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PRO-PALESTINIAN ENCAMPMENT BROKEN UP BY POLICE

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BAD HOSPITALS ... BAD POLITICS

NOT A SINGLE HOSPITAL IN ESSEX COUNTY IN THE TOP 200

Local hospitals lacking in United States rankings since 2021

OPEN PUBLIC RECORDS ACT GETS GUTTED

PAGE 9



By Dhiren Shah

We hear many times that some hospitals are “top ranked.” So, I checked the healthcare rating list of Newsweek and US News.

As per Newsweek, “To help, Newsweek has partnered with Statista for its annual ranking of the world’s best hospitals, a series that began in March 2019. This year, the list includes data on 2,400 hospitals across 30 countries. For the first time, Chile and Malaysia have been added to the ranking, which also includes the U.S., most of Western Europe and Scandinavia, 10 Asian countries, Australia and countries elsewhere in the world.”

45 hospitals from the US are in the world’s best 250 hospitals. However, not a single hospital from New Jersey made it in the first 250 best hospitals in the world for 2024. In 2023, 7 Hos-

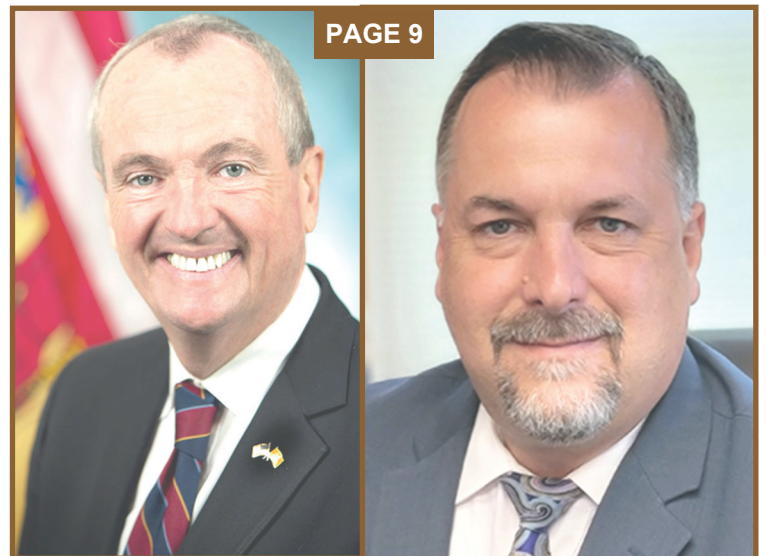
pitals from New Jersey made the top 415 best hospitals in the United States. Only one hospital, Newark Beth Israel from our “Local Talk area,” made it to number 201 among the best hospitals in the U.S.

ACCORDING TO NEWSWEEK’S RATINGS:

The world’s best hospital has been one in the United States for many years. That is the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. Congratulations to Mayo Clinic for being the best hospital in the world. As I have heard from other doctors, many want to give services to the Mayo Clinic, but are denied by them.

U.S. BEST HOSPITALS 2024 (Not

(Continued on page 11)



Governor Phil Murphy (left) and 17th Dist. Assemblyman Joe Daniels (D-Somerset) (right), who was the architect of the OPRA gutting legislation

HUNTER BIDEN FOUND GUILTY ON ALL COUNTS

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First Child of a U.S. President to be Convicted of a Crime



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To
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Editorial
Dhiren Shah
 Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

World Cup Cricket has drawn millions of people watching the games on TV, particularly the game between India and Pakistan on June 9, 2024. This game will be remembered for decades to come. Millions of people watched it on TV and 34,000 people watched at the Stadium. Also, other stadiums, including the NY Mets stadium Citi Field had the game onscreen and the stadium was full as I've heard. The game was delayed due to rain, but luckily, about one hour and 15 minutes later, the game started. Due to the rain, the pitch (field) helped the bowlers (pitchers). Pakistan won the toss and elected to bowl (pitch). As expected, India made only 119 runs. Pakistan started good, but eventually they could not hit the ball as needed for the victory and were all out with only 113

runs. What a game up to the last moment, with everyone's hearts beating.

The United States of America was not able to qualify in the traditional sense, but as a host country, they were in it for the first time. They won their first two games against Canada, and in a shocking upset, Pakistan in a close game. Both countries had the same score (159) at the end of the regular session, so they went for a super over (over time) and the U.S. beat Pakistan in an unbelievable game.

The U.S. team, who had not qualified through qualifying matches, may advance to the next round with a win over India (not likely) or Ireland (very possible). Meanwhile, for the first time ever, Pakistan, England, New Zealand, and Sri Lanka may not advance to the next round. Let's see what happens over the next week.

Hunter Biden, the current sitting President's son, was found guilty on all three counts by the jury. It was clear while interviewing Hunter Biden's witnesses that he was on drugs when he bought a gun and lied on the form that he did not use drugs. Biden's ex-wife of 20 years, Kathleen Buhle, spoke about Hunter's habit of

drug use. She found a pipe used to smoke crack cocaine in an ashtray in 2015 weeks after his brother Beau's death.

Hunter had a romantic relationship with his brother Beau's wife after his death. She testified that she threw a gun in the trash, after he bought it 11 days before, because she did not want her children to get their hands on it. Zoe Kestan, another woman in a relationship with Hunter, testified that he was smoking crack every 20 minutes when she stayed with the charming young man in a hotel for five days. However, Kestan did not have any contact with him when Hunter bought the gun in 2018. The jury had more than enough evidence to find him guilty on all counts.

Donald Trump will be sentenced on July 11, and Hunter Biden will be sentenced afterwards, perhaps in September - when he faces a tax evasion case - or in October 2024. It will be tough for Merchan to give a jail sentence to Trump. If he does, Hunter Biden may get a jail sentence as well. Under normal circumstances, first time offenders in the case of both Trump and Biden usually do not get jail time. I give credit to the judge in

Biden's case for not giving preferential treatment, as well as Judge Maryann Noreika, who killed a slap on the wrist plea deal that would have let Biden skate on everything.

Finally, President Biden is trying to make a deal with Hamas for a ceasefire and is giving about \$650 million to free U.S. hostages. However, Hamas stated that they are ready for the ceasefire deal offered by the UN. Hamas have not said anything about their reasoning.

In sports news, Caitlin Clark was not picked for the U.S. women's team for the Summer Olympics in Paris, France. The sensation of Women's National Basketball, Clark has done well in her rookie WNBA season with 16.8 points, 5.3 rebounds and 6.3 assists. Her key weakness so far has been handling the ball. As a point guard, she must reduce her turnovers, which is 5.6 per game.

Still, I think she could have helped the Olympic team, especially with her shooting, but who knows what was behind the selection committee's decision.

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>
Mostly Sunny	PM Storms	Sunny	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Isolated Storms	Partly Cloudy
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PRO-PALESTINIAN ENCAMPMENT BROKEN UP BY CAMPUS & CITY POLICE

By Lev D. Zilbermintz

NEWARK - After 39 days of occupying the grounds in front of the Law School at 123 Washington Street, Newark, the pro-Palestinian tent city has been dismantled. According to photographs and frantic posts by students and their allies on Instagram, Rutgers Police and Newark Police showed up at 7 a.m. on Sunday, June 9, at the Law School grounds. Law enforcement blocked off all the streets coming into the university.

On Thursday, June 6, Newark Solidarity Coalition and Clean Water For Newark posted on Instagram their determination to stick it through until Rutgers Newark divests from Israel.

