

# LOCAL TALK

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### OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

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Phone: 973-622-1111 • www.localtalkweekly.com

E-mail - Newspaper: localtalk@aol.com \* Printing: localtalkprinting@gmail.com

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## SENTINEL = FAKE NEWS

*Quantavia Hilbert Pulls Ahead Based On Public Sentiments, as False Accusations and Misrepresentations Plague Orange Mayor's Desperate Attempt for 4th Term*

Orange residents have been long suffering over the past 12 years under the highly controversial and legally challenged Warren Administration. According to one resident, “I’ve just had enough of the corruption and FBI investigations in my hometown. It’s definitely time for a change and Quantavia Hilbert is our best chance to rebuild Orange.”



The latest accusation coming from the mayor's supporters, through a brand new online publication called ‘The North Jersey Sentinel’ claims that Hilbert is somehow involved in a legal dispute over the sale of one of her businesses. This new unincorporated news entity - just in time to seemingly directed at smearing Warren’s formidable opponent Hilbert - neglected to state the case correctly.

“The fact is that my company initiated a lawsuit against the buyers who reneged on our agreement for them to pay us a certain price,” said Hilbert in response to the Fake News. “They agreed and broke the agreement while benefiting from our hard work. We sued them, and have a pending date

in court this June. They, then countersued claiming that somehow my being a councilwoman brought some pressure on them. This is as ridiculous as the Sentinel article. We have a right to claim what is rightly ours under the law and we will not settle for anything less.

“It’s unfortunate that the Sentinel, initiated by the mayor's legal and public relations supporters, didn't do their due diligence before putting out this Fake News,” Hilbert continues.

The current elections in the City of Orange Township have not seen such a closely contested election in the last

(Continued on page 12)

## AN ELECTION SEASON IN THE POST-PAYNE ERA

By Walter Elliott

NEWARK - Fate has already determined a June 4 party primary winner April 24 here even before most registered voters have given a thought to May 14's nonpartisan municipal elections.

The late Donald M. Payne, Jr., who died here April 24, will win the June 4 Democratic party for the U.S. House of Representatives 10th Congressional District unopposed. His death came four days after the June 4 primary ballots had been printed and mailed.

Payne, 65, had suffered from “a cardiac event” April 9 and was taken to RWJBarnabas Health Newark Beth Israel Medical Center. His Congressional staff said that the event was complicated with his diabetes and high blood pressure. He never recovered from the unconscious and intubated state that he was admitted in.

“DMP, Jr.” was a seven-term Congressman who followed in his late father Donald M. Payne, Sr.'s political footsteps. The Hillside High School Class of 1977 graduate was a Newark Municipal Councilman and an Essex County Freeholder who resigned from those positions when he was first elected to Congress - like his father.

The younger Payne won his father's CD-10 seat in a pair of special elections June 5 and Nov. 11. He was running simultaneous-



U.S. Congressman Donald M. Payne, Jr. (1958-2024)

ly for “DMP Sr” 's” unexpired term plus a full two-year term that started on Jan. 6, 2013.

It will be up to the party chairs of the Essex, Union and Hudson County Democratic Committees to convene a convention after June 17 to pick Payne's successor for the Nov. 5 General Election ballot. The convention delegates will be made up from the 18 municipal chairpersons and ward leaders of CD-10.

Gov. Phil Murphy (D-Rumson) could force Democratic Committee Chairman LeRoy Jones, Jr. and the party's hands by calling a special election to fill what is left of Payne's current term.

(Continued on page 5)

## WHY LEBRON JAMES IS NOT THE GOAT EDITORIAL - PAGE 2



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**Editorial**  
*Kristopher Seals*  
 Content Editor

**Hello Readers,**

Hey, it's me: The other guy. Let's get to it...

I'm a basketball fan, and as someone with a platform, there is something I want to clear up right now. Ladies and gentlemen, LeBron James is NOT the greatest player of all time. Here are some reasons.

1. The moment he took his talents to South Beach to ride Dwyane Wade to championship glory, he forfeited any right to it.
2. Even if you do not think that is a big deal, then try this on for size. The first title he won with Miami was in a 66-game season cut short due to beef between the players and owners. He won the second title because Ray Allen saved him in Game 6. The third title came due to Draymond Green getting sus-

- ended. Finally, the fourth title came in the pandemic bubble, where guys wanted to be home rather than out and about with a virus spreading everywhere. Not one of those championships came without an asterisk.
3. And then there are the losses. I don't hold the first one in Cleveland against him, as the Spurs were a far better team. The loss to Dallas is not too bad, as Dirk Nowitzki proved why he was Hall of Fame worthy. However, the other losses are awful. First, the loss to the Spurs after the Heat beat them saw third-year player Kawhi Leonard named MVP, and then the next year, Andre Iguodala won the honor when LeBron went back to Cleveland. What do they have in common? They both won MVP after locking up LeBron. I'm sorry, but the "greatest player of all time" has no business getting locked up by a pre-Klaw Kawhi and a Sixth Man.
  4. Now for the biggest indictment. First, the Cavaliers lost back to back series to the Warriors after beating them

- in 2016. In 2017, Kevin Durant (more on that disappointment in a moment) won MVP - at LeBron's expense. Now comes the #1 reason why LeBron CANNOT be the greatest ever: In 2018, Durant did it again. This means that he beat LeBron TWICE. If LeBron was truly the GOAT, then somebody else would have beaten Cleveland, as he would have handled Durant, and not have gotten done dirty by him TWICE in a row.
5. Let's contrast with the real GOAT: Michael Jordan. When he lost to the Pistons, he wasn't scheming to take his talents to Detroit. He LITERALLY got his weight up and swept them! Also, NO ONE won an MVP off of Jordan for either locking him up or cooking him in the Finals. In fact, MJ never lost an NBA Finals, whereas LeBron has lost five times.
  6. Yes, he has the most points in history, but he was able to skip college and start his career sooner. In terms of dominance by numbers, all praise goes to Wilt Chamberlain, who was so dominant they

- had to change the rules. Otherwise, he'd probably have 45,000 points.
7. In Jordan's era, players were tougher and far more competitive. NBA stood for "No Babies Allowed." You were actually allowed to play defense, hand check, and be hardcore (Just look at any footage of 1980s basketball). In LeBron's era, players are soft. Not just soft, but S-A-W-F-T. If you look at someone in a threatening manner, it's a Flagrant-2. And that's if they actually play, and aren't in street clothes due to "load management." (I don't mean every player, as guys like Anthony Edwards, Russell Westbrook, Harrison Barnes, etc. come to play with everything they have.)
  8. In conclusion, LeBron can be #2, but never #1, because he simply doesn't deserve it. Quality over Quantity.

In a related matter, here's some good news. It would appear that the era of NBA superstars riding other superstars to win championships is over. The Minnesota Timberwolves swept the  
*(Continued on page 13)*

**STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS FOR LOCAL TALK WEEKLY NEWSPAPER**

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**Editors:** Kristopher Seals • Anuj Shah  
**Journalists / Writers:** Kristopher Seals • Walter Elliott • Dhiren Shah • Anuj Shah • Akshat Shah • Asha Shah • Kinjal Shah • Thomas Ellis II • William Hathaway, Jr. • Lev D. Zilbermints • Dr. Robert Kennedy • Dr. Adil Manzoor • Fred Simpson • Andrea Dialect • Ahmed Screven, Esq.  
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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>
Partly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	PM Rain	Showers	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Scattered Storms
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# SIXTEEN PEOPLE CHARGED WITH CONSPIRACY TO DEFRAUD HUNDREDS OF ELDERLY AMERICANS

**NEWARK** - Sixteen individuals were charged in connection with a sprawling “grandparent scam” to defraud hundreds of elderly Americans out of millions of dollars, U.S. Attorney Philip R. Sellinger announced April 30.

