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N.J. POLITICAL

PAGE 14

POWERHOUSE INDICTED

PRO-PALESTINIAN PROTESTERS ACCUSE AUTHORITIES OF RAIDING ENCAMPMENT



PAGE 6

In response to the encampment ordeal, protestors took to the steps of City Hall in Newark to voice their concerns

Photo By Lev D. Zilbermints

GRAND JURY CLEARS COLUMBIA PRINCIPAL OF ENDANGERMENT

By Walter Elliott

SOUTH ORANGE / MAPLEWOOD - Suspended Columbia High School Principal Frank Sanchez can breathe a little easier, thanks to a State Superior Court-Newark grand jury's June 12 decision.

The grand jury handed down a no bill of indictment that Wednesday on the charge of second-degree endangering the welfare of a child facing Sanchez. The charge was lodged by the Essex County Prosecutor's Office March 8 in the wake of their winter 2023-24 investigation of a March 9, 2023 incident in a CHS hallway.

A "no bill" means that there was not enough evidence to warrant a criminal trial. The jury had reviewed hallway video surveillance recordings and Sanchez's own testimony before them among the ECPO-submitted evidence. Sanchez's attorney, John J. McMahon, of West Orange, thanked ECPO June 13 for "permitting Frank to testify before the grand jury in order to provide them the context necessary for their evaluation."

Sanchez had surrendered himself at ECPO's Newark office March 11 after he had learned that Stephens had signed an arrest warrant for both the felony endangerment charge and the simple assault-persons misdemeanor charge March 8.

Stephens, in the ECPO's press announcement that Thursday said that the simple assault charge was and is being treated separately. That charge was not in the grand jury's scope.

"The grand jury's decision is welcome news to the many families and students who've been looking forward to welcoming Frank Sanchez back to Columbia High School and the SOMSD community," said Acting SOMSD Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kevin Gilbert June 13.

Gilbert, without elaboration, put Sanchez on paid administrative leave Jan. 2 and had named Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Ann Bodner as acting super. The SOMSD Board of Education, on April 2, appointed Ricardo Pedro as Interim CHS Principal.

The no bill is the latest turn of a chain of events that happened between Sanchez and a CHS sophomore March 9, 2023. At issue is whether Sanchez was separating the

(Continued on page 7)

COACH USA FILES FOR BANKRUPTCY



PAGE 4



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Turn
To
**PAGE
9**



Editorial
Dhiren Shah
 Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

The world is sinking with the wrong attraction to money and power. Human values are dying in people's minds. Thinking about the well-being of one another is shrinking. Cellular phones and digital media are taking over. The next phase will be AI (Artificial Intelligence). Those days of enjoying the presence of family members and special occasions are becoming a distant memory. I am missing those good old days. I hope you might be missing them too.

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy signed a bill to gut the access to public records... BILL No. 1336-2024 OPRA (Open Public Records Act) bill. As the

governor signed it, he did not think once about the people. He had a right to deny the bill and could have sent it back to the assembly for two-thirds signatures to get it approved. But all are intertwined. The governor is looking for politics over people. Assemblypersons were also looking for the same thing.

We the people of New Jersey elected these democrats who do not think about the people but try instead to hide their wrongdoings. By not allowing proper access to public records, they clear a path to wrongdoing, where people cannot discover it easily. Legal corruption is at a height unseen before, and what will happen in the future, we all might witness terrible misdeeds. I feel bad voting for Governor Murphy. I became a Democrat by reading about their party platform, not thinking about their politics. I will be changing my stance to become Independent instead of Democrat. That gives

me an independent decision-making. I don't say all democrats are bad. But I would say all democrats are controlled by higher-ranking democrats. The OPRA gutting bill will be challenged in the court of law.

On June 17, George Norcross, a high ranking kingpin of the Democratic Party in South Jersey, has been charged with racketeering along with some of his allies by New Jersey Attorney General Matthew Platkin. This was a yearlong investigation by the AG.

This is an example of why we need OPRA at full strength. Demolishing the rights of the people will increase corruption. Newspapers must be exempt. They are the ones who work hard to find out the facts. Newspapers are the mirror; we are supposed to publish what comes to us and that goes out for the people to read.

Too many restrictions and one-sided control leads to the

death of the democracy in my opinion. I request that all the media members unite and protect our rights and that of the people.

It will be interesting to watch the debate on June 27th between President Biden and former President Trump. Only one microphone will be one at a time, and the other person's mic will be muted. Also, there will be no audience.

On the surface, all of this favors Biden, as Trump would usually draw energy off of a crowd. However, if Trump excels in the unfavorable environment, or if Biden has a mishap, it could be disastrous.

It will be very interesting to watch, as for the first time, we will have such an unusual presidential debate.

Have a wonderful week.

I'll talk to you next week.

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WEATHER FOR THE WEEK

<u>THURSDAY</u>	<u>FRIDAY</u>	<u>SATURDAY</u>	<u>SUNDAY</u>	<u>MONDAY</u>	<u>TUESDAY</u>	<u>WEDNESDAY</u>
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COACH USA FILES FOR BANKRUPTCY

By Walter Elliott

WEST ORANGE - Commuters on the Community Coach 77, since June 11, have entered a new tunnel other than their accustomed Lincoln Tunnel.

Riders who have been used to the Port Authority Bus Terminal and the Weehawken helix at the ends, do not know how long this new tunnel is and what will be at the other end.

Community Coach 77's parent, CoachUSA, had entered voluntary Chapter 11 reorganization bankruptcy in Wilmington, Del. federal court June 11. CoachUSA and its ownership, Variant Equity Advisors, of Los Angeles, is asking the bankruptcy court judge to allow them to sell off parts of its commuter and charter lines across North America.

CoachUSA's selling off of a majority of its assets will dismantle what has been North America's single largest bus carrier. The winning bidder or bidders may give Community Coach 77, local

Community Transport buses and/or the budget Megabus service a very different look.

Who gets some or all of Community Coach 77, whose West Orange to Midtown Manhattan via Orange / East Orange Main Street / Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard dates back to the 1920s, has not been set as of press time. One source, on June 12, said that Renco Group-Bus Holdings US LLC, of Manhattan, has agreed to purchase "certain assets of Community Coach."

