture for daughter and a dollhouse for granddaughter Maria Tullin.

The local American Legion, Elks and UNICO member applied his sportsman streak in bocce, bowling, boxing, golf, horseshoes, ping pong and softball. He also liked to cheer for the NFL New York Jets.

His beloved Dolores was an EEG technician at Montclair Community Hospital until her 1993 retirement but returned to part-time reception work at Mountainside Hospital in 2020. She also worked in Our Lady of Mount Carmel School's cafeteria and volunteered with the parish's bingo nights and stamping church envelopes.

The Montclair High School Class of 1949 graduate was followed in death by son  
*(Continued on page 15)*



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

Michael, Jr. five days later. Michael, Jr., MHS Class of 1977, had suffered a long illness. was a member of the St. Donato Society, the St. Sebastian Society, Montclair UNICO and the Make a Wish Foundation.

Michael, Sr.'s survivors include brothers Frank and Daniel, sisters Marie Intile and Jean DeCaito, daughter Leanora Michelli, granddaughter Maria Tullin and great-granddaughters Maya and Chloe Tullin.

His visitation was held at the Caggiano Memorial Home and April 13 Funeral Mass at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Oratory - where Dolores and Michael, Jr.'s last rites were also held. Memorial donations may be made in their names to the Tunnels to Towers Foundation [www.t2t.org](http://www.t2t.org), the hospiceofnewjersey.org and/or the charity of your choice.

**MONTCLAIR** - ECPO detectives and Montclair Police - with the New Jersey Attorney General's Office looking over their shoulders - are investigating the circumstances surrounding a gunfire exchange between suspect Maryann Swain and a Montclair Police officer along the 100 block of Forest St. since 3 p.m. April 15.

"There was an encounter between an individual in a residence and Montclair police officers," said ECPO Chief Assistant Prosecutor Thomas S. Fennelly. "The individual fired a weapon, striking one of the officers. It appears that an officer returned fire, striking the individual."

Witnesses told local reporters that Montclair police arrived at 191 Forest St. after 2 p.m. No one has said what prompted the first officers' visit. There was a shot of "Gun," three gunshots and a scream - prompting the arrival of more Montclair police, the Montclair Ambulance Unit and, later, the ECPO Crime Scene Investigation Unit and an MPD-contracted tow truck.

Neighbors added that the suspect is a woman who has two young children and had moved in the house less than six months ago. She and the wounded officer were taken to University Hospital for treatment of non-life-threatening wounds. Her Jeep with California license plates was towed to a police impound yard.

The nearby Montclair High School complex, the Renaissance at Rand Middle School and the Watchung School plus Woodman Field, said Montclair Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jonathan Ponds, were briefly put under a "shelter in place" order.

"We want to inform you that all students and staff are safe and are proceeding with a regular day," said Ponds. "The police have cleared the matter. All schools will be dismissed as usual."

**GLEN RIDGE** - The borough's board

of education had named Kyle C. Arlington as the public district's next superintendent of schools.

The GR BOE named Arlington to succeed Dirk Phillips, who will retire on June 30. Arlington was selected after winnowing 62 candidates for over four months. The process included interviews of several finalists after a community survey and stakeholder focus groups were held.

Arlington will be heading here from Union County's Kenilworth June 30. his four-year superintendency of the Pre-Kindergarten-12th Grade district included passing a \$31.4 million renovation bond issue, expanding its arts program, re-vamping its early literacy program and reopening the system post-COVID pandemic.

Arlington had previously Millburn Public Schools assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction. He had fostered greater access to Advanced Placement courses there. He had started his career as an English teacher at Vernon Township before advancing to middle school assistant principal on up to assistant superintendent.

The Denville resident is pursuing a doctorate in Columbia University's Teachers College and is a part-time instructor.

Phillips, 56, has decided to retire from his 29-year Glen Ridge Public Schools career - his last 10 as superintendent - June 30.

**BELLEVILLE** - 1199 SEIU, the union representing Nurses here at the Clara Maass Medical Center, have filed an unfair labor practice complaint against parent RWJBarnabas Health before the National Labor Relations Board April 1.

The Iselin-based union complains that, for "the six months preceding this date (April 1), the above named Employer has failed and refused to bargain in good faith with 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East by: 1.) insisting on proposals that give it control over virtually every aspect of the employment relationship, including but not limited to wages, hours, health benefits, retirement benefits, vacation and other paid time off and the performance of bargaining work, and 2.) engaging in regressive bargaining."

RWJBH, from its West Orange headquarters, called the union's charge as "baseless and insulting."

The 500 Clara Maass' registered nurses formed a union two summers ago over job security, "safe staffing," pay and benefits. Union representatives have cited that Clara Maass, unlike other RWJBH hospitals, does not have staffing guidelines.

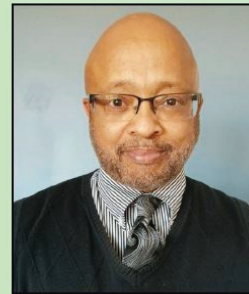
They have been since negotiating their first contract with the hospital administration.

**NUTLEY** - Bergen County law enforcers said that the former Nutley resi-

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dent who is facing a 2019 vehicular homicide charge has been charged - for a second time - of child sexual contact.

Donald Kumar Davis, 33, said Bergen County Prosecutor Mark Musella, was arrested in Hackensack March 3 and subsequently charged with aggravated criminal contact and endangering the welfare of a child. This particular charge was the result of an investigation of the BCPO Special Victims Unit and the Wyckoff Police Department of a Dec. 13, complaint against Davis.

This charge is on top of two counts of second-degree child endangerment and two third-degree counts of aggravated criminal contact against Davis, now of Lyndhurst. These charges, filed Dec. 19, are the results of an investigation among the county, Wyckoff and Washington Township departments. Davis was accused of sexually assaulting a juvenile twice in the township and once in Wyckoff.

Musella confirmed that Davis still faces charges of vehicular homicide of a retired Albanian police chief and his Walmart manager wife in a June 29, 2019 collision of their cars before the latter's Lodi address. He faces two counts of death by auto and one count of reckless driving.

Davis, on Dec. 20, had launched Kumar Davis Fitness from a Nutley address to elevate "lives through Mind, Body and Spirit transformation.

It is presumed that the strength and fitness coach had been released on bail from Hackensack's Bergen County Jail. He had been free after his 2019 charges until December.





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