"We are not leaving. We are not going anywhere. Rutgers once demolished hundreds of black and brown homes to build its buildings. It has taken from Newark and given to Israel.

We will stay here for 3800 days if we have to. We will not stop. We will not rest," the Newark Solidarity and Clean Water

For Newark Instagram post said.

As will be seen elsewhere, this was one of the reasons why Rutgers Newark administration decided it was time to remove the encampment.

Protesters and video expose the City and Department of Safety Statement's inaccuracy

Video on Instagram came in, showing protesters facing off numerous police at the Rutgers Newark Law School. The police can be seen standing in a row, holding hands, barring protesters from accessing the encampment. Protesters, led by Anthony Diaz, head of Clean Water for Newark, are trying to protect the encampment by gathering in numbers. On the ground, blue tarp, signs, and the remnants of the tents lie. Blue garbage bins can be seen in several places.

According to the Newark Solidarity Coalition's Instagram post, "They (Rutgers Police and Newark Police) are hitting professors and not allowing legal observers!!!!!"

One video shows police standing with zip ties, blocking the way. Students and their allies can be heard chanting slogans, shouting for others to come and join them. The video clearly shows both Newark Police and Rutgers University Newark Police joining forces for what the City's statement said was crowd control.

According to Newark Solidarity Coalition's June 9 frantic posts on Instagram, "Come defend the encampment!!! They (Rutgers Newark and Newark police) said they are clearing us in 30 minutes. 123 Washington Street, Newark. Mobilize now!!!"

In the comments section, Newark Solidarity Coalition allies gave their responses.

"This is insane! Rutgers is causing all this noise for a peaceful protest!" wrote a user called "beepbeep_122". His comment was posted about 10:07 a.m. on June 9.

Another user, "babyfigappleredbull" posted their comment around 9:43 a.m. "Go go go!!!! This is so important!!!!!" they wrote.

At 8:47 a.m., June 9, The South Orange / Maplewood (SOMA) Green Party posted emojis of three faces with their mouths taped shut, and three Palestinian flags next to them.

User "co.knew1" posted their Instagram comment at 9:47 a.m., June 9. "Get there!" the comment said.

One user, j_dot_rez, posted, "Just seeing this message. What's the status?"

Only one Instagram user posted as the law enforcement were blocking off all streets leading to the Rutgers Newark Law School. "Runituppvon" simply wrote "!!!!!"

Simply put, the residents of the Rutgers Newark Law School Pro-Palestinian encampment were caught off-guard.

Statement from Rutgers University - Newark

Peter T. Englot, Senior Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs & Chief of Staff, Rutgers - Newark issued a lengthy statement explaining the university's decision to clear out the encampment.

"This morning, {June 9,

2024) the small and sparsely occupied encampment at Rutgers-Newark was dismantled by the protestors shortly after they were informed by university officials that they needed to decamp, reflecting the university's authority to regulate the time, place, and manner of protest on university property while preserving the First Amendment rights of the students, faculty, and staff to protest. Rutgers-Newark administrators, Rutgers University Police Department in their regular uniforms, and Facilities staff were on site to oversee the decampment, which was orderly and peaceful. No arrests were made.

"From the encampment's beginning over a month ago, Rutgers-Newark leaders engaged with the protestors about their concerns in good faith through a series of meetings over the first couple of weeks. We met every one of their requests regarding the conditions and terms of negotiations, provided them every reasonable opportunity to be heard, and provided earnest, substantive, and productive responses to a large majority of their concerns.

"Over the past two weeks, however, while the protest remained peaceful, the protestors established a pattern of disengagement, including repeated violations of university fire safety policies (e.g., unsafe use of extension cords from Rutgers buildings and unpermitted use of open flames for cooking), ongoing defacement of property (e.g., graffiti on buildings), attempting to erect a large structure on the site, violations of ID use and building access policies, intensifying and expanding the degradation of the campus environment, and repeatedly delaying in-person negotiations because members of their designated negotiating team has been elsewhere.

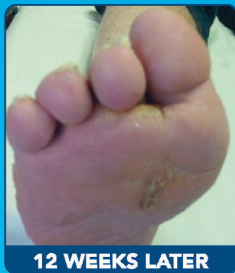
"Most recently, the protestors made public statements this past week indicating that they do not plan to honor the path forward for evaluating divestment requests, as codified for all of Rutgers in commitments made by the university on May 2nd.

"Over the preceding weeks, (Continued on page 14)

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ANALYSIS FROM THE PRIMARY ELECTIONS

By Walter Elliott

NEWARK - Now that the June 4 major party primary elections have been tallied and - as of press time - appears headed for County Clerk Christopher Durkin's June 18 certification, one can step back and see some trends.

The self-identified registered voting members of the Democratic and Republican parties have spoken their peace - and a majority thereof tended to keep their mostly incumbent officeholders in place for Nov. 5's General Election.

But that generality glosses over some interesting facets. They include party leaders needed to replace their posthumous candidate. Party voters turning back "insurgent" candidates. Then there was the Presidential party "Uncommitted" effect and, in the municipal races, one-and-a-half upsets of incumbents.

"Uncommitted" becomes "Best of the Rest."

In Essex County, the category used to protest President Joseph R. Biden's policy on the Israeli-Hamas War came in second - between Biden and Democrats for Life candidate Terrisa Bukovinac.

President Biden received 419,512 countywide votes for 88.5 percent of that primary vote. Uncommitted tallied 41,461 or 8.7 percent. Bukovinac drew 13,250 or 2.8 percent.

By voting uncommitted, Democratic National Party officials will have more delegates who want to open discussion on enacting a ceasefire, cutting arms and other supplies to the Israeli Defence Force, recognizing a Palestinian state and related issues.

With Uncommitted on 18 of the state's 20 democratic delegate districts, over 40,000 voters, or nine percent statewide, voted for that option. A Democratic delegate needs at least 15 percent to join the Democratic National Convention.

The big questions are whether Uncommitted will be on the Nov. 5 ballot, will that percentage grow in the Nov. 5 results and at which candidate's expense.

Will the Block Ballot Stay for Keeps?

New Jersey's Democratic voters got their first, federal court ordered, taste of the block ballot design over the long traditional County / Party Line design.

Given that most of the Democratic Party-endorsed candidates were drawn to the top of their blocks, there was little if any changes in the primary outcome. This has caused some "good government" groups to call for replacing the blind paper-in-a-drum drawing method to ones drawn by computer algorithm.

There is a pending court case in the US Court of Appeals in Philadelphia later this year that may force New Jersey to join the other 49 states in using the block ballot.

Rep. Andy Kim (D-Bordentown), now-Democratic Party candidate for U.S. Senate, appears to be the beneficiary of the change. Kim started the year as a challenger to the party establishment-endorsed Tammy Murphy. He was bracketed with Dr. Patricia Campos-Medina and Lawrence "Larry" Hamm as Murphy's challengers.

Kim and Campos-Medina filed suit in Philadelphia to overturn the County/Party ballot line on Constitutional grounds.

By March 28, a Third Circuit judge directed the state county clerks to use the "new" design for the Democratic Primary. Then T. Murphy, after several county endorsement splits, withdrew from the race.

Kim, all of a sudden, became the frontrunner - which bore out in Essex County and statewide primary results.

Democrats, After Hailing the Late Cong. Payne, Seek F/T



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Runner.