Nor is it known whether "CC77" will continue to operate from CoachUSA's Paramus garage. The private carrier has also put ShortLine's base and fellow Rockland Tours there up for sale. Renco has reportedly "agreed to purchase some of its lines, including ShortLine (including Chenango Valley Bus Lines) and Rockland."

This bankruptcy - not liquidation - sale is going on at 26 other metropolitan areas in the U.S. and

Canada affecting 2,700 employees. CoachUSA is seeking to plug or settle up to \$200 million dollars in debt amassed since the March 2020 COVID-19 pandemic shutdown.

CoachUSA, in its bankruptcy filings, claims it owes creditors \$197.8 million in liabilities against between 1,000 to 5,000 creditors against between \$100 and \$500 million in assets. Although it, like most private bus carriers, received some federal COVID relief aid, ridership first dropped to 90 percent.

CoachUSA's overall ridership rebounded to 45 percent of pre pandemic levels -- but has also seen inflationary pressure in fuel, and other supplies, property rent and employee retention plus higher interest rates. The almost \$198 million owed includes a \$37 million loan from the federal Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act.

It has meanwhile received \$20 million in debtor-in-possession financing to keep running its buses as usual. It intends to pay all vendors and suppliers in full.

"(CoachUSA) is operating as normal and remains focused on operating safely and serving customers in the U.S. and Canada," said Coach CEO Derrick Waters that Tuesday. "Our top priority remains safely carrying the millions of passengers who choose our buses each year and working closely with our valued contract customers and transportation agency partners. We appreciate the dedication of our employees to operating with safety as a priority and serving our customers and our communities."

Renco also intends to buy Megabus Retail and "the Megabus intellectual property and retail operations." Coach has been operating Megabus from its First Street, Elizabeth garage since 2006. It is the same garage where Coach has based its Newark Airport Express shuttles to Manhattan - and had last quartered its Orange-Newark-Elizabeth division's 24, 31 and 44 routes.

After several decades,

CoachUSA stopped running ONE's 24, 31 and 44 routes Oct. 7, 2023. ONE, after recent route cuts, had stopped all of its Sunday and Labor Day service July 7.

CoachUSA had recently decided not to renew its contract with NJTransit to operate the latter's local Bergen and Passaic county bus routes from Coach's Allwood, Clifton garage. Coach, as Community Transport, runs the 705 Passaic-Wayne route via Montclair State University and the 709 Bloomfield-Paramus route.

CoachUSA selling off Community Coach 77 is the latest in a 14-month pattern of private bus line cuts and withdrawals.

DeCamp, of Montclair, stopped its commuter service after 153 years April 7, 2023. NJTransit has since picked up all but two of DeCamp's routes and is running bare bones "emergency service" on the remainder.

NJTransit also absorbed the ex-ONE 24, 31 and 44 routes, maintaining pre-July 7 service. The nation's largest statewide public carrier had estimated the cost of picking up DeCamp, ONE and Jersey City's A&C Lines last year at \$22 million. (That figure includes contracting Academy Bus to run some of the 24 route.)

The State Legislature, in response, passed a regulation where private bus carriers must give a 90-day advance notice if they are to severely cut or end fixed passenger route service. Neither CoachUSA, nor any potential suitors, have posted such notices as of press time.

What is now Community Coach 77 had been operated by several private companies under Public Service/NJTransit charter. DeCamp bought the charter in the 1920s but sold it to an independent company in 1977.

Community Coach 77 expanded its service west to Livingston Mall and Morristown - which CoachUSA cut back in pre-pandemic times.

(Continued on page 12)

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SPORTS WRAP



Photos By Felicia Laguerre Owens

By William Hathaway, Jr.

The New York Red Bulls were back in action this past weekend in Harrison, finishing with a draw against Nashville FC. Defense was the key for both teams, as goalkeeper Ryan Meara recorded his second shut-out of the season, while his counterpart Joe Willis did the

After the game, head coach Sandro Schwarz said what worked well in the draw.

“Yeah, I would say the whole team for me said it was a good performance. We created a lot of good moments in the game. We played good defense today, and we defended as a whole.”

In other area sports, the



same for FC. Defended Sean Nealis made his 114th career start in MLS. Not only did the Red Bulls extend their unbeaten streak, but they have posted 93 shutouts at home since the 2010 season. Currently, RBNY record is 8-4-6 this season.

West Orange Police Athletic League made a statement this past weekend at West Orange High School. In the 1st annual North-South New Jersey Suburban Youth Football League (NJSYFL) 14 under girls flag football all-star game, the North



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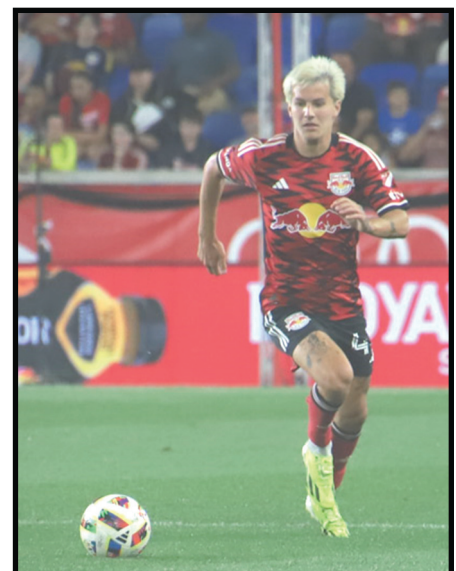


team defeated the South 26-0. Among the towns represented were Berkeley Heights, Bloomfield, Summit, and New Providence.

Finally, the Boston Celtics won an NBA record 18th World Championship at the expense of the Dallas Mavericks in a dominant 4-1 series win. The Cs took Game 5 106-88 at home, with Jaylen Brown winning Finals MVP honors.

While Boston is the team to claim the title, they could not have done it without help from the Nets, whose ill fated trade to collect the likes of Kevin Garnett, Paul Pierce, and Jason Ter-

ry years ago led the Celtics to getting Brown and Jayson Tatum - with what would have been the Nets' picks.



PRO-PALESTINIAN PROTESTERS ACCUSE AUTHORITIES OF RAIDING ENCAMPMENT

By Lev D. Zilbermintz

NEWARK - Depending on whose narrative the reader is hearing, the pro-Palestinian encampment at Rutgers - Newark Law School was either "raided" or peacefully "dismantled by the protesters."