Eleven men from the Dominican Republic are charged in a 19-count indictment with mail and wire fraud conspiracy; wire fraud; mail fraud; conspiracy to commit money laundering; and money laundering:

- Juan Rafael Parra Arias, aka “Yofre,” 40 (in custody)
- Nefy Vladimir Parra Arias, aka “Keko,” 39
- Nelson Rafael Gonzalez Acevedo, aka “Nelson Tech,” 35
- Rafael Ambiorix Rodriguez Guzman, aka “Max Morgan,” 59 (in custody)
- Miguel Angel Fortuna Solano, aka “Botija,” aka “Boti,” 41
- Felix Samuel Reynoso Ventura, aka “Fili,” aka “Filly The Kid,” 36 (in custody)
- Carlos Javier Estevez, 45

- Louis Junior Serrano Rodriguez, aka “Junior,” 27
- Miguel Angel Vasquez, aka “Miguel Disla,” 24
- Jovanni Antonio Rosario Garcia, aka “Porky,” aka “Chop,” 45
- Jose Ismael Dilone Rodriguez, 34 (in custody)

An additional five defendants were charged by complaint with wire fraud conspiracy as part of the same scheme: Endy Jose Torres Moran, 21, of Brooklyn, New York; Ivan Alexander Inoa Suero, 32, of the Bronx, New York; Jhonny Cepeda, 27, and Ramon Hurtado, 43, both of New York; and Yuleisy Roque, 21, of the Bronx.

“As alleged, these 16 defendants preyed upon grandparents’ familial love and devotion, cheating them out of millions of dollars,” U.S. Attorney Sellinger said. “In this ‘grandparents’ scam,’ the defendants allegedly impersonated grandchildren in distress, claiming, for example, they had been arrested after a car accident involving a pregnant woman who later miscarried, and

they needed immediate cash for bail or a lawyer. The panic-stricken grandparents quickly paid—sometimes tens of thousands of dollars. My office is committed to protecting the rights of all victims, and we will relentlessly prosecute those who allegedly target vulnerable seniors to steal their hard-earned savings.”

“The Justice Department’s Consumer Protection Branch and its law enforcement partners will vigorously pursue individuals who prey on vulnerable and elderly victims through fraudulent schemes,” Deputy Assistant Attorney General Arun Rao of the Justice Department’s Civil Division, Consumer Protection Branch said. “We will continue to identify perpetrators of these schemes and prioritize the pursuit of those who deliberately target vulnerable consumers, whether located in the United States or abroad.”

“Today’s announcement stems from the defendants’ alleged heartless targeting of elderly victims who were collectively tricked into handing over millions of dollars,” Department of Homeland Security, Homeland Security Investigations, New York, Acting Special Agent in Charge Darren B. McCormack, said. “For their own selfish gain, these accused individuals threatened innocent Americans’ livelihoods, and robbed them of their precious time and any nest eggs they had secured for themselves. I commend HSI New York’s El Dorado Task Force Cyber Intrusion Group, the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of New Jersey, the NYPD, the FBI, the Social Security Office of Inspector General, and HSI Santo Domingo for their outstanding collaboration and coordination. This can truly happen to anybody, and while we will always be there to assist victims, we hope that raising awareness will give these criminal opportunists fewer chances to target the public.”

“We allege these scammers created an elaborate scheme revolving around a grandchild reaching out to say they were in trouble, had been arrested, and needed help,” FBI - Newark Special Agent in Charge James E. Dennehy said. “Then to reinforce an immediate need for cash,

these fraudsters allegedly posed as attorneys, law enforcement officers and court employees explaining how grandparents can get them money. Even the most jaded and savvy of us out there may pause a moment, thinking that this could actually be real. That’s the insidious nature of this particular fraud, criminals are preying on our instinct to protect our families. We ask anyone who believes they could also be a victim to report it at [www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov).”

“Fraud targeting the elderly has a uniquely harmful effect on a segment of the population that is often amongst society’s most vulnerable,” Bradley Parker, Acting Special Agent in Charge, Social Security Administration (SSA) Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Boston - New York Field Division, said. “SSA OIG is proud to join HSI, the FBI, the Justice Department, and the NYPD in investigating these complex, international scams aimed at defrauding SSA beneficiaries.”

“These charges underscore law enforcement’s commitment to protecting our older population from fraudsters and financial exploitation,” New York Police Department Commissioner Edward A. Caban said. “The crimes outlined here are truly depraved in their nature: targeting our parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles, and others in an elaborate venture to bilk them of their hard-earned savings. I applaud our NYPD investigators and all of our federal partners involved in this important case for their tireless dedication to our shared public safety mission.”

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court: Juan Rafael Parra Arias, Nefy Vladimir Parra Arrias, and Gonzalez Acevedo operated a sophisticated network of call centers in the Dominican Republic. Their alleged victims included elderly residents of several states, including New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. The call centers victimized hundreds of Americans through fraud, stealing millions of dollars.

Members of the conspiracy referred to as “openers” called elderly victims in the United States and impersonated the vic-

*(Continued on page 14)*

## Non-healing Foot Wounds? Diabetic Foot Ulcers?



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# SPORTS WRAP

By William Hathaway, Jr.

The National Football League recently held its annual draft, with the 2024 edition taking place in Detroit. As no surprise to anyone, the Chicago Bears took USC QB and 2022 Heisman winner Caleb Williams with the 1st pick overall. The 2nd pick was the 2023 Heisman winner, LSU QB Jayden Daniels, selected by the Washington Commanders. North Carolina QB Drake Maye made it a clean sweep for the Top 3 being signal callers, as he was selected by the New England Patriots. Ohio State WR Marvin Harrison, Jr. was selected 4th by the Arizona Cardinals, while the Chargers took Notre Dame OT Joe Alt to round out the Top 5.

With the sixth selection, the NY Giants took explosive LSU WR Malik Nabers, who drew comparisons to another LSU star Big Blue once had in Odell Beckham, Jr. Two picks later, the biggest shocker of the whole draft came when, despite signing QB Kirk Cousins to a massive contract this offseason, the Atlanta Falcons too Washington QB Michael Penix, Jr. with the 8th pick. Two picks later, the Minnesota Vikings swapped picks with the NY Jets to move into #10 and took Michigan QB and 2024 National Champion JJ McCarthy.

At #11, the Jets took Penn State OT Olu Fashanu. With the next pick, the Denver Broncos took Oregon QB Bo Nix, meaning that half of the first dozen picks were quarterbacks. The Indianapolis Colts took UCLA DE Laiatu Latu with the 15th pick, which was significant because he was the first defensive player to be selected in the 2024 NFL Draft.

Here are some other local selections:

Giants: 2nd Round, #47 overall, Tyler Nubins (S, Min-



Photo Courtesy CSU Rams

nesota); 3rd Round, #70 overall, Andru Phillips (CB, Kentucky); 4th Round, #107 overall, Theo Robinson (TE, Penn State); 5th Round, #166 overall, Tyrone Tracy, Jr. (RB, Purdue); 6th Round, #183 overall, Darius Muasau (LB, UCLA)

Jets: 3rd Round, #65 overall, Malachi Corley (WR, Western Kentucky); 4th Round, #134 overall, Braelon Allen (RB, Wisconsin); 5th Round, #171 overall, Jordan Travis (QB, Florida State); 5th Round, #173 overall, Isaiah Davis (RB, South Dakota State); 5th Round, #176 overall, Quan'tez Stiggers (CB, Toronto Argonauts); 7th Round, #257 overall (the last pick of the NFL Draft, aka "Mr. Irrelevant"), Jaylen Key (S, Alabama)

As for local representation, Newark native Mohamed Kamara, who was a four year letterman and played at Central High School, was taken in the 5th Round with pick #158 from the CSU Rams to rush the QB for the Miami Dolphins.

In the NBA, as of this posting, the likes of the LA Lakers, Phoenix Suns, and New Orleans Pelicans have been eliminated from the postseason.

Finally, former USC star running back Reggie Bush had his Heisman Trophy restored after it was taken years ago.



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**ELECTION**

(Continued from page 1)

There is still the matter of registered voters in five towns choosing their municipal leaders from among 36 or 37 candidates by 8 p.m. May 14.

In ORANGE, there are three people vying to become the city's next mayor and three balloted council members plus a write-in candidate are seeking the three at-large council seats.