Those who voted for the late Donald M. Payne, Jr. (D-Newark) June 4, even though he had died April 24, gave the seven-term Congressman a posthumous victory lap.

Democratic officials among the Essex, Hudson and Union county towns in Payne's 10 Congressional District, will have to organize a mini-convention before Aug. 29 to pick one of their own to run what could have been Payne's seventh full two-year term.

The conventioners may choose Newark Council President LaMonica McIver - who is their endorsee for the July 17 special primary election. McIver, who is also the two-term Central Ward Councilwoman, is on the ballot for the two-stage special election that will complete the late Payne's unexpired term through Jan. 9.

Democrats do not want a vacant seat on Capitol Hill, given the narrow Republican Party majority in the House and a similar Democratic majority in the Senate.

McIver is being challenged by one or two other balloted July 17 candidates - so the process is not a slam dunk for her or the party.

"Establishment" Beats Back "Insurgents."

There were several races where organized party factions tried to make gains on their established leadership.

Gary Nash, who ran for the Essex County Sheriff nomination, was the technical head of "Democrats United for Change and Integrity." "Democrats United" also fielded Bloomfield Mayor Ted Gamble for reelection and Rodney P. Cauthen as At-Large Councilman.

Nash garnered 7,241 votes, or 16.46 percent) June 4 for sheriff. The ECDC-backed Amir Jones got the nomination with 36,762 or 83.54 percent.

"America First Republicans" meanwhile sought to make inroads on the Essex County Republican Party Organization.

(Continued on page 13)



UNITED STATES



HUNTER BIDEN FOUND GUILTY ON ALL COUNTS

Less than two weeks after the former President of the United States was found guilty, the current President has seen his son suffer the same fate.

On June 11, 2024, a jury of his peers in Delaware found Robert Hunter Biden guilty on three counts of lying about his status as a drug user in purchasing a gun. The jury took less than two days to come up with the verdict, similar to the jury that convicted former President Donald J. Trump in a hush money case in New York. While that case was rife with concerns about prosecutorial and even judicial misconduct, no one is doubting anything in this case to that level, as it seemed pretty cut and dry.

The three charges stemming from 2018 that Biden was convicted on were: unlawfully possessing a gun as a drug user, lying on a federal form when buying the gun, and making a false statement about information collected by a federally licensed gun dealer. Biden is also facing a separate case of tax evasion in September. All of this comes after Judge Maryann Noreika rejected a plea deal that would have given Biden a slap on the wrist for all the crimes combined.

Upon sentencing, Biden faces up to 25 years in prison and a fine of up to \$750,000. However, since he's a first time offender, like Trump, he will likely not

receive a maximum sentence.

Among those reacting to the verdict was the current Commander-in-Chief, Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

"As I said last week, I am the President, but I am also a Dad. Jill and I love our son, and we are so proud of the man he is today. So many families who have had loved ones battle addiction understand the feeling of pride seeing someone you love come out the other side and be so strong and resilient in recovery.

"As I also said last week, I will accept the outcome of this case and will continue to respect the judicial process as Hunter considers an appeal. Jill and I will always be there for Hunter and the rest of our family with our love and support. Nothing will ever change that."

Meanwhile, the convicted Trump also responded in a statement, through his campaign's National Press Secretary, Karoline Leavitt:

"This trial has been nothing more than a distraction from the real crimes of the Biden Crime Family, which has raked in tens of millions of dollars from China, Russia and Ukraine. Crooked Joe Biden's reign over the Biden Family Criminal Empire is all coming to an end on November 5th, and never again will a Biden sell government access for personal profit."

Also, "Local Talk" contributor Thomas Ellis II gave his own perspective on the verdict.

"As an advocate against guns and violence, and a victim of gun violence shot multiple times and left for dead on the streets, it serves Hunter Biden right. He was very irresponsible with the gun he purchased, when he knew he wasn't supposed to own a gun because of his addiction. This was justice for all those who have been affected by gun violence. #avictimsperspective."

MASS SHOOTING UPDATE

Information recent as of 6-11-2024 at 12 p.m.

2024 Mass Shooting Stats: (Source: Mass Shooting Tracker, <https://www.massshootingtracker.site/>

[data/?year=2024](#))

- Total Mass Shootings: 246
- Total Dead: 318
- Total Wounded: 968
- Shootings Per Day: 1.51
- Days Reached in Year 2024 as of June 11: 163

MIDDLE EAST



COUNCIL ADOPTS GAZA CEASEFIRE RESOLUTION

The UN Security Council on June 10 adopted a resolution aimed at reaching a comprehensive ceasefire deal in three phases to end the war in Gaza, with US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield telling members "today, we voted for peace."

The United States-drafted text calls for Hamas to accept a ceasefire proposal announced on May 31 by President Joe Biden that has already been accepted by Israel.

Adopted by a large majority with 14 votes in favor and Russia abstaining - choosing not to exercise its veto power - the resolution also urges both parties to fully implement the terms of the proposal "without delay and without condition."

Russia's Permanent Representative told the Council after the vote there was a lack of clarity over what exactly Israel had signed up to in the resolution, leaving too many questions unanswered for Moscow to offer its support.

President Biden described the deal as "not just a ceasefire that would inevitably be fragile and temporary" but one that would provide a "durable end to the war."

He added that the terms of the deal had been transmitted by Qatar to the leadership of Hamas.

Signaling a hopeful shift in diplomacy, the US-led initiative brought both Israel and the Palestinian mission on board, avoiding the vetoes from permanent members - including the US itself - which have stalled action on several of the resolutions which have failed to pass since

the October 7 terror attacks and kidnappings began the cycle of violence.

The motion envisages a three phase approach to ensure a lasting and comprehensive end to the fighting.

Phase one includes an "immediate, full, and complete ceasefire with the release of hostages including women, the elderly and the wounded, the return of the remains of some hostages who have been killed, and the exchange of Palestinian prisoners."

It calls for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from "populated areas" of Gaza, the return of Palestinians to their homes and neighborhoods throughout the enclave, including in the north, as well as the safe and effective distribution of humanitarian assistance at scale.

Phase two would see a permanent end to hostilities "in exchange for the release of all other hostages still in Gaza, and a full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza."

In phase three, "a major multi-year reconstruction plan for Gaza" would begin and the remains of any deceased hostages still in the Strip would be returned to Israel.

The Council also underlined the proposal's provision that if negotiations take longer than six weeks for phase one, the ceasefire will continue as long as negotiations continue.

In the resolution, the Security Council rejects any attempt at demographic or territorial change in the Gaza Strip, including any actions that reduce the territory of the enclave.

The text also reiterates the Council's "unwavering commitment" to the vision of the two-State solution where two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders consistent with international law and relevant UN resolutions.

"In this regard stresses the importance of unifying the Gaza Strip with the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority," the resolution added.

SPORTS WRAP

By William Hathaway, Jr.

The New Jersey High School Athletic Association, better known as the NJSIAA, held their first ever girls high school flag football North-South All Star Game at Kean University in union this past Sunday.

In a fast paced contest, the North All Stars beat the South All Stars 38-12. Leading the way for the North was Irvington High School senior Janasia Wilson, who scored a whopping 5 touchdowns on her way to MVP honors.

Her HIS teammate Brianna Hertilien had 2 TDs of her own. Lita Hattje caught a TD pass to put the game on ice, while Rebecca Sardinha led the North defense.