In preparing this article, "Local Talk" used its own video, photographs, and news accounts from other media sources that covered the June 12 rally and press-conference at Newark City Hall. Credit is given to the various sources, as per standard journalism practice.

On June 12, 2024, the pro-Palestinian protesters held a 9 a.m. rally at City Hall in Newark. This was followed by a press conference at 11:15 a.m. Media representatives from Patch.com, Public Square Amplified, TapInto.Net, "Local Talk", NJTV, all provided coverage of the rally and the press conference.

Clash over a flag draped over the shoulders of a George Floyd statue

In what looked to be a sign of contention between Newark Solidarity Coalition and Newark security, a scuffle broke out by the George Floyd statue. The subject of the argument was whether the red-black-green flag should be hanging from the statue's shoulders. The female security guard said no, the coalition members said it was freedom of speech.

As protesters and security argued, people from both sides stepped in to de-escalate the situation. The flag remained draped over the George Floyd statue's shoulders. Both the security guard and the protesters stepped away. Nearby Newark Police officers did not interfere. They preferred to observe what was going on.

The rally was attended by at least 30 people. "Local Talk" counted at least 10 Newark police and a few City Hall security guards in attendance. However, the police and security did not interfere with the rally or the press conference.

Many attendees wore keffiyehs, the white - black or red-

white checkered kerchiefs often seen in the Middle Eastern countries. Other attendees wore clothes in the colors of the Palestinian, green-red-white-black, flag.

At the press conference, Newark Solidarity Coalition (NSC) members gave their side of the story about the "forced" dispersal of the Rutgers - Newark Law School encampment on June 9. NSC members accused Rutgers-Newark administration of lying, using force, not giving protesters enough time to pack up everything, and more.

The Rutgers-Newark Law School encampment has lasted 40 days, May 1 - June 9, 2024.

The account of a professor who witnessed the June 9 events. Dispersal of encampment.

Professor Simeon Marsalis, of Rutgers-Newark's English Department, gave a detailed account of what happened just after 7 a.m., June 9.

Professor Marsalis said that he sought a meeting with the interim chancellor, Jeffrey Robinson, to allow protesters more time to pack up. However, the interim chancellor only gave the Newark Solidarity Coalition 15 minutes to pack up and leave.

According to Marsalis, this was a tense situation. Describing it, Marsalis said, "People are afraid that they would be arrested."

Simeon Marsalis said, "We do not want to send police on campus." The attendees shouted in unison, "Shame!"

Professor Marsalis said, "While we were literally surrounded by Newark PD. They then put out their statement by furthering their lies and deceit. While the city claimed that they were there simply for traffic control; assistance, the presence of an armored special operations vehicle and countless Newark PD cops and cars dispels this outright lie."

Another group chorus of "Shame!"

Prof. Marsalis continued, "This division in their own words consists of a specially trained technical team deployed for high risk incidents including

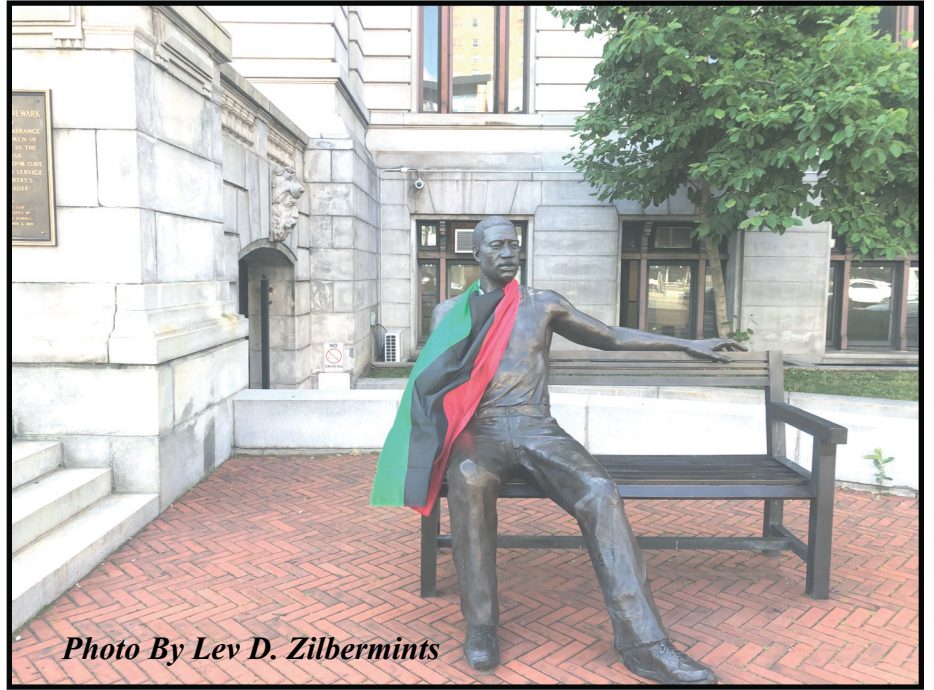


Photo By Lev D. Zilbermintz

barricaded persons, armed individuals, and other tactical incidents. Those of us encamped were nothing but peaceful for 40 days, yet, like the New Brunswick encampment, we were met with the armed forces of the state.

"The Mayor and city police have claimed that their only involvement was when they detained a male adult while a crowd was surrounding a Rutgers Police officer. I can assure you that at no point were the police officers outnumbered. There was never a crowd surrounding Rutgers cops. And the person who was detained was trying to get past the police to get his family member who was encamped with us. They viciously pushed him to the ground while cops put their knees to his back."

Another chorus, "Shame!"

Marsalis pointed out that police responded with force towards both the detained man, himself, and other protesters.

According to Marsalis, "A bunch of cops crowded one man, not the other way around. I want to record this incident to make sure there would be evidence. Seeing that the police refused to let the legal observers in the camp. As I was clearly recording the incident, the PD officer pushed me. When I asked him not to touch me, he told me to shut up."

Another group chorus, "Shame!"

Marsalis continued, "Others of us were touched by Newark PD though there was no discernable threat to Newark PD. Just a black man face down in the dirt being detained by the University and Newark police.

"Continuing in their disinformation campaign, Newark police claim they provided mutual help for crown control. Such language is a misrepresentation of reality at best, dangerous and inappropriate at worst.

"Police said they were performing mutual aid when in reality Newark PD and University PD were operating to destroy mutual aid that they saw at the encampment."