Current West Ward Councilwoman Quantavia L. Hilbert and former At-Large Councilman April Gaunt-Butler are challenging incumbent Mayor Dwayne D. Warren. Participating city voters get to choose whether Warren gets a fourth four-year term or if Hilbert or Gaunt-Butler becomes Orange's first woman mayor.

Hilbert is running on her own "Voice for Orange" banner. Gaunt-Butler is on "Community Continuity And Commitment." Warren heads up the "Moving Orange Forward 2024" ticket.

The three people looking to

be re-elected as at-large council members are Wheldon M. "Monty" Montague III, Clifford R. Ross and Adrienne Wooten of "Moving Orange Forward." They appeared to be running uncontested until April 16 - when Derrick Henry launched his write-in campaign.

Henry intends to become Orange's first successful write-in candidate. The current Orange Board of Education member was one of the founding members for the citizens committee that had that school board switch from a mayor-appointed panel to one that is now voter-elected.

In IRVINGTON, three of the four "Team Irvington Strong" incumbents face challengers for their council ward seats.

Incumbent Orlando Glen Vick is being challenged by "North Ward United Progress Ignited" campaigner Yasmin Jones in the North Ward. Incumbent Jamillah Z. Beasley and "Team New Irvington South

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**UNITED STATES**



**FOUR OFFICERS KILLED IN CHARLOTTE MASS SHOOTING**

What started as a routine service of a warrant ended in an incident so tragic it got a response from the nation's highest ranking official.

Between 1-2 p.m. on April 29, U.S. Marshals and an officer with the Charlotte- arrived at a house on Galway Drive to serve a felony warrant to 39-year-old Terry Clark Hughes, Jr. Shockingly, Hughes and another suspect opened fire with an illegally modified AR-15, killing three of the Marshals and the police officer. Four other Marshals were injured in the shootout, which ended after Hughes was shot dead after a SWAT team was called in. The other shooter, who was not identified as of deadline, was taken into custody.

CMPD Chief Johnny Jennings released the names and conditions of CMPD officers wounded in the incident.

CMPD Officer Michael Giglio, hired in February of 2021, was treated for gunshot wound injuries and released from the hospital. CMPD Officer Jack Blowers, hired in February of 2023, was also treated for his gunshot wound injuries and was released from the hospital. CMPD Officer Justin Campbell, hired in June of 2020, sustained injuries resulting in a broken foot. He was treated and released from the hospital. Also, CMPD

Officer Chris Tolley remains in stable condition.

Tragically, Thomas M. Weeks Jr., 48, of Mooresville, North Carolina, died in the line of duty at approximately 1:30 p.m. April 29 when the suspect opened fire on the group of law enforcement officers, killing Weeks and three others.

Weeks was a 13-year veteran of the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS), serving in the Western District of North Carolina for the last 10 years.

Also, Marshals Sam Poloche and Alden Elliot died at the scene, and officer Joshua Eyer was initially in critical condition but died in the hospital several hours later.

The shooting was so tragic, it even garnered the attention of President Biden, who gave a statement.

“Four brave law enforcement officers - including a Deputy U.S. Marshal - were killed in the line of duty. They are heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice, rushing into harm’s way to protect us. We mourn for them and their loved ones. And we pray for the recoveries of the courageous officers who were wounded.

“When a law enforcement officer puts on that shield in the morning and heads out the door, their family members dread the phone call - the very call that came today. It’s like losing a piece of your soul. To the families of those we lost: Jill and I, and all Americans, are here for you. And we will always be here for you.

“We must do more to protect our law enforcement officers. That means funding them - so they have the resources they need to do their jobs and keep us safe. And it means taking additional action to combat the scourge of gun violence. Now. Leaders in Congress need to step up so that we ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, require safe storage of guns, and pass universal background checks and a national red flag law.

“Enough is enough. May God Bless these fallen heroes.”

**MASS SHOOTING UPDATE**

*Information recent as of 4-30-2024 at 12 p.m.*

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

- Total Mass Shootings: 166
- Total Dead: 240
- Total Wounded: 620
- Shootings Per Day: 1.37
- Days Reached in Year 2024 as of April 30: 121

**WORLD CAMPUS PROTESTS CATCH GLOBAL EYE**

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on April 30 said he was troubled by “a series of heavy-handed steps” taken by some universities in the United States to disperse and dismantle Gaza war protests.

In recent days, demonstrations unfolding through tented encampments on school grounds - sparked by students at New York’s prestigious Columbia University who are demanding authorities divest from Israel due to its occupation and military assault on Gaza - have spread nationwide.

University authorities from the west to east coast have taken different approaches, ranging from Columbia’s initial response to authorize police to clear protests by force to continuing negotiations and allowing the encampments to remain.

Columbia’s protesters ignored an ultimatum from the university to leave the camp or risk suspension on April 29. Early the next morning, students took over historic Hamilton Hall on campus, barricading themselves inside.

The building was one of those occupied in civil rights and Vietnam war protests by students in 1968.

The university president announced earlier that dialogue with protesters had failed, and the institution would not bow to demands to divest from Israel.

In his statement on April 30, UN rights chief Volker Türk said

that freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly were “fundamental to society,” particularly when there is sharp disagreement on major issues as there is in relation to the conflict in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel.

He noted that in recent weeks, thousands of university students in the US have been protesting the war, and many demonstrations have taken place without incident.

But, there have also been hundreds of arrests following interventions on some campuses by security forces. Many have subsequently been released while others still face charges or academic sanctions.

“I am concerned that some of law enforcement actions across a series of universities appear disproportionate in their impacts,” he stressed.

The rights chief emphasized that any clearly anti-Semitic conduct and speech was totally unacceptable and deeply disturbing. Anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian conduct and speech are equally reprehensible, he said.

“Incitement to violence or hatred on grounds of identity or viewpoints - whether real or assumed - must be strongly repudiated,” he continued. “We have already seen such dangerous rhetoric can quickly lead to real violence.”

He said any violent conduct should be addressed on a case-by-case basis rather than through sweeping measures “that impute to all members of a protest the unacceptable viewpoints of a few.”

Action taken by authorities and law enforcement officials to restrict such expression needs to be carefully scrutinized to ensure they do not go beyond what is demonstrably necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others or for another legitimate aim, such as the maintenance of public health or order, Mr. Türk said.

“Here, as elsewhere, responses by universities and law enforcement need to be guided by human rights law, allowing

*(Continued on page 11)*



**ELECTION**

(Continued from page 5)

Ward" runner Danouchka Desir are vying for the South Ward seat.

Dr. October Hudley and "East Ward Your Voice Our Mission" Yasmina King are contesting the East Ward. Vernon Cox, barring a write-in campaign, is running unopposed in the West Ward.

**MONTCLAIR** voters meanwhile facing choices for mayor and council in a wholesale turnover. The mayor and all seven council seats are up for grabs every four years.

Mayor Sean Spiller plus respective First, Second and Fourth ward council members William "Bill" Hurlock, Robin Schlager and David Cummings plus the appointed At-Large Councilman Roger Terry have decided not to run for re-election. The mayor's office and council seats here are up for grabs every four years.

Former Fourth Ward Councilwoman Dr. Renee Baskerville and Chrissy M. Thomas are contending to become Montclair's first woman mayor. Baskerville is heading the "Together Montclair" ticket. Thomas is on her solo "Change That Works" campaign.

"Together Montclair" candidate Shivaun Gaines and "Clean Government Advocate" Erik D'Amato are seeking First Ward voters' nod.

Eileen Birmingham, who "Genuinely Cares," and "Montclair Good Government Team" member Ilmar Vanderer are contesting in the Second Ward.

Third Ward voters get to choose among Wendy A. Tiburico, "A New Perspective/Una Nueva Perspectiva;" Roddy Moore, "Montclair Good Government Team" and Rahrn Williams, "Together Montclair."

Former N.J. Attorney Patricia A. Hurt, "Time For A Change;" Aminah Toler, "Montclair Good Government Team" and Zina Floyd "As One We Win" are vying in the

Fourth Ward.

Former mayor and current councilman Robert J. "Bob" Russo and former independent candidate Carmel Loughman are running together as the "Montclair Good Government Team." Susan Shin Anderson is the "Together Montclair" candidate.