“I’m excited for this opportunity and very humble. We as a team worked together for the victory,” said Wilson after the win.

Head coach Kyle Steele, who coached Wilson all four years at Irvington and recently added to the Hall of Fame, said,

“She is the best player in the country.”

Wilson competed in the 2024 All Star game in Texas, and played in the US Army Bowl American All Star game back in December, and Wilson was the MVP in that game also.

In tackle football, the 2024 Phil Simms North-South All Star Game also recently took place at Kean University, and featured All Star players throughout the area. Among those featured was Orange High’s Maurice Williams and senior Kryee Fisher from East Orange Campus.

The game featured players from Newark, Irvington, West Orange, Irvington, Montclair and Seton Hall Prep, with the North beating the South 20-18.

Elsewhere in the sports world, New York Giants tight end Darren Waller has retired due to health issues. Finally, UConn men’s basketball head coach Dan Hurley has opted to stay with the Huskies after rejecting a 6-year, \$70 million offer from the LA Lakers.

Photo Courtesy
Kyle Steele



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Registration is Underway for Summer II Classes at Essex County College

Registration for Summer II 2024 classes at Essex County College is underway. The College’s Summer II term starts Monday, July 8, and runs until Thursday, August 15, 2024.

Students may also register for Fall 2024 classes at this time. Fall 2024 Semester classes begin on Tuesday, September 3.

Essex County College’s main campus is in Newark. The new West Essex campus is located in West Caldwell.

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

For more information, please click on this link: <https://www.essex.edu/registration/>.

Students may be eligible for scholarships and qualify for the Educational Opportunity Fund program. Additional registration information is available through the College’s Welcome Center, located on the 2nd Floor at the Newark campus, by calling the Center at 973-877-4477, or the West Essex campus at 973-877-3175.

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OPEN PUBLIC RECORDS ACT GETS GUTTED

Democrats and Republicans join forces with Governor, ignoring widespread opposition

By Lev D. Zilbermintz

TRENTON - In what amounted to an attack on accountability and easy access to information, both houses of the New Jersey Legislature joined forces with Governor Phil Murphy to pass legislation that would render the Open Public Records Act ineffective.

“Local Talk” did extensive research on the Internet about the subject matter. The article that follows is based on information from at least six different sources.

Originally passed in 2002

Open Public Records Act (OPRA) was first passed in 2002. According to the March 11 issue of the New Jersey Mon-

itor, Lori Bucklew of the New Jersey League of Municipalities was just one of a handful of people who testified in support of the bill amending OPRA, back in March. At the time, Ms. Bucklew said that privacy laws required an update to the Open Public Records Act.

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

According to his statement, Governor Phil Murphy said, “The Open Public Records Act (“OPRA”) was enacted in 2002. In the last 22 years, the statute

has not been the subject of any type of comprehensive update until now. Today’s world is very different than 2002, a time when the Internet was far less ubiquitous and there was vastly less access to individuals’ personal information. While case law on OPRA has evolved, it is also appropriate for our democratic branches of government to take a look at the statute, informed by how various provisions have played out in practice.”

Vote to pass

According to a May 14 article on njspotlightnews.org, “The senate voted without any debate and by a bare minimum 21-10 to pass the bill, with Democrats who control that house providing all but three ‘yes’ votes. Seven Republicans and three Democrats voted against the bill. Unlike the rest of the Senate session, the vote on the bill was not livestreamed, due reportedly to

an error by the Office of Legislative Services.

Later, the Assembly also voted to amend OPRA by a 42-27 vote, with seven Republicans helping the Democrats pass the bill and nine Democrats voting ‘no.’” (Source: <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/05/radical-revision-nj-opra-public-records-law-would-make-much-harder-access-public-records/>)

New Limitations to the Open Public Records Act

According to a June 5, 2024 njspotlightnews.org article, the changes to OPRA under the new law would include:

- Encouraging governments to put documents online so they are easily accessible and appropriating \$10 million for that purpose. If people can’t

(Continued on page 13)



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 - The American Red Cross Essex County chapter is supplying temporary housing and immediate needs, including food and clothing, to the 10 families displaced by a June 8 fire here in the Roseville section.

The first Newark Fire Department units - Engine 15 and Ladder Truck 7 from 271 Park Ave. - needed only a minute to arrive at 260 North 6th St a block south after getting a fire call at 6:10 p.m. Saturday. The incident commander noticed heavy smoke and flames coming from the three-story 1909-built house and pulled a second alarm.

Newark Fire and police units closed North 6th Street between West Sixth Avenue and Park Avenue. An engine, used to pump water, took up Park Avenue's eastbound right hand lane.

Firefighters checked the building's basement for residents and found no occupants; 25 or 26 people, depending on the record, had self-evacuated. The fire was brought under control by 6:30 p.m. No injuries were reported.

The June 8 fire was among 22 that first responders and the American Red Cross had fielded statewide June 1-10. The reports include a June 5 fire at Irvington's 27 W. Avon Ave. The local Red Cross said that their resources are starting to strain and may soon ask for the public's help.

IRVINGTON - One of the six individuals honored as the

Irvington High School Athletic Hall of Fame inductees came up twice to accept honors at its May 16 ceremony - one for himself and one for his late father.

IHS head wrestling coach Kyle Steele was first called up to accept his own award onto the induction stage at Nutley's Mamma Victoria's in Nutley that Thursday night. He was enshrined for his work in launching and guiding the IHS Blue Knights girls flag football team to two Super Football Conference championships in its first four years. Members of those flag football teams were among the Hall of Fame's guests.

Steele then came up to the podium to accept father Ralph's HoF plaque. Ralph Steele, a longtime IHS sports public address announcer, was hailed for his starting the Irvington Golden Knights Pop Warner Football program. The elder Steele died in March 2023.

Other individual inductees include:

- The late Nashawn Brooks, Class of 2019. The football and wrestling star was killed in a 2021 car crash.
- Yvonne Bradford, Class of 1990, soccer and track and field standout.
- Bruce Essing, 1998-2008 IHS Athletic Director.
- Randy James, Class of 2006, outstanding track and field athlete.

The 1975 varsity football squad was inducted as a team. The Blue Knights' 7-3 regular season did not include an eight-game winning streak that began in the 1974 season. They became the first IHS gridiron players to reach the NJSIAA playoffs and was ranked as high as eighth place by Essex County sports writers that year. There were 18 members of that squad plus members of 1974-76 teams who also played that playoff year in attendance.

Brooks' father, Reggie Toran, received the Irvington Varsity Club's Milton "Mickey" Wiener Mentorship Award for his work with Irvington's student-athletes and the community.

EAST ORANGE - The city, like its Newark neighbor, will be enforcing a curfew June 21 through Sept. 2.

City Public Safety Director Maurice Boyd Police Chief Phyllis Boindi and Recreational and Cultural Affairs Director Jamal Pearson, at their June 4 announcement, said they will be coordinating enforcement efforts among themselves plus the city's fire and OEM divisions. They will be stepping up patrols and inspections throughout the city and target "hotspot" locations. OFD personnel will resume distributing fire and smoke detectors - including those for the hearing impaired.

Unaccompanied minors 16 years old and younger are not to "be in a public place" in East Orange on those overnights 11:30 p.m. - 5:30 a.m. This enforcement, established by a 1997 ordinance, was written to be year-round.