The listeners applauded at this point.

Marsalis said that the coalition was helping the homeless, feeding the hungry, giving medical care, and providing education. Then the police came and disrupted everything.

Newark mayor caught misrepresenting the facts. Videos show what really happened

Marsalis continued, "Despite him not once being on the ground, Baraka continued lying, claiming Newark police did not remove students or participate in dismantling the encampments. We have not once sent police on the campus. The videos show a different story. They show folks old and young afraid; they show police putting their hands on campers, they show the universi-

(Continued on page 7)

ENCAMPMENT

(Continued from page 6)

ty throwing our art and valuables because people who have been encamped for 40 days were not moving fast enough..."

"...They showed the despair of people fighting to get the university to stop investing in a government that is actively facilitating a genocide being shown how business is done as usual.

"...The level of trauma they caused us will have effects for years to come.

"In conclusion, the Newark Solidarity Coalition demands the following immediate actions from Rutgers Admin and the city. We ask that a full and independent investigation into the Newark Police Department and Rutgers Conduct and Rutgers complicity in the incident on June 9th be conducted."

Stormy applause greeted these remarks. After silence again reigned, Professor Marsalis continued speaking. A number of demands were given by the Newark Solidarity Coalition.

"We ask for public disclosure of Rutgers U financial dealings and real estate holdings as relayed in our communication with the chancellor's office, a question they refused to answer before dismantling our camp.

"We ask for formal apologies from Mayor Baraka and Rutgers U leadership acknowledging their roles in mismanaging and misrepresentation of the event.

"We ask for guarantees against retaliation for all students, faculty and community members that were involved in the encampment.

"On behalf of the Student Coalition I want to thank everybody for coming out today.

"Follow us on Instagram. It is at Newark Solidarity Coalition," Professor Marsalis said, ending the press conference.

Administrators never responded to proposed meeting dates

Professor Marsalis described giving Rutgers - Newark administration at least four or five different dates and times when Newark Solidarity Coalition negotiators could be together for a meeting with Rutgers - Newark

officials. This was about a week before June 9. R-N officials maintained "radio silence" according to NSC spokesman as seen on the June 12 video.

"Local Talk" wrote in its June 13 issue how the pro-Palestinian encampment was broken up by campus and city police forces. The relevant excerpts from the lengthy Rutgers - Newark statement are cited here.

Rutgers - Newark officials said in their statement that the protesters repeatedly violated university fire safety policies by the unsafe use of extension cords from Rutgers buildings and unpermitted use of open flames for cooking. Also, "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 were elsewhere."

Unanswered Questions

Assuming the protesters are being truthful about giving dates and meeting times, the question arises, why did not the administration respond to the proposed dates and times?

Another unanswered question is whether the Newark Solidarity Coalition understands that some of their demands cannot be met by Rutgers University. Rutgers being a corporate entity, it does not have to list how its assets are or are not connected to Israel. Rutgers did agree to meet 8 demands. These included more housing; tuition - free program; legal aid; free health care for Newark city residents and other needs.

A third question is whether the City of Newark was telling the truth about its police officers' role in disbanding the pro-Palestinian encampment at Rutgers Newark Law School.

"Local Talk" published the text of the Joint Statement from the City of Newark and Department of Public Safety in its June 13 edition.

Authorities Announce Increased Reward in Killing of Newark Imam



NEWARK - Essex County Prosecutor Theodore N. Stephens, II and Essex County Sheriff Armando Fontoura have announced that the Essex County Crime Stoppers reward for information leading to the identification of those responsible for the January 3, 2024 shooting death of Imam Hassan Sharif has been increased to \$35,000.

Sharif was shot as he was about to enter Masjid Muhammad on South Orange Avenue for morning prayers. The Imam was rushed to University Hospital where he was pronounced dead a few hours later.

The investigation is active and ongoing. Anyone with information is asked to contact the Essex County Prosecutor's Office tips line at 1-877-TIPS-4EC or 1-877-847-7432. Calls will be kept confidential.

GRAND JURY

(Continued from page 1)

African or African American girl in a hallway fight or if he had assaulted her during the separation and/or restraint.

Sanchez had reported the incident to the N.J. Department of Education and the Department of Community Affairs' Division of Child Protection and Permanency later that day. The matter rested until Board Member Courtney Winkfield said that an in-district investigation draft report, conducted by a hired outside lawyer, came to the panel's attention at their December 2023 meeting.

Winkfield, in a March 12, 2024 open letter, said that the School Board Attorney that December recommended that they do not take the draft report under consideration. The outside investigator, said the attorney, "had failed to follow protocol and submit to his supervisor for review and sign-off. The findings had irregularities and had not been properly vetted."

Winkfield, who declined board re-election last November, said that DCP&P "found no substantive cause for the complaint and refused to investigate." She said that two of her BOE colleagues that December meeting urged that Sanchez be recommended for termination and, failing to get that, said they would "take this matter into their own hands."

Additionally, Winkfield said that then-board member Elissa Malespina had presented her copy of the drafted report to the Maplewood Police Department, "who, in turn, provided it to the ECPO." Some board members, said Winkfield, had wanted to fire Sanchez May 11, 2023 - but his contract was later renewed instead.

Malespina, whose term ended on or by Jan. 1, 2024, has not commented on Winkfield's accusation.

The student and her parents, shortly after March 9, 2023, had filed an affirmative action complaint with the New Jersey Law

(Continued on page 12)

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West Orange:	77 Main Street	Tel. 973-324-2090
West Orange:	95 Main Street	Tel. 973-672-3829
West Orange:	92 Old Northfield Avenue	Tel. 973-736-5552



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 - Water service was restored June 14 to the residents of 22 properties who found themselves in the crossfire over a nearly \$1 million payment bill between the city and their landlord. The water was restored after 48 hours - and five days before a forecasted June 18-21 heatwave.

Newark Water and Sewer Utilities Director Kareem Adeem said that the shutoffs were a last resort in getting Boomers Investment Group, LLC, of Newark, to pay \$45,978.41 in arrears. Boomers' last payment was in October. Boomer owns and manages properties in all but the East Ward.

"Water is not free; people have to pay their bills," said Adeem that Friday. "I know it's terribly unfair to the tenants but, at some point, these landlords leave us no choice but shut off the water. It's a drastic step but one that usually brings these landlords to the table with some good faith effort on paying the bills."