In BELLEVILLE, one cannot go by ballot slogan alone to determine which candidate is on which ward council ticket -- but there will be a wholesale turnover.

Mayor Michael Melham's "A Better Belleville" ticket has fielded unopposed Third Ward Councilman Vincent Cozzarelli for re-election - but does not have its name on his ballot space. "A Better Belleville" are on the northeastern corners of Patricia Inaugurato, Victor D. Mesce and Diana Sorice Guardabasco's lawn signs and posters.

Who will succeed the late independent Marrie Strumolo-Burke is being contested between heir runner "Believe in Belleville" Tracy Juanitia Williams and Belleville Zoning Board of Adjustment President Inaugurato.

Gary Hinton, Frank Velez III and Mesce are vying to succeed the outgoing Steven Rovell in the Second Ward. Hinton is "For A Better Belleville;" Former Board of Education Trustee Velez is flying the "Believe in Belleville" banner.

Gadfly and former BOE Trustee Michael Sheldon and Guardabasco are looking to succeed John J. Notari as Fourth Ward Council Member. Sheldon calls himself "A True Fighter For Belleville."

**NUTLEY** voters may or may not be aware that they may be indirectly choosing the township's next mayor while selecting five Township Committee members from among the seven balloted candidates. Nutley's committee, like Maplewood, selects a mayor from among themselves.

Participating 2020 voters created a tie vote between Mauro Tucci and Joseph P.

ESSEX COUNTY'S RECYCLING DAY

# Household Hazardous Waste

## Saturday, May 4, 2024

### 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Essex County Fleet Management (Public Works)**  
99 W. Bradford Avenue, Cedar Grove, New Jersey

**Free to all Essex County Residents.** Essex County residents must provide proof of residency at the site.

**NOT FOR COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES.**

- ✓ Do not exit vehicle.
- ✓ Items for disposal to be placed in trunk.
- ✓ NO containers will be returned (gas cans, etc.).


For more information call **973-792-9060** or [www.ecuanj.com](http://www.ecuanj.com)

**ITEMS ACCEPTED:**

Herbicides Paint thinners and solvents Oil based paints and stains Chemistry sets Propane tanks (barbecue type) Pool chemicals	Automotive fluids (antifreeze, motor oil, steering fluids, etc.) Darkroom/Photographic chemicals Lithium and NiCad batteries Fluorescent light bulbs and ballasts	Mercury and products containing mercury Gasoline/Kerosene Household cleaning fluids Car batteries Fire extinguishers (home) Driveway sealer Aerosol spray paints
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**WE WILL NOT ACCEPT:**

Latex paint Unlabeled or Unidentified Materials Asbestos Regulated Medical Waste or Infectious Waste	Commercial or Industrial Waste Empty Containers Explosives, Munitions, Ordnance or Reactive Materials	Household batteries (AA, AAA, C, D, 9V) Smoke Detectors and Carbon Monoxide Alarms
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"There are some materials that should be removed from our regular waste stream because of their hazardous nature. This collection day provides our residents a place to properly and safely dispose of contaminants, protecting our precious environment for future generations. I encourage residents of all of our communities to come out and participate."  
— Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr.

Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr., Essex County Executive, The Essex County Board of Commissioners and the Essex County Utilities Authority

Scarpelli for the most votes. Tucci and Scarpelli agreed to turn over the mayor's chair Jan. 1, 2022, ruling "half-and-half."

All five incumbents - Tucci, Scarpelli, Thomas J. Evans, Alphonse "Al" Petracco and John V. Kelly III - and challengers Maria Hamlin and Dr. Lorenzo Marchese, Jr. are all running individual campaigns.

Evans is running as "CPA Right Person in Right Role" and Hamlin's slogan is "Together We Can." Kelly says he is "Bringing Nutley Values to Future Generations" and Marchese bills himself "DOC Larry Dedicated, Organized, Committed." Petracco pitches "Honesty, Integrity and Experience" and Scarpelli simply "Dr. Joe 2024." Tucci. calls him-

self a "Strong Proven Leader."

May 14 is a nonpartisan election, but party affiliation will count in the June 4 major party primaries.

May 14 sample and Vote By Mail Ballots should have been mailed out by now. VBMB users can mail or deposit their documents in designated drop boxes now until 8 p.m. May 14. One has until 4 p.m. May 7 to ask for a BVBM by mail or in person at the county's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Building in Newark.

Polling stations are to be open May 14 6 a.m. - 8 p.m. Check with [essexclerk.com](http://essexclerk.com) for whether there are any early day polling stations and/or other details.



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Expires May 3, 2024

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- Letterheads
- Envelopes
- Brochures
- Calendars
- Bookmarks
- Flyers
- Door Hangers
- Greeting Cards
- Labels
- Postcards
- Posters
- Table Tents
- Complete Printing

### PRINTING

- NCR forms  
(2parts/3 parts)
- 2/3 Part Booklets
- TICKETS  
(with stub & Numbered)
- & More

### LARGE FORMAT

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- Vinyl Banners
- Display with Banner
- X-Frame + Banner
- Aluminum Boards
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# DERRICK HENRY ANNOUNCES WRITE-IN CAMPAIGN FOR ORANGE COUNCIL



## ABOUT DERRICK HENRY

- Member, Orange Board of Education;
- Member, New Jersey School Boards Association;
- Community activist

Can I have 30 seconds of your time?

I've decided to run for Councilman-At-Large, but in a different way. I am asking You, the voters of Orange, for the city's first successful write-in candidacy.

Why?

Don't you believe that our leadership should be present, receptive and considerate enough to know that it's going to take all of Us, not just a chosen, favored or compensated few?

Because I do.

As we move towards 2028, Orange needs to be about the power of service, not the power of office.

Please take 30 seconds to write my name, Derrick Henry, in the write-in space on your ballot. And, don't forget to color the bubble so Your vote can be counted.

30 seconds for 4 years sounds like a great tradeoff, to create a better Orange for all of Us.

Thank you , Orange

## WRITE-IN

# DERRICK HENRY

## FOR COUNCILMAN-AT-LARGE

Derrick Henry has announced his intention to run as a write-in candidate for one of three councilman-at-large seats in the upcoming election on May 14th. "After some consideration and recent events, we can't sit back and wait for change. Unfortunately, it feels like 12 years has been too long a wait for the return on Orange's investment in its current leadership slate."

Currently serving on the Orange Board of Education, Henry has previously chaired the Facilities and Public Relations committees. In 2021, he was nominated to the Legislative & Leadership Committee(s) of the NJ School Boards Association by then-President Ray Pinney, a role he continues to hold, providing significant contributions to school board governance across the state. As a board member, he participates in voting on the strategic direction of the school district.

Formerly, Henry was part of the Committee For Elected Orange School Board (CEOSB), instrumental in transitioning to an appointed school board following extensive litigation, and other community initiatives such as Preserve Our Water and Committee For Term Limits in Orange.

"We need leaders who will be able to think independently of the mayor's office. The City Council is supposed to be about checks and balances to a mayor's power, much like a congress and president," he explained.

Henry recently discussed the anti-nepotism resolution attempted by mayoral candidate Quantavia Hilbert, West Ward

councilwoman.

"I see two things wrong with this. First, with all the diversity of talent Orange has, openings in staff and administration shouldn't be first-come, first-serve to friends and family. We should all have a hand in a better Orange. Secondly, the mere fact that only one councilperson supported such a measure speaks volumes about how complacent or comfortable our City Council has become. Change, progress and growth are all uncomfortable processes. However, if they're not listening, acting or earning our money, they should be replaced."

Passionate about reinstating live or hybrid council meetings, Henry noted, "Citizens have complained about being digitally censored or muted during council meetings. Their voices have been controlled by council members or city attorneys who won't address their concerns regularly."

A proponent of enhanced public engagement, he aims to advocate for greater citizen involvement in the city's budgeting process and the establishment of a permanent Citizen Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC).

"The citizens deserve input on their money on a full-time basis, as the CBAC should be a permanent body, not just advisory," he stated.