None of the speakers that Tuesday said whether they will have parental notifications and social worker follow-up like Newark has outlined for this summer. Bindi, while declaring that the curfew is not "a one-size-fits-all solution," added that police officers will use sensitivity and compassion "that require an adaptable approach."

The "aggressive enforcement," like Newark's curfew, accompanies a "Safe Summer Initiative".. Pearson unveiled a slate of events, ranging from "pop-up" block parties, "Adopt a Park" events, "Cardio with Cops" fitness sessions, basketball games, Police Athletic League Safe Haven and Police Explorers programs, boys and girls mentoring, summer camps and sports clinics.

ORANGE - Three Newark men and their lawyers are exploring their next move since a Newark federal grand jury, on June 10, posted a bill of indictment regarding the armed robbery of a pharmacy here on Jan. 16.

Reginald Ware, 52, Nyron Williams, 22, and Jamon Crosby, 35, were each indicted of carrying, showing and using a firearm during a crime plus committing a Hobbs Act robbery and conspiracy thereof.

The jury had found that the evidence against the trio was sufficient to hold a criminal trial. The federal Hobbs Act, established in 1940, covers robberies and/or extortion affecting inter-

state or international commerce.

U.S. Attorney Philip Sellinger said the trio were accused of pulling up to the unnamed drug store Jan. 16 and, minutes apart, entered the pharmacy while wearing masks. Ware and Williams, holding handguns, approached the cashier and demanded money. Crosby, also armed, joined to demand cell phones from the employees.

Before the trio could leave with the cash, cell phones and "at least 10 bottles of prescription medication," Orange Police officers were waiting for them in the parking lot. They were sent on a silent alarm signal, alerting the OPD headquarters dispatcher.

This was the incident Orange Police Chief Vincent Vitiello described to the City Council at the latter's meeting that night. Vitiello, for example, said that all nearby schools were put into "shelter-in-place" lockdowns.

The suspects did not get far. Ware was grabbed in the parking lot and Williams apprehended two blocks away. Crosby was caught while he was "breaking into a residence."

Vitiello said that the threesome were connected to the guns left behind at the store and in the car. The drugs and cash were recovered in the car - which was reported as stolen from Hillside.

WEST ORANGE - Township planning board members have set a continuance of its June 6 public hearing on replacing vacant Revolutionary War era house with a three-story apartment building at 410 Main St and Park Drive North, for July 10. Its application approval or denial may hinge on whether four left turns make a right.

410 Main St. Holdings, LLC, of Jackson, wants to build the apartment building on 410's lot plus two adjacent lots on Main and PDN's southwest corner. An interior parking garage and retail/commercial storefront space are among its features.

410 Main Holdings bought the namesake vacant house for \$500,000 May 12, 2023. The 1.5-story wood frame house was built in 1778 when that part of Main Street was part of the Valley Road Indian trail. Its vernacular design was not listed as a West Orange historic site.

(Continued on page 11)

HOSPITALS (Cont. from page 1)

a Single Essex County Hospital in the first 412 Hospitals.)

No. 1	Mayo Clinic	Rochester, MN	97.50%
No. 47	Morristown	Medical Center	
		Morristown, NJ	70.63%
No. 58	Hackensack	University Medical Center	
		Hackensack, NJ	69.72%
No. 137	Valley Hospital	Ridgewood, NJ	65.75%
No. 174	Overlook	Medical Center	
		Summit, NJ	65.12%
No. 329	Englewood	Hospital and Medical Center	
		Englewood, NJ	63.30%
No. 411	Monmouth	Medical Center	
		Long Branch, NJ	62.04%

U.S. BEST HOSPITALS BY Newsweek. 2023 (From 415 Hospitals)

No. 1	Mayo Clinic
-------	-------------

Rochester, MN	97.50%
No. 46	Morristown
Medical Center	
Morristown, NJ	70.66%
No. 57	Hackensack
University Medical Center	
Hackensack, NJ	69.52%
No. 121	Valley Hospital
Ridgewood, NJ	65.30%
No. 167	Overlook
Medical Center	
Summit, NJ	64.42%
No. 201	Newark Beth
Israel Medical Center	
Newark, NJ	64.05%
No. 317	Englewood
Hospital and Medical Center	
Englewood, NJ	62.88%
No. 406	Monmouth
Medical Center	
Long Branch, NJ	61.82%

U.S. BEST HOSPITALS BY Newsweek. 2022 (From 414 Hospitals)

No. 1	Mayo Clinic
Rochester, MN	97.96%
No. 46	Morristown
Medical Center	

Morristown, NJ	69.56%
No. 57	Hackensack
University Medical Center	
Hackensack, NJ	69.09%
No. 111	Valley Hospital
Ridgewood, NJ	66.04%
No. 168	Overlook
Medical Center	
Summit, NJ	64.87%
No. 235	Newark Beth
Israel Medical Center	
Newark, NJ	63.75%
No. 333	Englewood
Hospital and Medical Center	
Englewood, NJ	62.54%
No. 414	Monmouth
Medical Center	
Long Branch, NJ	61.33%

U.S. BEST HOSPITALS BY Newsweek. 2021 (from 334 Hospitals)

No. 1	Mayo Clinic
Rochester, MN	98.43%
No. 34	Morristown
Medical Center	
Morristown, NJ	72.90%
No. 43	Hackensack
University Medical Center	

Hackensack, NJ	71.48%
No. 132	Valley Hospital
Ridgewood, NJ	67.42%
No. 164	Overlook
Medical Center	
Summit, NJ	66.68%
No. 233	Newark Beth
Israel Medical Center	
Newark, NJ	64.85%
No. 333	Englewood
Hospital and Medical Center	
Englewood, NJ	62.54%
No. 414	Monmouth
Medical Center	
Long Branch, NJ	61.33%

Rutgers University Hospital is not ranked in any top list and CareWell - the former East Orange General Hospital - has had its issues over the years.

However, when it comes to money and grants, all of the hospitals are requesting big money, like University Hospital in Newark asked for 1.8 billion dollars, which is a work in progress according to the news.

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 10)

It is not clear whether neighbors on Park Drive North and South had presented their petition to the planning board opposing the prospective building's traffic plan June 6 or will do so on July 10. 410 Main Holdings has placed its garage entrance along Park Drive North - a one-way west bound street.

While garage-bound traffic has a mostly easy way to enter (there may be a question of northbound Main Street traffic taking a left-hand turn onto PDN), exiting traffic will have to make a loop onto Park Drive South to get onto Main Street.

SOUTH ORANGE - Village Tax Assessor Ellen Maigieri is accepting bids from prospective purchasers of the South Orange Water System now through 10 a.m. June 25.

Maigieri, as the village's qualified purchasing agent, had held a pre-bid conference June 4 and had accepted questions until June 7. What bids that are submitted on or before June 25 are to be publicly unsealed - and the lowest responsible bidder recommended to the Village Council - at a to-be-announced date.

It is not clear whether the village is expressing a desire to replace its water system owner and/or operators or is exploring its options in advance of its contract with New Jersey American Water. While the village and the water provider signed a 30-year water sales agreement in late 2016, their 10-year operation and maintenance contract are up for renewal or expiration Jan. 1, 2027.

South Orange switched its water system operation and maintenance to NJAW from

the East Orange Water Commission Jan. 1, 2017. The village has largely drawn its water from NJAW's Canoe Brook Reservoir and wells in Millburn ever since.

