

LOCAL TALK

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25¢

“LET’S TALK FOR THE BETTERMENT OF OUR COMMUNITIES”

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

ESSEX COUNTY • EAST ORANGE • ORANGE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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WCBS NEWSRADIO 880
TO BECOME W R.I.P. PAGE 6

U.S. DOMINATES PARIS OLYMPICS



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U.S. Track and Field superstar Sha'Charri Richardson was among those who represented the country in Paris. Photo Courtesy Team USA

NEWARK POLICE-INVOLVED SHOOTING UNDER PROBE



PAGE 8

NJAG REPORT: 29 LOCAL AREA COPS DISCIPLINED

By Walter Elliott

NEWARK - Police offices in "Local Talk" land, going by the New Jersey Attorney General's Office 2023 Major Law Enforcement Discipline Report released Aug. 2, have had their share or more than their share of disciplining.

The report, released by Attorney General Matthew Platkin, catalogs major discipline actions taken by 167 reporting agencies statewide on 460 officers from June 15, 2020 to Dec. 31, 2023. By "major discipline," the action taken ranges from being suspended at least five days, forfeiting vacation or other accrued time, transference, demotion, resignation or firing.

There were officers from 11 agencies who work in Eastern Essex County who received major discipline. Seven municipal police departments reported to the AG's office plus Essex County's correction, sheriff and prosecutor's offices and the New Jersey Institute of Technology Police.

The 2023 report has the Newark Police Division, with 16 discipline incidents, and the county department of corrections, with 12, as among the "top" or "worst" 10 agencies. Essex County has the second highest volume of reports among New Jersey's 21 counties.

"Local Talk" will be focused on the seven reporting police departments or divisions. Details and reports from the county and



NJ Attorney General Matthew Platkin

college campus agencies are found online. Officers will be listed in alphabetical order.

NEWARK

PO Wali BURKS. Indicted on 17 criminal counts. Accused of failing to intervene and to report a shooting initiated by one of his associates.

PO Luis CONTRARAS. Six day suspension for failing to notify supervisor of a motor vehicle pursuit, failing to activate body camera and pursuit for a stolen auto violation.

PO Jose CRUZ. 10 day suspension for unholstering his firearm and allowing a friend to handle it. Handling led to a round being discharged.

PO Jeanette DEJESUS. Suspension for indictable offense. Accused of using a weapon to

(Continued on page 8)



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Turn
To
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Editorial

Dhiren Shah
Editor-in-Chief

Hello Readers,

The Democratic National Convention is around the corner on Monday August 19, 2024. It is already decided who will be the presidential nominee. For the second time in history, a woman will be contesting for the top job of the United States and the world on a major party ticket. Also, it will be the first time that an Indian and Jamaican and African American heritage woman will be contesting.

Donald Trump was leading President Biden by 2 to 5 points in several different polls. When Kamala Harris entered the race, Trump was initially leading Harris, but as of Tuesday August 13, 2024, Harris is leading by 1.1 percent and with all other candidates she is leading by .8

percent. However, both predictions are within the error margin of 3 to 5 points.

My main concern is which candidate can help the country, the United States of America. In my opinion there are a few main problems: 1. Economy 2. Migration 3. World affairs 4. Middle class 5. Affordability for the poor and working middle class 6. Cheap politics 7. Nepotism 8. The law 9. The appointment system of the judges 10. PAC system to control the politicians.

In 1943, the U.S. Congress banned direct contributions by unions to political candidates. They found an alternative and made PACs (Political Action Committees) to keep control over politicians.

In 1984, the budget for presidential candidates was \$77.2 million for the Republicans and \$149.2 million for the Democrats. In 1996, it turned to \$304.25 million for the Republicans and \$128.93 for the Democrats. In 2008, it was \$625.05 for the Republicans and \$1,135.6

billion for the Democrats. In 2016, it was \$668.13 million for Republicans and \$833.85 for Democrats. In 2020, it was \$828.68 for Republicans and \$3,155.01 billion (Over 3 billion dollars is the highest so far). Finally, in 2024, Harris and her supporters have raised \$497 million, while Trump and his supporters have raised \$471 million so far.