A self-described "forever library kid," Henry is committed to improving library management and resources. He also supports the creation of a city Ethics Commission or Committee and advocates for reduced tax abatements.

"I think the administration is more pro-developer or redeveloper vs. the needs of the long-term or lifelong Orange resident. We need representatives that won't sit by and watch the average Orange citizen get forced out of their apartments or homes."

Henry has challenged the current incumbent at-large slate - Clifford Ross, Adrienne Wooten, and Montague Weldon - to a debate.

"There's still enough time to have a worthy conversation about the future of Orange when it comes to controlling the mayor's powers, as well as the will of the people, I'm here for it," he declared. "Moreover, as I don't see much of a difference in their opinions or ideas, I'll take all three of them on at the same time."

If successful, Henry would be the city's first elected write-in candidate.

"I'm thinking of changing my name from #RebelLeader to a city leader. Ironically, what started as a jest by some local residents and/or media has turned into a title and a cause. I'm vulnerable enough to say this is a matter of power of service vs the power of office.

"Honestly, it's going to take all of Us, but I can't do this without you. On May 14th, please take a minute to write Derrick Henry and color the bubble under any one of the incumbents after voting 1A for Quantavia Hilbert for our next Mayor of Orange, and that's it. Orange doesn't need any more litigation, nor investigations. We need a productive next four years."

ADVERTORIAL





**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** - People who are under 18 years old 11 p.m. - 5:30 a.m. overnight Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, starting May 3, should not venture outside of 100 yards of home into September.

Those who do go beyond 300 feet of home should be ready to state to city authorities that they are going to or from work or be accompanied by an adult or a guardian.

That is the substance of the Summer Safety Initiative 2024 that Mayor Ras J. Baraka had announced, after a week's delay, at City Hall April 25. Although the measure has been annually announced since 1966, this year's edition could be called, "Newark Youth Curfew 2.0."

Newark police officers who encounter unaccompanied youth during those hours, said Baraka that Thursday, will be asked for a parental contact. The said youth will be picked up on-site by the Office of Violence Prevention and Trauma Recovery's Wellness Response Team. Team members will be taken home, or if the parent cannot be contacted, to OVPTR's Re-Engagement Center.

The said youth will be taken to a local hospital for medical clearance before being returned to the REC. Youth - or taken the N.J. Division of Child Protection and Permanency. OVPTR social and outreach workers will visit the families 24 to 48 hours after the NPD encounter.

Repeat incidents over a three

month period could leave families with fines and/or reported to NJDCPP. The revamped program is being integrated with the mayor's Summer of Hope programming and activities.

Summer of Hope includes trips to theaters, block parties, summer youth engagement, workforce development and increased police patrols.

**IRVINGTON** - Last rites for Valdaishia L. Simpkins - a funeral at Madison's St. Vincent Martyr Church and burial at Summit's St. Teresa's Cemetery - was set for May 2.

Simpkins, 27, was killed by an errant tractor truck while she was inspecting a flat tire along Interstate 80 April 8. She was heading home here after spending Easter with her Pennsylvania relatives.

Valdaishia La-Teifah Simpkins, who was born in Newark June 25, 1996, attended Northern Elementary before her family moved to Bernardsville. She attended Bernardsville's middle and high schools before graduating with South Orange-Maplewood's Columbia High School Class of 2004.

Simpkins may be best known for helping elderly and/or disabled passengers traverse Newark Liberty International Airport and board or disembark United or JetBlue flights. She was hired through contractor PrimeFlight and was training to become a TSA agent at the time of her death.

Parents Ormond Simpkins, Sr., of Irvington, and Rahseda Belinda Emma Harris, of Summit, brothers Ormond Simpkins, Jr. and Jaden Christopher Harris, sisters Shaquetta Valerie Simpkins, Bernadette Harris and Rasheda Mary Downing, daughters Lauryn Ariel Marshal and Lani Emma Blaise and paternal grandfather Cornell Simpkins, Sr. are among her survivors.

Simpkins' Funeral Mass was simulcast on [www.svmnj.org](http://www.svmnj.org). Memorial contributions may be made towards her daughters' fund.

**EAST ORANGE** - Although authorities from multiple law enforcement agencies have not said where they had apprehended him April 18, but he will be in Paterson's Passaic County Jail for some time to come.

Eudys T. Santos-Toribio, 23, was picked up that Thursday by members of the Paterson Police Department Shooting Investigation Unit and the State Police and U.S. Marshals NY/NJ Regional fugitive task forces in connection with a Jan. 1 shooting in Paterson.

Paterson Police and the Passaic County Prosecutor's Office supplied information that had linked Santos-Toribio to the shooting of a Prospect Park woman New Year's Day at Market and East 33rd streets.

His description was given to PPD officers by the victim, 25, while she was being treated at St. Joseph's University Medical Center at 4:56 a.m. Jan. 1. She had suffered non-life-threatening injuries.

Santos-Toribio was charged with second and third-degree counts of aggravated assault, possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose and unlawful possession of a weapon.

**ORANGE** - Residents in and around the Orange Valley have been anticipating the results of a mural artist selection for the new PSE&G substation here since 3 p.m. April 27.

Orange stakeholders had the opportunity to select proposals from three Newark area artists here in person at the Forest Street Community School multipurpose room 1-3 p.m. that Saturday. Those who were unable to attend the session at 651 Forest St. could vote in advance or in absentia by a QC code on handbills posted by Arts Committee Orange and the Mayor's Office.

Voters were to consider one proposal each from three Newark area artists: Jacob Mandel, Jazz Pena and Layqa Nuna Yawar. The trio were selected among several submissions received and reviewed, according to the advance press releases, by "Orange stakeholders " and artists.

The awarded artist or artist team would receive a \$50,000 commission to create a mural on a corner of the PSE&G "Orange Heights Switching Station" at 532-36 Freeman St. The three story mural would go up at the corner of Forest and South Jefferson streets.

The mural artist selection process was sponsored by PSE&G, the Mayor's Select

Committee on Art Installations Project and the OAC. The utility, as of April 30, has erected a 70-foot facade, resembling four-story apartment buildings, to surround the soon-to-be-completed switching station.

Orange's Planning Board had approved the two-acre replacement of the former Mitchell-Supreme fuel oil facility in the Orange Valley Arts District with an extension of an existing substation in 2022.

**WEST ORANGE** - Construction on the new senior citizens building here at 46 Mt. Pleasant Ave has progressed to where the township will start taking residency applications on May 1.

Contractors for the township and redeveloper Joe Alpert have partially replaced the 1959-built West Orange Public Library with a five-story 65-unit apartment building. Demolition of the original WOPL began as soon as its replacement at 10 Rooney Circle, a former office building north of the Essex Green shopping plaza, was repurposed in January.

Remaining is the 1979-built WOPL eastern extension that overhangs the municipal parking lot. (They share a block with Township Hall, the Law and Justice Complex, the John P. Renna senior tower and the site of the old Gaston Street School.)

That 1979 annex is being repurposed as the new senior apartments' community space. One of its to-be-announced uses may be a WOPL branch. Sparing the annex from demolition has an ironic note, since its Jan. 29 facade collapse was cited by township officials in 2022 as a reason for moving WOPL to 10 Rooney Circle. (The facade's bricks pummeled two parked cars as its only damage.)

The project, financed by \$20 million from the New Jersey Home Mortgage Financing Association's Affordable Housing Production Fund, is still set to open later this summer. Housing for 60 of the units are for people at least 62-years-old. Five units are set aside for homeless people - who will have "wrap around" social services.

**SOUTH ORANGE / MAPLEWOOD** - The South  
(Continued on page 13)





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Do you want to finish college but not sure how or who to contact for help?

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- ▶ Saturday, May 11, 2024 at 10:00 am  
West Essex Campus  
Multipurpose Room
- ▶ Wednesday, May 15, 2024 at 5:30 pm  
Main Campus - Smith Hall



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(Paid for through the New Jersey Office of the Secretary Higher Education-Some College, No Degree Grant)

Watch the Essex County College *Community Education Forum* TV Series, hosted by Alfred Bundy on and

## WORLD NEWS

(Continued from page 6)

vibrant debate and protecting safe spaces for all.”