The village and NJAW, in advance of the Jan. 1, 2017 switch, built interconnections. South Orange Water's interconnections with EOWC and Newark Water remain but are only used in emergencies.

Sixty miles of village-owned water mains - including 3,000 valves and 600 hydrants - serve South Orange's 4,570 customers.

MAPLEWOOD - The South Orange-Maplewood School District Board of Education, at its special June 4 meeting, more than approved Jason Bing as its next Superintendent of Schools.

Bing, who was the finalist from among a pool of 40 applicants, is getting June 20 as his first day at work here - 11 days earlier than his just-approved contract's July 1 date.

Bing's current employer - New York's Dutchess County Board of Cooperative Educational Services - is allowing his early leave. He will also double at SOMSD June 20-30 as its District Supervisor of Special Services. The SOMSD school board's selection, after a four-month search, brings a familiar name to others in "Local Talk" land.

The Bloomfield Public Schools hired Bing, after two years as Great Meadows' super, Jan. 1, 2011 and signed a five-year contract with him. He, however, resigned May 1, 2013 after a 2013-14 school budget battle that would have led to district-wide staff layoffs.

Seton Hall University may also recall

Bing as a Sister Rose Thering Fellow of its Jewish-Christian and Holocaust / Genocide Studies. He was the first certified master teacher in Holocaust Studies by Rutgers University.

Bing, a Union High School graduate, also was superintendent at Barnegat before going to New York's Hudson Valley. The University of Massachusetts-Amherst graduate started teaching in the North Plainfield schools before taking up administration in the Phillipsburg and Jersey City districts.

Bing's critics, however, have "a thing" about his name. He names himself as "Jason Schetelick" on his LinkedIn page. That page has not been updated to reflect that he had been a super at Bloomfield and Jersey City into 2021.

BLOOMFIELD - Those who normally deposit or cash their checks at Provident Bank's Brookdale Branch here at 1260 Broad St., will have before 3 p.m. Aug. 30 to do so before Provident closes it for good.

Depositors, thereafter, will have to go three miles south to Provident's Town Centre Branch at 11-13 Broad St. (The former Bloomfield Savings Bank building.) Check cashers will also have to do the same. They may go to other Provident branches and/or online and mobile banking options.

Provident had completed its absorption of Lakeland Bancorp May 16, ending a merger process which began on Sept. 26, 2022. The combined Provident Financial Services currently has 140 branches in New Jersey and parts of New York and Pennsylvania.

The new Provident will have a combined
(Continued on page 12)

SAVING BASEBALL IN THE HOOD

Story & Photos
By Thomas Ellis II

This past weekend, there was a lot of baseball for the kids in Ivy Hill, East Orange, and the Newark South Ward.

The Ivy Hill Yankees T-Ball team played East Orange on Friday night at Columbia Field off of 4th Avenue. It was an awesome game, and for the Yankee players it was their first time playing away.

On Saturday, the Ivy Hill Mets played the Jackie Robinson team in Newark's South Ward at 10 am. The game started out with Pittsburgh Crawfords and ended with the second game the KC Monarch played the Ivy Hill Yankees.

It was a fun-filled weekend for all the players, the parents and coaches. The main objective is keeping baseball alive in the Hood. Over the past few years, it has been dying out in the community, but the goal of the coaches from Ivy Hill, East Orange, the South Ward, and Elizabeth is to pump oxygen into the league and keep it alive.



The Father's Day Softball Game and Cookout for the T Ball players of East Orange, Ivy Hill, and Jackie Robinson players will start at Noon, with fathers playing in the game.



TOWN WATCH

(Continued from page 11)

\$24.5 billion in assets. Provident stockholders now own 58 percent of the new entity and Lakeland shareholders 42 percent.

"For our customers, we've provided this notification well in advance of these closures," said the Provident spokesperson. "Discussions with affected employees in advance of the external notifications."

1260 Broad St. is among the 22 branches statewide slated to close on Aug. 30. Provident's single branches in Belleville, South Orange and West Orange and the four in Newark remain open. Lakeland's sole "Local Talk" branch at 356 Franklin, St. Nutley is likely to be rebranded as Provident.

MONTCLAIR - What has long been known as St. Paul's Church at 205 Glenridge Ave. reopened for the first time in 20 years May 31. The building, constructed in 1896 but was vacant and deteriorated since the 2000s, however, has a new calling.

Daysi de Dios had moved her Hous Freya apothecary store from Valley Road in Upper Montclair to the closest sanctuary before Memorial Day. De Dios, who started her business online in 2017 before going "brick and mortar" in 2020 intends to move into the rear of the single story 3,300-square foot structure once all of its renovations are complete.

Township records indicate that 205 Glenridge Ave. was bought in 2022 from another private owner. It had been owned by Pulpit Realty in 2015 with the intention to build a three-unit apartment house.

St. Paul's started life in 1896 as St. Eric's

Evangelical Lutheran Church, built by Swedish immigrants. It became St. Paul's in 1927.

A Seventh Day Adventist congregation kept St. Paul's name when they bought the building in 1965. They had stopped worshipping there before selling it to a private owner for \$400,000 in 2008.

The architect for Pulpit had argued before the Montclair Historic Preservation Commission in 2015 that the building's foundation was undermined by neighboring excavation and the structure was "not salvageable." The commission did not award pulpit a certificate of appropriateness, which would have been St. Paul's death warrant.

BELLEVILLE - Town Manager Anthony Iacono, on June 4, announced that Leonard Averhoff has been promoted as Interim Recreation and Cultural Affairs Director for the time being.

Iacono's promotion of Averhoff came 12 days after he had dismissed longtime director Tom Agosta. The temporary promotion also came eight days after a capacity City Hall Council Chamber crowd inquired Iacono and Mayor Michael Melham of Averhoff's termination.

It is presumed here that Averhoff will continue until Iacono, with Township Council approval, vets and hires Agosta's successor. It is not known whether Averhoff is among those candidates being considered.

There had been scarce information on why Agosta was fired. Melham, at the May 28 council meeting, said that Agosta's status was at the discretion of the township's CEO - Iacono.

Averhoff, before May 24, was a part-time Belleville Recreation Sports Coordina-

tor since 2019 and, since 2023, the holder of a doctor in education from Seton Hall University.

Averhoff's LinkedIn resume includes being a full-time Port Authority of NY and NJ police officer 2007-19, a part-time FDU School of Administration instructor, a Hudson County Sheriff's Officer 2003-07 and an elementary Hoboken school teacher 2001-03.

NUTLEY - Those who want to pay respects to Sgt. A.M. Vreeland here at a cemetery here has had an easier time of doing so since his May 22 headstone's recovery. Those who visited Vreeland's marker before May 18 would have easily missed it since it had sunk behind a patch of weeds to a foot above ground level.

That was how Grace, Bethany and Emma McGuire found the tombstone while at the cemetery May 18 and called for their father, John. The foursome were part of Nutley VFW Post 493 who were out cleaning veterans' gravesites and decorating them with American flags before Memorial Day. The ritual goes back to the first Decoration Day on May 30, 1868.

John McGuire, incoming Post 493 commander and head of the Nutley Veterans Council, took one look, recorded Vreeland's site and called for backup. He returned May 22 with an assembly of volunteers, including the Nutley Fire Department and DPW.