The election will be very interesting this year. However, it will be good to watch the Democratic National Convention next week. The democrats, who were divided a few weeks ago, has stuck together like a glue. In the same way, the Republicans are gathered under the leadership of Donald Trump. Let's wait and watch for the political turn after the DNC.

Trump attended a Libertarian Convention in May 2024. He promised to have one Libertarian in his Cabinet if elected. GOP Vice Presidential Nominee J.D. Vance has said that out of 18 million illegal immigrants, they

may deport one million immigrants in the first year. It will be a lot of money saved for the United States of America. New York City's mayor has booked rooms at hotels and motels in Rockland County, NY, spending \$800,000 plus of taxpayer money. Rockland County denied the idea of undocumented immigrants staying in the county. NY will lose over \$800,000 of taxpayer money received from the federal government.

Ukraine, with the full support of the Biden administration, has captured a few towns within Russia. For the first time, it was different, as Russia was used to attacks in Ukraine. In the same way, Israel killed Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh outside of its borders. Now the whole world is watching Iran, and when they will attack Israel. A U.S. submarine is already on the way to protect Israel.

Have a wonderful week.

I'll talk to you next week.

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WEATHER FOR THE WEEK

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



OP-ED BY DR. ADIL MANZOOR

Vitamin D Supplementation: Balancing the Benefits and Risks

Ever heard the advice to bask in the midday sun for a few minutes to get a super dose of vitamin D? That's certainly good advice, as vitamin D is associated with a wide range of health benefits, from strengthening your bones to improving heart health and elevating mood. And, yes, you can indeed get vitamin D

from sunshine.

Trust me, I wouldn't want to bore you with the deep chemistry of the biochemical process. Still, it is important to know that the ultraviolet (UV) B rays from the sun break a cholesterol ring in the skin, which then rearranges to produce vitamin D. It is, therefore, only fitting that vitamin D is dubbed the sunshine vitamin.

However, it's not just sunshine and blue skies with vitamin D, as researchers have identified a few risks that exist with its supplementation. What are these risks? How significant are they? Do they outweigh the benefits of the vitamin? Let's find out together. Before that, though, a brief introduction of our guest of honor for today - vitamin D.

There is a total of 13 vitamins and they serve different functions and contribute to several bodily processes. When many people hear about vitamins, they think of them as a luxury in diet and the body, but that could not be further from the truth. Vitamins are crucial to good health, and some vitamin deficiencies can be potentially fatal.

Of the 13 vitamins we have, vitamin D is the one most associ-



ated with strong bones and the prevention of osteoporosis. This is because the vitamin helps the body absorb calcium, which is one of the primary building blocks of bones. Beyond the role of vitamin D in our skeletal system, the vitamin is also important in fostering good mental, muscular, cardiovascular, and immune health.

I really cannot overemphasize how essential it is in the body. In fact, when there is a deficiency of the vitamin, several unpalatable experiences like peripheral neuropathy (pins and needles), bone pain, muscle pain, fatigue, muscle weakness, hair loss, frequent illness, and, of course, brittle bones and increased risks of fractures. Although we all need vitamin D, this message is even more consequential in adults.

It is no secret that the bones of the elderly are weaker than younger adults, especially in older women, because of the depletion in estrogen levels after menopause. So, the logical conclusion, then, is that adults should take more vitamin D to combat the effects of depleting estrogen and weakening bones, right? Eh, not so fast. This is the same answer to whether it is feasible to increase supplementation to younger adults and children, too - not so fast.

As good as vitamin D is, there is a major risk associated with its supplementation - vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin. I didn't tell you this earlier, but vitamins can be divided into two broad groups: water-soluble and fat-soluble. As the name very much implies, the water-soluble vitamins dissolve in the body's water content, while the fat-soluble vitamins are absorbed by

fat. The four fat-soluble vitamins are vitamins A, D, E, and K, while vitamins B and C are water-soluble. How is this a problem?