The High Commissioner emphasized that any restrictions to fundamental freedoms of expression must be guided by “legality, necessity and proportionality” and applied without discrimination.

“US universities have a strong, historic tradition of student activism, strident debate and freedom of expression and peaceful assembly,” Mr. Türk said.

“It must be clear that legitimate exercises of the freedom of expression cannot be conflated with incitement to violence and hatred.”

### UNITED KINGDOM UK SANCTIONS UGANDAN OFFICIALS

On April 30, UK Deputy Foreign Secretary Andrew



Mitchell announced sanctions on high profile Ugandan politicians charged with corruption, and the Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda.

It is the first time the UK government has used the Global Anti-Corruption Sanctions regime on individuals involved in corruption in Uganda.

The three individuals, two of whom were previously ministers responsible for Uganda’s poorest region, Karamoja, and have been charged with corruption at Uganda’s Anti-Corruption Court, will be subject to travel bans and asset freezes.

The two former ministers sanctioned - Mary Goretti Kitutu and Agnes Nandutu - stole thousands of iron sheets used for roofing and infrastructure from a Ugandan government-funded

project aimed at housing some of the most vulnerable communities in the region, providing them to prominent politicians and their families instead.

The Speaker of the Parliament, Anita Annet Among, benefited from the proceeds.

Over 60% of people in Karamoja live in poverty and many suffer from the devastating impacts of drought and insecurity.

Secretary Mitchell said, “The actions of these individuals, in taking aid from those who need it most, and keeping the proceeds, is corruption at its worst and has no place in society. The Ugandan courts are rightly taking action to crack down on those politicians who seek to line their own pockets at their constituents’ expense.

“Today the UK is sending a clear message to those who think benefiting at the expense of others is acceptable. Corruption has consequences and you will be held responsible.”

The 3 individuals sanctioned:

- Anita Annet Among, who has been the Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda since 2022.
- Mary Goretti Kitutu, who was the Minister for Karamoja Affairs between 2021 and 2024.
- Agnes Nandutu, who was the State Minister for Karamoja Affairs between 2021 and 2024.

These measures follow previous UK sanctions under the Global Anti-Corruption sanctions regime, which has targeted individuals involved in serious corruption cases across the world, including Bulgaria, Lebanon, Moldova, Russia, South Africa, South Sudan, and Venezuela.

Since its introduction in April 2021, the UK has introduced sanctions on 42 individuals and entities under this regime globally to combat corruption across the world.



# NASA-LED STUDY PROVIDES NEW GLOBAL ACCOUNTING OF EARTH'S RIVERS

A study led by NASA researchers provides new estimates of how much water courses through Earth's rivers, the rates at which it's flowing into the ocean, and how much both of those figures have fluctuated over time - crucial information for understanding the planet's water cycle and managing its freshwater supplies. The results also highlight regions depleted by heavy water use, including the Colorado River basin in the United States, the Amazon basin in South America, and the Orange River basin in southern Africa.

For the study, which was recently published in Nature Geoscience, researchers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California used a novel methodology that combines stream-gauge measurements with computer models of about 3 million river segments around the world.

The scientists estimate that the total volume of water in Earth's rivers on average from 1980 to 2009 was 539 cubic miles (2,246 cubic kilometers). That's equivalent to half of Lake Michigan's water and about 0.006% of all fresh water, which itself is 2.5% of the global volume. Despite their small proportion of all the planet's water, rivers have been vital to humans since the earliest civilizations.

Although researchers have made numerous estimates over the years of how much water flows from rivers into the ocean, estimates of the volume of water rivers collectively hold - known as storage - have been few and more uncertain, said JPL's Cédric David, a co-author of the study.

He likened the situation to spending from a checking ac-

count without knowing the balance. "We don't know how much water is in the account, and population growth and climate change are further complicating matters," David said. "There are many things we can do to manage how we're using it and make sure there is enough water for everyone, but the first question is: How much water is there? That's fundamental to everything else."

Estimates in the paper could eventually be compared with data from the international Surface Water and Ocean Topography (SWOT) satellite to improve measurements of human impacts on Earth's water cycle. Launched in December 2022, SWOT is mapping the elevation of water around the globe, and changes in river height offer a way to quantify storage and discharge.

## 'Fingerprints' of Water Use

The study identified the Amazon basin as the region with the most river storage, holding about 204 cubic miles (850 cubic kilometers) of water - roughly 38% of the global estimate. The same basin also discharges the most water to the ocean: 1,629 cubic miles (6,789 cubic kilometers) per year. That's 18% of the global discharge to the ocean, which averaged 8,975 cubic miles (37,411 cubic kilometers) per year from 1980 to 2009.

Although it's not possible for a river to have negative discharge - the study's approach doesn't allow for upstream flow - for the sake of accounting, it is possible for less water to come out of some river segments than went in. That's what the researchers found for parts of the Colorado, Amazon, and Orange



*The Colorado River supplies water to more than 40 million people as it snakes through seven U.S. states, including the part of southeastern Utah seen in this photo snapped by an astronaut aboard the International Space Station. Photo Courtesy NASA*

river basins, as well as the Murray-Darling basin in southeastern Australia. These negative flows mostly indicate intense human water use.

"These are locations where we're seeing fingerprints of water management," said lead author Elyssa Collins, who conducted the analysis as a JPL intern and doctoral student at North Carolina State University in Raleigh.

## A New Way to Quantify Rivers

For decades, most estimates of Earth's total river water were refinements of a 1974 United Nations figure, and no study has illustrated how the amount has varied with time. Better estimates have been hard to come by, David said, due to a lack of observations of the world's rivers, particularly those far from human populations.

Another issue has been that there are many more stream gauges monitoring the levels and flow of large rivers than there are of small ones. There's also broad uncertainty in estimates of land runoff - the rainwater and snowmelt that flow into rivers.

The new study started from the premise that runoff flowing

into and through a river system should roughly equal the amount that gauges measure downstream. Where the researchers found inconsistencies between simulated runoff from three land surface models and gauge measurements taken from approximately 1,000 locations, they used the gauge measurements to correct the simulated runoff numbers.

Then they modeled the runoff through rivers on a high-resolution global map developed using land-elevation data and imagery from space, including from NASA's Shuttle Radar Topography Mission. This approach yielded discharge rates, which were used to estimate average and monthly storage for individual rivers and the planet's rivers in total.

Using a consistent methodology enables comparisons in flow and human drawdown between different regions.

"That way we can see where in the world the most amount of river water is stored, or where the most amount of water is being emptied into oceans from rivers," said Collins, now a post-doctoral researcher at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

## SENTINEL = FAKE NEWS

(Continued from page 1)

three occurrences, and voters will go to the polls to choose who will lead the administration over the next four years. By all accounts, it is a two person race, even though there are three candidates, with one candidate not campaigning by any stretch of the imagination.

Some residents describe Hilbert as a fresh, new and strong voice for Orange who will make history as the first female mayor

in a City of over thirty thousand residents.

Hilbert went on to say that, "With challenges such as a need for a quality library and recreation facilities for our youth, which were both defrauded by administration officials and for which Directors were charged and arrested by the FBI, we can no longer afford to trust the future of the City to a leader who was apparently asleep at the wheel or at the very least showed poor leadership in managing the residents resources.

"This is a time for new leadership. I can bring my experience as a successful business manager to make the right assessments and

put forth quality leadership with honesty, integrity and transparency as our benchmark in getting the job done.

With the elections slated for May 14, 2024, the residents will make a choice to move forward with one of the candidates, and Hilbert proclaims that she will emerge victorious, even if the opposition continues to try and distract the residents with misrepresentations and more Fake News coming from so called legitimate entities such as newly erected attack groups like the Sentinel.

**EDITORIAL** (Continued from page 2)

Phoenix Suns out of the playoffs in the First Round. That means that the super trio of Kevin Durant, Devin Booker, and Bradley Beal flamed out. Durant, who once again left a team to hook up with another star, like he did with the Warriors and Nets, was an afterthought. Most of all, he deserves it.