A DPW backhoe loader operator and NFD firefighters took turns digging out and lifting Vreeland's headstone. They, in the presence of Mayor John V. Kelly III and DPW Commissioner Mauro Tucci, refilled the cavity, anchored the headstone and plant-

(Continued on page 15)

OPRA (Continued from page 9)

find the information online, governments can charge them for providing a paper copy.

- New protections on personal information including restrictions on birth dates, email addresses and home addresses.
- No longer guaranteeing that people who win disputed records-requests in court will have their legal fees paid by the government agency.
- Enabling governments to sue people seeking information if they can prove the request amounts to harassment of substantially interrupts them from doing their jobs. Governments can also add "service charges" for filing requests under certain circumstances.
- Specifically identifying individuals when seeking their correspondence and limiting the search to a "reasonable" time frame.
- No longer requiring immediate access to budgets, bills, vouchers, contracts and public employee salary and overtime information if that information is more than two years old.
- Extending the seven - day deadline to provide records to as long as two weeks if redactions are required, or three weeks if the records are in storage.

(Source: <https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2024/06/nj-gov-phil-murphy-signs-contentious-public-records-overhaul/>)

How the law amending OPRA was fast-tracked

Back in March 2024, the Legislature held public hearings on the new law governing Open Public Records Act. As "Local Talk" reported in its March 20, 2024 issue, the decision to pull the bill from the agenda occurred only three days after both the Assembly and Senate held public hearings on the proposed OPRA amendments.

According to the May 14 njspotlightnews.org article, "Organizations representing the state's municipalities and counties were the greatest proponents of the measure, which was fast-tracked in March, then resurrected last Thursday (May 9) and passed by two committees without drafts of the amended bill available to the public on the OLS website.

"Dozens of nonprofits, good-government groups and civil rights advocates, as well as journalism organizations and individuals, opposed it. A recent FDU Poll said that more than 81% of registered voters support the current law and oppose the public's right to records."

Statements by organizations and people in favor and against the amendments to OPRA

According to the May 14 njspotlightnews.org article, Senate President Nicholas Scutari (D-Union), speaking briefly to reporters after the vote, said the bill will result "in a savings of taxpayer dollars." After final Assembly passage, Antoinette Miles, state director of the New Jersey Working Families Party, said the measure "is not a bill that modernizes OPRA, it is a bill that decimates OPRA."

Sarah Fajardo, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of New Jersey Policy Director, said

in her public statement, "The public opposition to S2930/A4045 was a powerful display of democracy at its best - advocates, stakeholders, and 81% of voters from across the ideological spectrum made it clear that New Jersey should be strengthening government transparency, not undermining it in backroom deals.

"It's shameful that despite overwhelming concerns from their constituents, lawmakers fast-tracked, and the governor signed, a bill that severely restricts access to government records and limits the public's ability to hold elected officials accountable. But we know that voters will have the last word at the ballot box next year - and maybe then Legislators will remember who they are meant to serve."

Governor Phil Murphy issued a five-page statement explaining in detail why he signed the bills amending the Open Public Records Act.

According to the Governor's statement, "Before I discuss the merits of the bill, I want to acknowledge that I know that this decision (to sign the bill) will disappoint many members of the advocacy community, including a number of social justice, labor, and environmental organizations, among others. I have heard the many objections to the bill directly, and I know that they were made in good faith and with good intentions. I also commend everyone who has engaged in this debate for making their voice heard, which is the foundation of our democratic system of government.

"Perhaps the most troubling concern that I have heard is that signing this bill will both enable

corruption and erode trust in our democracy. ... If I believed that this bill would enable corruption in any way, I would unhesitatingly veto it. ... I take the concerns regarding corruption and trust in our democracy extremely seriously. However, my responsibility as Governor is to evaluate the bill on the merits, regardless of how it may be perceived," Governor Murphy said in his statement.

Legal Challenges. Freedom of Information Act.

With the revisions to the Open Public Records Act now effective law, the question arises whether legal challenges will arise soon. Plausibly, a court case challenging the new law is just a matter of time. When such a case does occur, it will attract the attention of everyone who fought against amendments to the Open Public Records Act. Legal cases being lengthy business, it might take at least two or three years to reach first the New Jersey Supreme Court, and then the United States Supreme Court. How that turns out depends on how well the plaintiffs put their case together.

Since the Open Public Records Act is no longer effective, the public should consider the Freedom of Information Act to obtain information. FOIA, as it is called for short, is a federal law, the counterpart of the Open Public Records Act. And since federal law overrides state law, those who want the necessary information from New Jersey government, counties, police, etc., can use the Freedom of Information Act to obtain that information.

ANALYSIS (Continued from page 5)

"America First" closely identifies with the policies and beliefs of former President Donald J. Trump.

Their Sheriff primary candidate, Robert Bianco, drew 1,783 or 26 percent against nominee Nicholas Pasini's 36, 762 or 83.54.

Their County Registrar runner, Scott D. Pollac, fell short to nominee Sgt. Jeffrey M. Plewka; 4,942 or 73 percent to 1,824 or 27.

You Can "Beat City Hall" in Maplewood

Former Reuters reporter Malia Herman scored an upset in the Maplewood Township Committee Democratic Party.

Herman, at 2,433 or 35.15, placed second to Mayor and Maplewood Democratic Committee ticket head Nancy Adams' 2,558 or 36.78. Herman upset one-term Deputy Mayor Jermaine L. Cripe's 1,954 or 28.

A Gamble on Gamble's Pick

Bloomfield party voters, on the surface, upset now-outgoing Mayor Ted Gamble by selecting Councilwoman Jenny Mundell.

Mundell was Bloomfield Democratic Committee-backed while Gamble was on the "Democrats United" ticket.

A majority of Township Council Members appointed Gamble over Mundell as mayor in January when then-Mayor Michael Venezia took up his new job as State Assemblyman. Venezia, who is still the party chairman, favored Mundell.

Voters gave Mundell 2,605 or 57.4 over Gamble's 1,934 or 42.6.

BDC-backed Monica Charris-Tabares turned back Democrats United's Rodney P. Cauthen 3,027 or 69.8 to 1,307 or 30.2.

The Observation Booth



OP-ED By Andrea Dialect
YOU'VE BEEN SERVED

Unfortunately, in today's culture, like the old saying goes, we place one shilling in, only to take two out. Now that those stockpiles are in dire need of replenishing, few of us are to be found.

Sadly, selfishness is most definitely on the come up. So, when I come across those who opt to give of themselves, by putting those shillings in, I must pay homage.

My Mama Doris Brown always says, "Give credit where credit is due." I opt to listen to my Mama. We must always show our appreciation for those who lovingly support us.

Our feature today is such a person. Ironically, before crossing our paths, the flowering bed

had already caught my attention. I absolutely love wildflowers and weeds and things of that sort, and their placement was a breath of fresh air. It made for happy trails as I moseyed along Evergreen Street, heading towards Extra Supermarket to cop those turkey tails.

It was a happy medium in the ever-boring fields of crumbling asphalt and mismatched pavements, among other unsightly things. It had made that record skip, and that jolt made me look and deeply gaze upon the sprinkled effect of beauty. This is what she said when I



Photos By Andrea Dialect



stumbled into her, once those turkey tails had been in tow... Enjoy.