When you take more fat-soluble vitamins than your body needs, the vitamins simply accumulate in your body's tissues. If you keep loading up on these vitamins, they may reach toxic levels and cause several adverse effects. In the case of vitamin D, the symptoms you may experience include nausea and vomiting, kidney stones, appetite loss, excessive urination and thirst, confusion, and pain. If vitamin D supplementation increases still, it approaches dangerous levels in the body and can affect regular heartbeat and even lead to death.

This holds even more weight with adults, as they tend to have higher fat content as they age. So, it may very well be a case of moving from frying pan into fire if vitamin D supplementation is wrong. There's a pretty easy fix, though.

The skin regulates the amount of vitamin D you get from the sun, so you can never overdose on naturally produced vitamin D. That is your cue to work out more outdoors in the midday sun. Plus, if you eat a well-balanced diet (typically fortified with vitamin D) consisting of any of these - soy milk, fatty fish, fish liver oil, beef liver, egg yolk, and some mushrooms - you will have little need for supplementation.

However, for people living in northern states with long winter months, older adults, people with darker skin, obese people, and people with liver conditions, you may need extra vitamin D supplementation. It has to be done very carefully, though. Do not

(Continued on page 5)

Non-healing Foot Wounds? Diabetic Foot Ulcers?



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SPORTS WRAP

By William Hathaway, Jr.

The latest Olympiad has come to a close, with some history, heartbreak, and a bit of controversy.

First, the overall medal count saw the United States lead all nations with 126 medals - 42 Bronze, 44 Silver, and 40 Gold. China tied the U.S. in the Gold count of 40, but was well behind in the overall count at just 91. The "Bronze" medal for most medals barely went to Great Britain at 65, with host nation France just behind at 64.

The French had two shots at Gold on the basketball court, but settled for Silver in each one. The men's basketball title game saw the U.S. win their 5th in a row, winning 98-87. Stephen Curry went off in the first Olympics run of his career, scoring 24 points in the finale and nailing a dagger in the final minute that put the game away.

For the ladies, heartbreak was on the menu, as France lost 67-66 after their final basket was just inside the three point line. The U.S. women won their eighth straight Gold in the event. American superstar A'ja Wilson had 21 points and 10 rebounds in the clincher.

As for the history makers, Katie Ledecky continued her dominance in the pool, leaving Paris with two more Gold medals. Like Ledecky, Caeleb Dressel added two Gold to his career tally as well. On the

pitch, a young but hungry U.S. women's soccer team stunned everyone and took home the Gold, beating Brazil 1-0 in the finale.

Of course, the featured event is the Gymnastics portion. Simone Biles became the most decorated U.S. gymnast of all time, adding three more Gold to her resume along with a Silver. However, there was some controversy, as teammate Jordan Chiles initially finished fifth, but then finished third and with the Bronze on appeal, but then finished fifth again after the appeal was disallowed.

Also doing the Olympics and hip-hop no favors was the break dancing competition, which had people wondering why baseball and softball were excluded this time around.

Finally, the closing ceremonies featured a handoff to Los Angeles, who will host the 2028 Olympic Games.

In preseason football, the New York Giants opened up against the Detroit Lions at MetLife Stadium last week, winning the contest 14-3. Leading NY was Eric Gray with two touchdowns. Also, the Jets defeated the Washington Commanders 20-17.

Finally, the New Jersey high school football season is almost upon us. The Orange Tornadoes will soon be on the road to play West Orange in the old Northern Hills Conference battle.

THE DOCTOR IS IN (Continued from page 4)

hesitate to contact your healthcare provider for guidance before using vitamin D supplements. Better safe than sorry.

This article was written by Dr. Adil Manzoor, DO, a Board-Certified Internist; Board certified Pediatrician who works as a Hospitalist and Emergency Room Physician. He is also the current President of Garden State Street Medicine, a non-profit organization whose sole purpose is to provide free preventive and acute urgent care services for the homeless.