KD is the worst. After choking away a 3-1 lead against the Warriors in 2016, Durant took the saying, "If you can't beat them, join them" to the highest extreme, signing with Golden State that offseason. He won two titles thanks to LeBron proving he's not the GOAT. Then, he left for another superteam in the Nets. Despite booting a good coach in Kenny Atkinson, and having the likes of Kyrie Irving, James Harden, and trading for Ben Simmons, it failed exponentially. After that, he forced his way to Phoenix to ride Devin Booker, and eventually got Bradley Beal in a trade. In the blink of an eye, the Suns were eclipsed by the Wolves.

Moral of the story: Don't ride other stars to the promised land. It's not a good look.

Now that my NBA tangent is done, let's deal with other matters. The first Trump trial has Biden fans happy about David Pecker's testimony on the "catch and kill" technique. They think that it has torpedoed Trump entirely. Here's the problem. The prosecution is trying to pass off the National Enquirer, which is associated with things like UFOs and Bigfoot, as a "legitimate" media publication. Also, Michael Cohen has not testified yet. If Cohen is found faulty, then it destroys everything, as any action will be linked solely to him and not Trump.

To no one's surprise, Trump was found guilty of violating the gag order. He was fined \$1,000 for each of the nine violations, and threatened with jail if he violated it further. While I'm not a fan of the guy, it seems strange that he cannot say anything, but Cohen is talking about Trump everywhere he can. If Trump loses, the matter will likely get appealed. Again, that's if he loses. All he needs is just one juror

to hold to a "not guilty" vote on all 34 counts.

Keep in mind, Bragg's predecessor Cy Vance did not bother trying the case when it was a misdemeanor and still within the statute of limitations. If this case does stick, then I had better see some Democrats get charged, because you can pretty much guarantee that they have done "catch and kill" too. Otherwise, the legal system is a joke.

Then, there's the other state case. Fani Willis doesn't know how to sit down and shut up, and is ruining her chances to get a conviction. Also, like with Alvin Bragg's case in New York, it seems the case is rooted in, pardon the pun, "Trumped Up" charges. The Georgia case is charging him in a RICO conspiracy. RICO is reserved for people like mobsters, and as much as you may not like him, Trump is not a mobster, just a sore loser like that guy you beat on a basketball court who says, "run it back." With all the money and power at his disposal, if Trump REALLY got down like that, then people like Stormy Daniels and E. Jean Carroll would have

had their cases settled "out of court."

Finally, the conservatives on the Supreme Court basically feel that while they don't particularly support absolute immunity for a President, they feel that these cases really came up because Trump is running for POTUS again. So, it will likely get kicked down to lower courts to force the trials to take place after the true and most legitimate trial takes place - the 2024 Presidential Election, where the American voters will be the jury - as it should be.

This whole situation is ironic. Biden was able to win in 2020 because the pandemic allowed him to isolate himself from the campaign trail and not beat himself. Now, Trump, who is normally incapable of not beating himself, is forced to isolate in court. These cases could backfire exponentially on the Democrats, and if Trump wins, they have only themselves to blame for blatant election interference via lawfare along with bad policies.

*Have a nice week everyone.*

**TOWN WATCH**

(Continued from page 10)

Orange-Maplewood School District Board of Education ended a long April 25 budget presentation by passing its 2024-25 school budget on a 5-4 split vote.

What the school board passed that Thursday night amounted to a \$4,041,835 increase on village and township taxpayers over the outgoing 2023-24 budget. The increase is part of the 7.86 percent of the SOMSD's budget but to be made up through property taxes.

The budget - as revised by the two-town Board of School Estimate and presented by Interim Schools Superintendent Dr. Kevin Gilbert and School Business Administrator Eric Burnside - reflected inflation among maintenance, materials, transportation, home and out-of-district instruction. Student enrollment increased by 132 boys and girls over the 2022-23 school year. There was also an increase of 29 employees on the payroll from 2020.

The New Jersey Department of Education had the budget stay

within the two percent increase cap but allowed SOMSD and its estimate board to keep a two percent increase on the current budget's surplus. State and federal COVID funds, however, have been depleted.

To deliver a balanced 24-25 budget between May 15 and June 30, district administrators and the estimate board decide to lay off 28 employees; 18 through retirement or attrition and the rest discharged. (The administration first calculated 30 pink slips.) There were 35 percent cuts in textbook and materials purchase and in the arts department.

"Tonight's not easy," said Dr. Gilbert. "We were looking for the least impactful scenario for each department and building."

Board President Qawi Telesford, First Vice President Arun Vadlamani and members Elizabeth Callahan, William Meyer and Shana Sackett-Gable carried the budget. Second VP Nubia DuVall Wilson and members Regenia Eckert, Bill Gifford and Kaitlin Wittleder dissented.

**BLOOMFIELD** - The best that can be said lately of the in-

tended renovation of the former South Junior High School building here at 177 Franklin St. is that the developer is keeping its property taxes paid on time.

Urban Smart Growth, of Pawtucket, R.I. and Los Angeles, Calif., according to the township tax assessor records, had paid Block 335, Lots 26, 30, 72-73 up to the latest quarterly period. USG, under its Bloomfield Junior High School Urban Renewal LLC subsidiary, received township planning board approval Sept. 15, 2020 to convert the decades vacant building into "Bloomfield Lofts."

Bloomfield Lofts would have 122 live/work apartment units, art studio/gallery space and the auditorium used for visual/performing arts and community space. The project calls for building additions out front and atop the school for 20,368 more square feet and five stories plus a parking garage for 171 parking spaces.

The 2020 approval and 2019 long term tax agreement with the township was welcome news to those who remembered when the school was closed June 30, 1986 and its community merged with

Bloomfield Junior High School. A prior apartment plan was mullied in 2006.

Work on the 1939 Art Deco middle school, which had been projected for 12 months, had stopped for the entire 2023-24 school year so far.

It turns out that Urban Smart Growth's founder and CEO, Lance J. Robbins, 76, had died Aug. 24. Robbins started his company by buying and rehabilitating 6,000 "distressed inner city apartments" in his native Los Angeles in 2004.

Robbins and USG brought their rehabilitation and repurposing philosophy to former schools, warehouses and factories to 13 cities in eight states - including JHS here. It is not clear as of press time whether other USG projects have been affected by Robbins' death.

**MONTCLAIR / GLEN RIDGE** - First responders from the township and the borough broke up a fight between a pair of out-of-town men on the Montclair Public Schools Administration Building Parking lot April 12.

(Continued on page 15)



# The Observation Booth



OP-ED By Andrea Dialect

## THE SMILE PROJECT

*Music Therapy - "I Smile" by Kirk Franklin, "What A Wonderful World" by Louis Armstrong, "Get On The Good Foot" by James Brown, "Happy" by Pharrell Williams (GOOGLE THAT)*

When I went to get my fingerprinting done last week, about twenty to twenty-five people had entered that space. Once the doors opened after the lunch break, everyone that was standing outside filed in as quietly as mice. You'd think that we were entering a library or even a courthouse of some sort. The receptionist aggressively made her requests and suggestions known during that PBA. Every-

one just did what they'd been told.

Shamefully, the conversation exchange didn't go beyond a yes or no response for the most part. During the entire time I was there, no one spoke, smiled, or basically made eye contact with anybody besides the rude receptionist and her equally unfriendly coworkers that forcefully grabbed those fingers and hands to capture that scan. I was furious.

I was equally bothered the other day by foot traffic and the many that I'm forced to share the road with as a bus driver. The unfriendly gazes and solemn faces are mindboggling to me. Such behaviors are justified in those busy heads when pointing from point A to point B as zooming selfishly through culturally diversified landscapes in which division clearly unifies during our missions to nowhere.

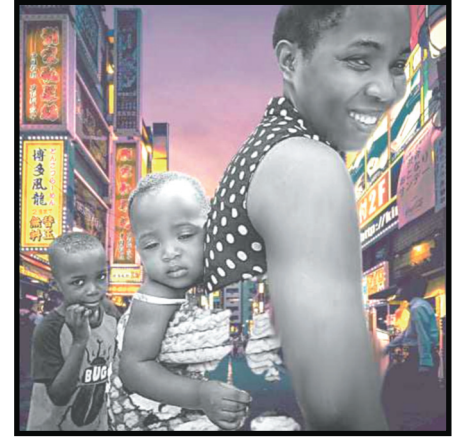
The question is, where are we going for God's sakes? Surely, soon I will be handing in my



keys when embarking upon going to a money-making space that triggers a song or an occasional whistle as I get up to go. When that happy tune no longer plays, Andrea bows out gracefully. It had always been that way throughout my life.