Newark Water and Sewer had been employing last resort shutoff since its COVID-19 moratorium was lifted in October 2022. Adeem, in September, said that \$24 million in federal COVID aid for bill payment had been exhausted.

"Local Talk" had bound two accounts of such shutoffs in the North Ward. The taps were turned off Sept. 15 at 555 Mt.

Prospect Ave., for example, for allegedly owning \$400,000.

Since water is needed for consumption, sanitation and fire suppression, the shutting off creates an instant health hazard.

Shutting off Boomer's 22 properties, however, may be the single largest one.

Residents in 103, 109 and 128-132 Chancellor Ave. and at 104 Montclair Ave. said that they had no advance shutoff notice and they had kept their rent, including utilities, current.

A spokesman in Boomers' management office said, on June 14, that they are usually closed on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

IRVINGTON - A prayer vigil and rally were held at Ellis and 19th avenues June 10 for comfort and outrage.

The comfort was for the 11-year-old neighborhood boy and his mother who were victims of a predator in the neighborhood. The outrage was double; one that the act had happened and the other for authorities not informing the community of the suspect's presence.

That the suspect - Caream Davis, 46, of Irvington - was arrested by U.S. Marshals in Richmond, Va. June 7 and has been charged by ECPO on 11 assault and related counts and, as of June 18, awaits extradition - is of mild comfort for the neighbors and community activists from Irvington and Newark.

Essex County Prosecutor Theodore "Ted" Stephens II and Irvington Public Safety Directors Tracy Bowers said that township police were called to the block June 3. The mother and son then told about their ordeal, which brought in the county's Special Victims Unit.

Although authorities have not given details, a video recording of the suspect dragging the boy out of his Ellis Avenue address went viral on the Internet - angering the community. The mother told WPIX 11 News that her son was finishing walking the dog when the suspect approached him, dragged him to the backyard and sexually assaulted him while threatening to kill him if he spoke out. The suspect then entered the address, punched her and tried to assault her before she screamed, and he

fled.

Davis has been charged with two counts each of first-degree aggravated sexual assault, second-degree aggravated assault and third degree endangering the welfare of a child. He has also been charged with a count each of first-degree attempted murder, first-degree kidnapping, second-degree attempted sexual assault, third-degree criminal restraint and third-degree making terroristic threats.

Mayor Anthony "Tony" Vauss told activists early June 10 that he had met the victims' family. Although Vauss told the activists that the mother did not want the rally, she had granted her blessing for the Prayer Vigil for Healing and Unity in the Community.

EAST ORANGE - A city man has been remanded to Newark's Essex County Correctional Facility since what West Orange Police said was a June 12 confession to a May 1 bank robbery at the latter township.

WOPD Det. Geovanni Loreto and his colleagues had arrested Bryant Goodwyn, 25, at his home here June 11 and brought him to the West Orange Law and Justice Building at 60 Main St. Loreto said he had linked Goodwyn, 25, to the May 1 robbery of the Ascendia Bank after witness interviews, "hundreds of hours of electronic video analysis and in-person surveillance."

Witnesses and in-store video recordings told of a masked man entering the bank branch at 83 Northfield Ave. at 9:21 a.m. that Wednesday. The suspect handed a note to a teller, "demanding a specific amount of money and threatened that he had a weapon."

The teller turned over the cash and the suspect fled east on foot.

Bryant has been charged with second-degree robbery by threat or fear of bodily injury, criminal mischief and contempt of court; violating a domestic violence order by a crime or by a disorderly person's offence.

ORANGE - Firefighters swiftly put up mourning bunting here at the Marty De Marzo Fire Headquarters and lowered its flags to half-staff June 9 for one

of their departed colleagues.

Robert W. Seibel, Jr., 78, a former 25-year Orange Fire Department member, died that Sunday at Manahawkin's Southern Ocean Medical Center. He had retired to nearby Little Egg Harbor in 2000.

Seibel joined "Orange's Bravest" after his honorable discharge from the U.S. Marine Corps in 1970. The Orange native had enlisted in the USMC in 1966 and served in Vietnam.

Seibel and his late first wife raised three sons in Orange while being a city firefighter before retiring in 1995. He briefly lived in Bloomfield before going to Little Egg Harbor.

In retirement there, he was a member of American Legion Post No. 493 and Mystic Islands MICA club.

Sons Christopher, Kevin and Keith Seibel and Craig and Eric Johnson, grandchildren Sarah and Ryan Seibel are among his survivors. His Ju, followed by a military ne 19 funeral at Tucker-ton's Wood Funeral Home followed by a military burial at Wrightstown's Brigadier Gen. William C. Doyle Military Cemetery.

WEST ORANGE - The township's topology along the Watchung Mountains would change should the West Orange Planning Board, on July 10, grant the Goddard School permission to replace "a former radio station" with a similarly sized school or child care building.

GBS LLC aka The Goddard School wants to demolish a three story broadcast studio and transmission room and two radio towers here at Mt. Pleasant Ave. In its place on Block 83, Lot 1 and 5.01 would be a three story building which would serve as a separate annex to its existing one-story school or childcare building.

West Orange's planners, on Aug. 2, 2017 granted permission to Goddard to replace a 2007 fire-damaged Mt. Fuji Steak House with the 8,800-square-foot single story Goddard Center. The restaurant at Mt. Pleasant and Prospect avenue's northeast corner started out as McCloud's Hotel and Restaurant in 1912 and per-

(Continued on page 14)



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First Kappa Beta Delta Induction Ceremony At Essex County College Celebrates Business Division Excellence

The Business Division of Essex County College recently held its inaugural international Kappa Beta Delta (KBD) Honor Society induction ceremony. The event, at the West Essex campus in West Caldwell, saw 15 outstanding students and 10 faculty members formally inducted into the prestigious honor society. The College is one of only four New Jersey community colleges accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools & Programs (ACBSP).

KBD is the international honor society for associate degree business schools accredited by ACBSP.

ECC President Dr. Augustine A. Boakye, who was also inducted as an honorary member, presided over the ceremony, emphasizing the importance of dedication, leadership, and scholarly achievement. "This induction is not just a recognition of your hard work, but a call

to continue striving for excellence in all your endeavors," he stated.