BLOOM

FEATURE: Lynette Johnson
Demographic: East Orange

"When it comes down to it, I do it for no pay. It's from the goodness of my heart, that's why I do it, and I love it. I just love it. It takes the place of everything that is wrong as far as I'm concerned. It's silent beauty, and we all need that in the way we live in this world today. We need that silent beauty, and some peace of mind. I come here to get clarity and clear my thoughts. I decided to be the change because it's going to come anyways, so you might as well get prepared and be ready for it.

"I didn't consider doing this a challenge. When I lived in Boston, my backyard was bigger than this parking lot. So I have no problem doing this. This is no

problem, and as long as I'm living here, I will be doing this. Beauty and cleanliness of the community are very important to me. It is a standard to me, and we must follow some type of standard. I cannot deal with the litter and the filth and the garbage lying around. We have a big dumpster there, but seemingly nobody wants to use it. But I use it. I don't care whose property it is. I'm doing this. People sit here, and they resonate with what's going on. Walking through here is a privilege, and if we don't respect this property, they could gate it, and we'd have to walk around. ...

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ENCAMPMENT

(Continued from page 4)

university leaders repeatedly made commitments in person and in writing that substantially addressed the protestors' concerns.

"We assured them that the commitments already made by Rutgers on May 2nd in New Brunswick apply at Rutgers - Newark and we provided ample evidence that we already had begun working to affect those commitments, including:

- Assuring representation of Rutgers-Newark students in the upcoming meeting of students with President Holloway and the chair of the Joint Committee on Investment of the Rutgers boards, in keeping with Rutgers' investment policy, which clearly articulates the process for evaluating divestment requests
- Forging the connections needed to enroll Gazan students whose universities have been destroyed

- Initiating discussions to identify needs for enhancements to programming on campus for Palestinian and Arab students
- Building on an existing agreement with Birzeit University
- Using appropriate terminology in communications to refer to Palestine and Palestinians
- Continuing to build cultural competency of faculty and staff about Arab peoples and Islamophobia
- Assuring that no member of the Rutgers community - including faculty, staff, graduate students, undergraduate students, or alumni - found to have been involved in the encampment or related activity will face retaliation from the University, including termination of employment or reduction in compensation.

Further, in response to the more local concerns expressed by the protestors:

- Rutgers-Newark has a well-established

track record of investing significant resources in collaboration with the City of Newark and grassroots Newark nonprofits on housing insecurity in our city, working with community partners across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to advocate and organize community support for innovative public policy and actual affordable housing solutions for Newarkers. The work of our Center on Law, Inequality and Metropolitan Equity (CLiME) has been foundational, literally, in the creation and ongoing work of the Mayor's Equitable Growth Advisory Commission, for example, and in documenting the urgency of optimizing the use of city-owned land to address housing needs in Newark through the Newark Land Bank.

- Since 2016, Rutgers-Newark has had a free-tuition program for Newarkers - the Rutgers University - Newark Talent & Opportunity Pathways (RU-N to the

(Continued on page 15)

ENCAMPMENT

(Continued from page 14)

- TOP) Program - that ensures no tuition or mandatory fees for students from families making up to \$65,000 a year, with a sliding scale above that up to \$100,000 that keeps college very affordable. Indeed, this model was adopted by the State of New Jersey, and we have expanded our own efforts to the point at which we now provide more than \$7 million a year (on average over the past five years) to Newark residents to enable them to attend Rutgers-Newark.
- The legal clinics of Rutgers-Newark have been offering free legal services to Newark residents for more than 50 years. Today, there are eleven such clinics, providing free consultation to Newarkers in the following areas: child advocacy, community and transactional law, constitutional rights, criminal and youth justice, education and health law, entrepreneurship, federal taxation, housing justice and tenant solidarity, immigrant rights, intellectual property law, and international human rights.
 - At the same time, we do not see an appropriate role for Rutgers-Newark to play in addressing a small number of the protestors' concerns. These are:
 - Seeking to have Rutgers-Newark lobby the Newark Municipal Council on behalf of the Newark Solidarity Coalition for a Gaza ceasefire resolution
 - Seeking free health care services for Newarkers from Rutgers Health, which is not a part of Rutgers-Newark, and which already provides such services through free clinics
 - Seeking divestment by three other higher education institutions in the Newark area (NJIT, Essex County College, and Seton Hall University).

“As a public institution, Rutgers-Newark - administration, faculty, staff, and students - is publicly accountable for abiding by policies that apply across all of Rutgers. That includes the policy on investment, which clearly articulates the process for evaluating divestment requests - a process grounded in the democratic principles of consensus building among campus constituencies in order to consider collective action. It has become clear in recent days, unfortunately, that those in the encampment do not plan to abide by that.

“Although the protestors have dismantled the encampment and work has begun to restore the site to its intended uses for the university community, we have offered to continue discussion with the protestors on how we may collaborate on local issues of mutual concern. As we have done concertedly for the past decade

and more, we will continue to invest Rutgers-Newark's intellectual, human, financial, and physical capital collaboratively with community partners toward the ends of achieving racial equity and equitable growth in our community.”

Text of the Joint Statement from the City of Newark and Department of Public Safety

The City of Newark and Department of Public Safety published a joint statement regarding the dismantling of the protestors' encampment at the Rutgers Newark Law School.

“Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka and Public Safety Director Fritz G. Frage report that Rutgers University Police made a decision to remove a student protestors' encampment today, Sunday, June 9, 2024. Rutgers Police requested that Newark Police provide traffic control assistance during its dismantling operation.

“Newark Police officers did not engage nor participate in the dismantling of the encampment until three Newark Police Officers, who were conducting traffic control on the streets outside of Rutgers University, observed a crowd surrounding two Rutgers Police. The university's police officers had detained an adult male following a foot pursuit. Newark Police Officers provided mutual aid for crowd control. When the crowd was dispersed, Rutgers Police detained the suspect, who was later released from the campus. Newark Police returned to their traffic control locations. No arrests were made by Newark Police.

“Both Mayor Baraka and Director Frage applaud the response of Rutgers University - Newark and thank Chancellor Nancy Cantor for the university's respectful approach to handling one of the longest-lasting protests in the country. This response, which sought to engage protestors while respecting their rights, serves as a model for campus protests nationwide. The City of Newark appreciates the university's restraint and tolerance and its honorable upholding of students' rights to peacefully assemble.

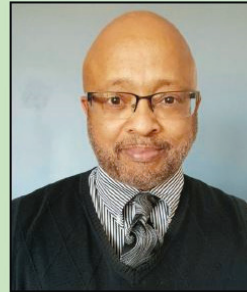
“Prior to this incident, Newark Police Officers had not entered the campus, neither in uniform nor in plain clothes. During today's mutual aid incident, one Newark Police Officer was observed at the scene flexing his muscles. As a result, the officer is under disciplinary investigation for violating Newark Police policies and procedures.

“Always, the City of Newark and the Newark Police Division work to uphold the public's rights while respectfully acknowledging various perspectives and points of view.”

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TOWN WATCH

(Continued from page 12)

ed an American flag.

Post 493 and the Veterans Council take turns annually cleaning and decorating Nutley's three cemeteries that hold veterans' graves.

"We try to keep the flags up until July 4," said McGuire. "This year, we're going a little more above and beyond. I hope that, by including my daughters. They'll someday continue the legacy on their own."

It appears that Sgt. Vreeland - going by the headstone's material, age, and style - may either have been killed in action or a veteran of one of America's conflicts 1846-98. That period spans the Mexican-American War and the Spanish-American with the Civil War between them.



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