As I pondered the thought that day, God whispered to me, "You always do that. The bow out gracefully." He was so right, and it has been a lesson on repeat for most of my life. Then he demanded that I, "Do something." Thus, the Smile Project has been born!

The Smile Project invites individuals from all walks of life to join in the simple yet powerful mission of spreading joy and kindness through smiles. Together, let's create a world where even the smallest gestures to



#SpreadJoy! ...

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).



Photos By Andrea Dialect

## CONSPIRACY (Cont. from page 4)

tims' children, grandchildren, or other close relatives. The call centers used technology to make it appear that the calls were coming from inside the United States. Typically, the victim was told that their grandchild had been in a car accident, was arrested as a result of the accident, and needed help.

Once openers duped victims into believing their loved ones were in dire trouble, others working at the call centers, known as "closers," impersonated defense attorneys, police officers, or court personnel and convinced victims to provide thousands of dollars in cash to help their loved ones.

Closers, including defendants Rodriguez Guzman, Fortuna

Solano, Reynoso Ventura, and Estevez, typically told victims to give the cash to couriers who they sent to victims' homes to collect their money. Other times, closers instructed victims to send the cash by mail.

Once victims were convinced to give cash, call center "dispatchers," including Serrano Rodriguez, Vasquez, Rosario Rodriguez, and Dilone Rodriguez recruited and managed a network of U.S.-based couriers to steal cash from the elderly victims across the Northeast.

Those U.S.-based couriers, including the five charged by complaint, typically went to the elderly victims' home to retrieve the cash, often using false names and providing victims with fake receipts in exchange. The couriers then brought the cash to oth-

er members of the conspiracy, who sent the victims' money back to the Dominican Republic.

Each of the charges in the indictment and complaint carries a maximum potential penalty of up to 20 years in prison. Each of the mail and wire fraud charges also carry a potential fine of up to \$250,000; each of the money laundering charges also carry a potential fine of up to \$500,000.

U.S. Attorney Sellinger credited special agents and investigators of the Department of Homeland Security, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge McCormack; special agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Dennehy in Newark; the Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General, New York / Boston Field Divi-

sion, under the direction of Acting Special Agent-in-Charge Bradley Parker; and the New York Police Department, under the direction of Commissioner Caban, with the investigation leading to the charges. He also thanked the Justice Department's Office of International Affairs.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Carolyn Silane of the Economic Crimes Unit in Newark, and Jason Feldman, Joshua Ferrentino, and Emily Powers of the Department of Justice, Consumer Protection Branch in Washington, D.C.

The charges and allegations contained in the indictment and complaint are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.



**DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY COLLECTS \$214 MILLION IN CIVIL AND CRIMINAL ACTIONS IN FISCAL YEAR 2023**

**NEWARK** - U.S. Attorney Philip R. Sellinger announced today that the District of New Jersey collected a total of \$214 million in Fiscal Year 2023. Of this amount, \$33.4 million was collected in criminal actions and \$13.4 million was collected in civil actions. The district also collected \$91 million in cases the office handled jointly with other U.S. Attorney's Offices and components of the Department of Justice, including \$90.9 million in civil actions and \$60,851 in criminal actions.

In addition, the district recovered \$71.5 million in civil bankruptcy proceedings where individuals and businesses owed debts to federal agencies. And the district, working with partner agencies and divisions, collected \$4.7 million in asset forfeiture actions.

Significant recoveries included a \$14.7 million False Claims Act settlement the District of New Jersey entered into with Biotelemetry Inc. and Lifewatch Services Inc. Both companies were alleged to have knowingly submitted inflated claims for remote cardiac monitoring that were not supported by medical necessity. The district also recovered \$4.25 million in an FCA settlement with Watermark Retirement Communities LLC, a senior living facility alleged to have received kickbacks in return for referrals to a nationwide home health agency which previously settled its liability with the government for \$17 million.

The district's significant bankruptcy recoveries included over \$18 million of delinquent tax debts for the IRS and over \$16 million of outstanding commercial loans for the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The U.S. Attorneys' Offices, along with the department's litigating divisions, are responsible for enforcing and collecting civil and criminal debts owed to the U.S. and criminal debts owed to federal crime victims. The law requires defendants to pay restitution to victims of certain federal crimes who have suffered a physical injury or financial loss.

While restitution is paid to the victim, criminal fines and felony assessments are paid to the department's Crime Victims Fund, which distributes the funds collected to federal and state victim compensation and victim assistance programs. Forfeited assets deposited into the Department of Justice Assets Forfeiture Fund are used to restore funds to crime victims and for a variety of law enforcement purposes. Recoveries in bankruptcy are returned to the federal agencies that are creditors in the case.

**TOWN WATCH**

(Continued from page 13)

Although both were treated from their injuries, one man from Fairfield was arrested on aggravated assault and weapons possession charges.

The first Montclair police units came to 22 Valley Rd. on reports of two pickup truck drivers ramming each other on the lot at 8 p.m. They found two men fighting each other but one with a masonry hammer and a three-foot-long level.

MPD officers separated the pair and called for Montclair and Glen Ridge EMS. The man covered with blood - 58, from Randolph - said that he was told to meet a friend there when his pickup truck was struck from behind by the suspect's truck. Both got out and began arguing.

Witnesses said that the suspect - identified as Giuseppe Iudici, 60, of Fairfield - took out his hammer and carpenter's level to beat the victim about the head.

Montclair EMS took the victim to Paterson's St Joseph Medical Center for treatment. Glen Ridge EMS and Montclair Police took the suspect to Mountainside Hospital for his treatment and later arrest.

Iudici was charged with aggravated assault, possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose and unlawful possession. He was remanded to Newark's Essex County Correctional Center until he had posted bail.

**BELLEVILLE** - Township police officers have one April 30 drug store burglary suspect in custody but are looking for two others who fled.

A BPD unit on patrol said that they had stopped at the Good Health Pharmacy, 305 Joralemon St., at 3 a.m. Tuesday after they had noticed "suspicious activity" inside. They saw three men - two of whom fled out the back door.

A third man - identified as James Lowe, 37, of Jersey City - was nabbed after a foot chase. He was arrested and detained in the Essex County jail on burglary and resisting arrest charges.

Although BPD has not given a description of the other two suspects as of press time, they had a 1999 Honda Odyssey impounded as evidence. A check discovered that the minivan was wearing fictitious license plates.

None of the pharmacy's inventory has been reported as missing.

Lowe is being investigated for connection with any other recent drug store burglaries here.

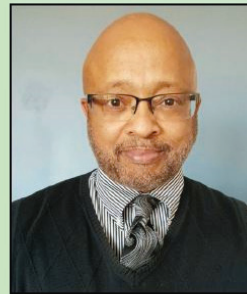
**NUTLEY** - The case of the bank employee here who allegedly stole \$105,000 in retirement benefits from a dead customer, said federal officials, has entered the sentencing phase.

U.S. Attorney Philip Sellinger, on

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April 18, said that Jorge Nova, 35, of Passaic, had pleaded guilty in federal court-Newark April 17 to one count of wire fraud before U.S. Magistrate Judge Evelyn Padin.

Nova was an employee of a commercial bank here in 2014 where one of his customers had received Social Security Administration benefits directly deposited to his account. Sellinger said that Nova did not inform SSI of his customer's death and the monthly checks kept coming.

Sellinger said that Nova, until October 2018, tapped into the dead man's account with fraudulent debit cards that he made out in the deceased's name. He was also accused of creating a second account in the man's name with "a money service provider" to withdraw funds from.

Nova's sentencing by Padin is set for Oct. 8. He faces up to 30 years' imprisonment and a maximum \$250,000 fine.





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