The KBD honor society recognizes academic excellence in students pursuing business degrees and honors faculty demonstrating exceptional teaching and leadership. The inducted students and professors are now part of a global network of business professionals committed to lifelong learning and ethical business practices, said Dr. John Olotewo, the KBD faculty advisor at the College.

"The Business Division looks forward to continuing this tradition, inspiring future generations to achieve greatness in the world of business," said Division Chair Germaine Albuquerque. "This marks a significant milestone in the College's commitment to academic excellence and professional development."

ACBSP is present at more than 1,000 campuses across the



Kappa Beta Delta inductees at Essex County College. Photo By ECC

globe, including over 160 associate degrees institutions. Kappa Beta Delta is one of the benefits ACBSP accredited programs can offer their students. Only institutions with ACBSP accredited business programs are eligible to establish a Kappa Beta Delta Chapter.

Students inducted were Kate

Bontia (Chapter President), Oluwateniayo Onaiyekan (Chapter Vice President), Samirah Scantling, Angelica Laguador, Brian Sucre, Bryan Atariguana, Kadigue Sidibe, Marlon Richards, Naihara Cabrera, Nizar Aallalou, Paola Argandona, Rihanata Sana, Robert Cole, Rodney Watkins, and Christopher Andrade.

COACH USA (Continued from page 4)

Some readers may remember a July 2012 public meeting called by the mayors in Livingston and West Orange, to redress CC77 rider complaints. The then-CC77 general manager received a 288-signature petition about erratic service before an audience of 150 and State Assembly members John McKeon (D-West Orange) and Mila Jasey (D-South Orange).

Livingston Township, for a while, ran a commuter van shuttle bus to South Orange's village center station from Labor Day 2012.

Going by Community Coach 77 Riders Facebook page, riders have since had ebbs and flows of improvements and service woes.

Variant Equity Advisors bought CoachUSA from its StagecoachUSA United Kingdom owners in 2019 for \$270 million. Most of that \$270 million was debt that was on the books.

Yankee Coach's Boxcar division is meanwhile conducting a survey of CC&&-area riders, including those in West and South Orange. The Boston outfit has been running New York rush hour service from Maplewood and South Orange railroad stations since 2021.

GRAND JURY (Continued from page 7)

and Justice Department's Office of Civil Rights. According to the April 11, 2024 "New York Times" article, the student said that she was "grabbed" and slammed against a wall."

The sophomore is being represented by Robert Tarver III, Esq., of Toms River, and the SOMA Black Parents Workshop. BPW founder and spokesman Walter Fields said that he was not surprised that "Friends of Frank" had raised \$50,000 for his defense fund and that ECPO received 1,000 post-cards urging the office to drop the endangerment charge.

"While some in the community have tried to paint Mr. Sanchez as the victim," said Fields June 13, "the real victim is a young woman and the dignity of any Black SOMSD student who dares to come forward and protest their mistreatment."

All parties who have taken sides in this now-16-month matter can agree that the no bill of indictment is a turn of events and not an end.

Sanchez still faces the simple assault charge. it is not known whether he will be reinstated as CHS principal.

The school board, in a separate move June 4, hired Jason Bing as its new schools superintendent, effective June 20. Dr. Gilbert returns to his previous assistant super post.



THE CITY OF ORANGE TOWNSHIP
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
 29 North Day Street, Orange, New Jersey 07050
 Mayor Dwayne D. Warren, Esq.

Wendy M. Sykes, MHS
 Director of Community Service
 P: (973) 952-6100 x. 1804

ORANGE TOWNSHIP SFSP NOTIFICATION TO THE COMMUNITY

Enrolled Sites and Camps

The City of Orange Township is participating in the Summer Food Service Program. Meals will be provided to all eligible children free of charge. (To be eligible to receive free meals at a residential or non-residential camp, children must meet the income guidelines for reduced-price meals in the National School Lunch Program). The income guidelines for reduced-price meals by family size are listed on the family size and income scale). Children who are part of households that receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) benefits or benefits under the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) are automatically eligible to receive free meals.

Acceptance and participation requirements for the Program and all activities are the same for all regardless of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity and there will be no discrimination in the course of the meal service. Meals will be provided at the sites and times as follows:

LOCATIONS	OPERATING DATES & DAYS	SERVE TIMES
CAMP DON BOSCO 650 NASSAU STREET ORANGE, NJ 07050	July 1, 2024 thru July 26, 2024 Monday thru Friday	Breakfast: 8:30 am – 9:30 am Lunch 12:00 am – 2:00 pm
IT TAKES A VILLAGE CTR. 439 MAIN STREET ORANGE, NJ 07050	July 1, 2024 thru August 23, 2024 Monday thru Friday	Breakfast: 8:30 am – 9:30 am Lunch 12:00 am – 2:00 pm
JR. PUBLIC SAFETY ACADEMY 234 LINCOLN AVENUE - COMMUNITY ROOM ORANGE, NJ 07050	July 15, 2024 thru August 2, 2024 Monday thru Friday	Breakfast: 8:30 am – 9:30 am Lunch 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm
MOUNT OLIVE SUMMER DAY CAMP 29-37 NORTH ESSEX AVENUE ORANGE, NJ 07050	July 1, 2024 thru August 2, 2024 Monday thru Friday	Breakfast: 9:00 am – 10:00 am Lunch 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Compliant-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
- (2) fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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SFSP Notification To The Community Enrolled Sites and Camps/Standard



**THE CITY OF ORANGE TOWNSHIP
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**
29 North Day Street, Orange, New Jersey 07050

P (973) 952-6121

Wendy M. Sykes, MHS
Director

PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

Contact: Kim Fisher or Wendy Sykes
 973-294-8947 973-789-1673

The City of Orange Township, New Jersey will be participating in the 2024 Summer Food Service Program from *July 1, 2024, 2022 to August 23, 2024*. Meals will be provided to all children without charge and are the same for all children regardless of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identify and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity and there will be no discrimination in the course of the meal service. Meals will be provided, at a first come, first serve basis, at the open sites and times as follows:

LOCATIONS	OPERATING DATES & DAYS	SERVE TIMES
CENTRAL PLAYGROUND CENTRAL AVENUE & CARTERET PLACE ORANGE, NJ 07050	July 1, 2024 thru August 23, 2024 Monday thru Friday	Breakfast 8:00 am -9:00 am Lunch 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm
METCALF PARK VALLEY STREET & ARGYLE AVENUE ORANGE, NJ 07050	July 1, 2024 thru August 23, 2024 Monday thru Friday	Breakfast 8:00 am -9:00 am Lunch 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm
COLGATE PARK DAY STREET & NEW STREET ORANGE, NJ 07050	July 1, 2024 thru August 23, 2024 Monday thru Friday	Breakfast 8:00 am -9:00 am Lunch 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm
ROPES PARK 432 WASHINGTON STREET ORANGE, NJ 07050	July 1, 2024 thru August 23, 2024 Monday thru Friday	Breakfast 8:00 am -9:00 am Lunch 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm
COLLEGE PARK ALDEN & HIGH STREET ORANGE, NJ 07050	July 1, 2024 thru August 23, 2024 Monday thru Friday	Breakfast 8:00 am -9:00 am Lunch 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm
LINCOLN AVE SCHOOL – ORANGE SUMMER CAMP 216 LINCOLN AVENUE ORANGE, NJ 07050	July 1, 2024 thru August 23, 2024 Monday thru Friday	Breakfast: 7:30 am – 8:30 am Lunch 11:30 am – 1:30 pm
LINCOLN AVE SCHOOL – CARES NJ SUMMER CAMP 216 LINCOLN AVENUE ORANGE, NJ 07050	July 1, 2024 thru August 23, 2024 Monday thru Friday	Breakfast: 8:30 am - 9:30 am Lunch 11:30 am – 1:30 pm

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identify and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

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- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
- (2) fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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POLITICAL POWERHOUSE GEORGE NORCROSS AND OTHERS CHARGED WITH RACKETEERING

Conspiracy Spanning 12 Years Resulted in the Enterprise's Acquisition of Camden Waterfront Property and Property Rights for Itself and Others through Unlawful Means

TRENTON - Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin and the Office of Public Integrity and Accountability (OPIA) has announced the filing of criminal charges against six defendants following a years-long investigation into a criminal enterprise run by George E. Norcross III and his associates in South Jersey and elsewhere.

The thirteen-count indictment unsealed June 17 alleges that through a series of unlawful acts, the Norcross Enterprise obtained property and property rights on the Camden Waterfront for itself and others, collected millions of dollars in government-issued tax credits, and controlled and influenced government officials to further the interests of the enterprise.

The indictment available here alleges that from as early as 2012 through the present, the Norcross Enterprise used its power and influence over government officials to craft legislation tailored to serve the interests of the enterprise, and with the cooperation of then-Camden Mayor Dana Redd and other officials, used parts of the city's government to aid the enterprise in acquiring property and property rights for itself and others through coercion, extortion, and other criminal acts. All six of the following defendants are charged with first-degree racketeering:

- George E. Norcross, III, 68, of Palm Beach, Florida, is executive chairman of the insurance firm Conner, Strong & Buckelew and chairman of the board of trustees for Cooper Health.
- Philip A. Norcross, 61, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is an attorney and the managing shareholder and CEO of Parker McCay, a New Jersey law firm. Philip Norcross also serves on the board of Cooper Health and is the registered agent for the groups that own buildings in Camden that are the subject of the criminal allegations.
- William M. Tambussi, 66, of Brigantine, New Jersey, is an attorney and partner at the law firm of Brown and Conery. He is the long-time personal attorney to George Norcross. From 1989 to present he also served as counsel to the Camden County Democratic Committee - which George Norcross chaired from 1989 to 1995. Tambussi has also served as outside counsel to the City of Camden, the Camden Redevelopment Agency, Cooper Health, and Conner Strong.
- Dana L. Redd, 56, of Sicklerville, New Jersey, is currently the CEO of Camden Community Partnership, which was formerly Cooper's Ferry Partnership.

She previously served as a member of the Camden City Council, the New Jersey Senate, and from 2010 to 2018 was the Mayor of Camden, and she is alleged to have abused that position to benefit herself and the Norcross Enterprise.

- Sidney R. Brown, 67, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is the CEO of NFI, a trucking and logistics company. He also serves as a member of the board at Cooper Health, and is a partner in the groups that own several of the Camden buildings at the center of the allegations.
- John J. O'Donnell, 61, of Newtown, Pennsylvania, has been in the executive leadership of The Michaels Organization, a residential development company, in a variety of roles including COO, President, and CEO. He is also a partner in the groups that own several of the Camden buildings at the center of the allegations. He has also served on the Board of Cooper's Ferry Partnership at various times since 2018.

The defendants are also charged with various counts of financial facilitation, misconduct by a corporate official, and official misconduct and conspiring to commit theft by extortion, criminal coercion, financial fa-

cilitation, misconduct by a corporate official, and official misconduct.

All of the offenses charged in the 111-page indictment are violations of the first and second degrees. First-degree charges carry a sentence of 10 to 20 years in state prison and a fine of up to \$200,000. The crime of first-degree racketeering is subject to the No Early Release Act, and thus carries a mandatory 85% parole disqualifier. It also exposes criminal defendants to the potential for additional financial penalties - including the forfeiture of ill-gotten proceeds from their criminal activity - which, as the indictment makes clear, the State intends to seek in this case.

Second-degree charges carry a sentence of five to 10 years in state prison and a fine of up to \$150,000. The offense of official misconduct carries a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment of five years for public officials convicted of that offense related to their office.

These charges and allegations are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in court.

The arraignment for the defendants is scheduled for July 9 at 10 a.m., before Superior Court Judge Peter E. Warshaw Jr. in Mercer County.

TOWN WATCH

(Continued from page 10)

haps best known as the 1945-78 Mushroom Farm.

It appears that Goddard recently bought the .0574-acre lot and that Family Radio, of Oakland, Calif., is moving its last station - WQXR 1560 AM - to share WOR's antenna in Rutherford. WQXR stopped broadcasting March 4, ending a 95-year run for those call letters, and filed a "notice of consummation" to the FCC Feb. 29.

Family Radio, in a winter 2023-24, proposal to the FCC, asked that they operate on 500 watts 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. weekdays when Goddard was open and up to 1,000 watts the rest of the time. Goddard had been complaining that the broadcast transmission was interfering with the center's electronics.

Family Radio sold the station for \$50.1 million to Cumulus Media, and Cumulus, of Atlanta, leased the building back in 2013. Its

WFME 94.7 FM station had been there since 1963. The site was a 5,000 watt transmitter for several FM stations going back to WAAT in 1948 and including WRXP (in 2013), WNSH NASH FM (2013-17) and WXBK "The Block" (2017-21) and (briefly) WHTZ. 100.3 FM.

SOUTH ORANGE / MAPLEWOOD

Kaitlin M. Wittleder, one of South Orange-Maplewood School District's two vice presidents, decided on June 10 that she is one and done as a school board member.

Wittleder, of Maplewood, announced that Monday that she will not seek a second three-year term Nov. 5. and that she will run out her term on or around Jan. 1.

Wittleder did not state why she had decided to leave the two-town board in her nine-paragraph open letter to the community. She did thank "each and every one of you who have been a guiding force in shaping our school district for the better. Your ideas,

your passion and your commitment to our students have been truly inspiring."

Those thanks included fellow board members, "dedicated teachers and staff" and wished "the incoming Superintendent (of Schools Jason Bing) well. Her appreciation for the said classroom level staff and teachers developed when her children entered the district during her 2021-24 term.

She also encourages prospective board of education candidates to apply for petitions before the July deadline.

BLOOMFIELD - A Watsessing Avenue resident told responding Bloomfield Police officers June 6 that she had just arrived to find her car parked in the middle of the avenue instead of her driveway.

She also noticed that her parents' Land Rover, which was usually parked on the same driveway, was missing. Going inside the kitchen, she found its window forced

(Continued on page 15)

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 14)

open and the Land Rover's keys missing. BPD officers, detectives and the shift dispatcher promptly put out an all points bulletin on the Land Rover. The SUV owner had meanwhile, tracked the missing vehicle to Union Township.

Both Union and Bloomfield police found the SUV unoccupied. It was returned to its owners, after it was dusted for fingerprints and combed for evidence.

The presumed car theft suspects, based on how the cars were moved off the driveway, remain at large.

MONTCLAIR - Town Manager Michael Lapolla may well put the currently vacant Montclair Fire Station No. 3's future near the top of his priority list for incoming Mayor Dr. Renee Baskerville and the all-new Municipal Council.

The 1901-built station at 151 Harrison Ave. is well-tended on the outside but has a "Temporarily Closed" sign on its door. Its personnel and equipment, since last July, have been quartered at the Montclair Fire Department Headquarters on Pine Street.

The red brick castle-like building at the northwestern corner of Harrison and Cedar avenues had been housing firefighters who had been responding to calls in the Nishuane Park neighborhood and major clients like the 1950-2006 Montclair Community Hospital. They had also responded to mutual aid calls from West Orange's Watchung Hills section and other adjacent towns.

In 2020, the council allocated \$500,000 for station improvements. The bulk of that fund went to preserving its exterior. Lapolla, in response to Fourth Ward Councilman David Cummings' May 13 query about the station, said that it's being empty would require "another \$700,000 to \$800,000" to bring it up to habitation.

Station 3, also called the Cedar Avenue Firehouse, is not deficient to the township code or safety standards. It is not a designated Montclair historic landmark, although it is featured on several master plans.

A 2021-22 architectural evaluation showed that the building, first constructed for a horse-drawn wagon, was straining under the weight of its 30-ton fire engine and lacked an exercise room and other amenities. There was a discussion and a \$24,950 allocation to Connelly and Hickey AIA to draw up an expansion plan.

That expansion would consume part of the municipal Nishuane Park.

The two African American firefighters, in their 2022 lawsuit against MFD, however said that their reassignment to Montclair's oldest active firehouse was

meant for retribution to their complaints.

BELLEVILLE - Outgoing Superintendents of Schools Dr. Richard Tomko may leave behind a parting gift for Mayor Michael Melham - a 1979 recording of Cliff Richard's "Isn't Funny How We Don't Talk Anymore."

Melham was asked by a public speaker at the Township Council's June 4 meeting if it was true that Tomko had tired three times to meet with the mayor to ask him about ongoing residential development's impact on BPS school enrollment.

Melham said that he did not know of Tomko's attempts and that such a meeting would be moot anyway. The mayor said that, since most of the new apartment housing are studio and one-bedroom units, there would be no new children going to Belleville schools.

Tomko, in late 2023, based his proposed 2024-25 school budget in part on his projected 628 more students over the next decade - 258 from the new developments. That budget was finally drafted by State Monitor Thomas Egan after the Board of Education Trustees, on a May 7 tie vote, failed to pass one.

The final outlay does not include Tomko's sought-for township backing of a \$3.75 million physical improvement bond issue. The council, on Melham's recommendation, voted 4-3 against the co-signing Jan. 23.; Melham said that BPS ought to put that bond up to a voter referendum. Tomko turned to the Essex County Improvement Authority for bond backing.

It is not known that the above, or a dispute with landlord Melham over BPS leasing 355 Union Ave. in 2021-23, are among the factors in Tomko quietly leaving for Garfield Public Schools on July 1.

Melham and Tomko, in earlier times, had forged shared service maintenance agreements between BPS and the Township. The Township, for example, is allowing the district to build a parking garage at the King window shop site at 279 Washington St. in exchange for allocating the otherwise Belleville Middle School deck to reserve a floor for public parking.

NUTLEY - The Nutley Public Schools district, as of June 17, have received a loan from the New Jersey Department of Education to fill their budget's \$7 million gap -- but will it be enough to cover?


Superintendent of Schools Kent Bania announced NJDOE coming to their budget aid at the June 17 Board of Education. The zero-interest loan is to be paid back over the next 10 years.

State educators permitted the loan after a March audit discovered that NPS' 2023-24 has a \$7 million shortfall. Tren-

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ton, however, sent State Monitor Jeanette Makus to Nutley May 7 to diagnose what went wrong and to have veto power over future school budgets for an indefinite time.

Makus, in her initial May report, said that School Businesses Administrator David DiPisa had withdrawn from the current budget's maintenance reserve account and applied it to other budget line items.

"The budget was over-expended but it didn't show," said Makus. "The reserves are gone - there's no place to pull money from. And what has resulted is what exists today."

The school board, that Monday night, approved Mike DeVita, formerly of the Lyndhurst district, as its new SBA. Bania and DeVita were Clifton High School class of 1995 graduates. DiPisa's administrative leave will meanwhile run out June 30.

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