He is also the co-founder of his own unique medical practice, Mobile Medicine NJ; House Call Doctors. He is also currently pursuing an Executive MBA and a Master's of Science in Healthcare Leadership at Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management and the Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences.

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- <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/VitaminD-Consumer/>
- <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/taking-too-much-vitamin-d-can-cloud-its-benefits-and-create-health-risks>



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UNITED STATES



WCBS NEWSRADIO 880 TO BECOME W R.I.P.

One of the most prestigious news outlets in the region has endured one of the worst things that could happen in the field - becoming the news rather than reporting it.

That is because on Aug. 12, broadcast powerhouse Audacy announced that WCBS Newsradio 880 would cease operations on Aug. 25. The 880 AM frequency will be taken over by Good Karma Brands (GKB) and assigned to ESPN New York.

The WCBS call letters - pending approval from the FCC - will be retired, and replaced with WHSQ. The station will still be the exclusive radio home of the New York Mets.

Some local listeners, like those at "Local Talk," first heard of the news on WCBS 880's sister station, 1010 WINS on 92.3 FM. The 92.3 FM frequency came after that spot on the dial was occupied by everything, from classic rock to pop music to even talk radio at one point.

"New York has always been proudly unique in supporting two all-news radio brands, but the news business has gone through significant changes," said Chris Oliviero, New York Market President, Audacy.

"The headwinds facing local journalism nationwide made it essential to strategically reimagine how we deliver the news for the most impact. WCBS 880 has been one of the most respected

radio stations in history, with a legacy cemented by the hundreds of world-class journalists, on and off the air, who willed it into existence over the decades. If it happened in New York or the world, you heard about it on WCBS 880.

"Today, 1010 WINS@92.3 FM, equally iconic, moves forward as New York's only 24/7 all-news station with the best distribution platform, the largest audience and the most recognized brand in the industry. All-news is a pillar of Audacy and this decision, though difficult, fortifies that leadership position for generations to come."

To honor WCBS 880's meaningful impact, the station will broadcast a live commemorative special, "WCBS 880 News: The People, the Moments, and the Events that Shaped our Lives," on August 22 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. ET. The special, which will air during the "Newline" program helmed by former WINS reporter Brigitte Quinn, will include interviews and historical clips.

WCBS Newsradio 880 debuted in August 1967, two years after WINS, its formal rival. When the clock strikes 12:01 a.m. on Aug. 26, 1010 WINS on 92.3 FM will stand as the longest running 24 hour news outlet in the Greater New York area.

MASS SHOOTING UPDATE

Information recent as of 8-13-2024 at 12 p.m.

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

- Total Mass Shootings: 396
- Total Dead: 478
- Total Wounded: 1654
- Shootings Per Day: 1.75
- Days Reached in Year 2024 as of August 13: 226

MIDDLE EAST SCHOOL ATTACK CONDEMNED

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has deplored a deadly weekend attack on a Gaza school-turned shelter, his Of-

fice said on Aug. 12.

"The Secretary-General condemns the continued loss of life in Gaza, including women and children, as we witness yet another devastating strike by Israel on the Al-Taba'een school in Gaza City, sheltering hundreds of displaced Palestinian families, with scores of fatalities, amidst continued horror, displacement, and suffering in Gaza," said UN Deputy Spokesperson Farhan Haq.

The incident occurred on Aug. 9 and at least 100 people were killed, according to international media reports, which cited the Gaza health authorities. At the time of the attack, people were performing the dawn prayer at the school's prayer hall.

Casualties were brought to Al Ahli hospital - among the 16 hospitals that remain only partially functional in the Gaza Strip - which is "overwhelmed by this mass casualty incident amid shortages of medications, clean water and beds," Mr. Haq told journalists.

Humanitarian partners on the ground helped families who returned to the school, providing drinking water, food parcels, hot meals, hygiene kits and clothing, as well as psychological first aid and psychosocial support activities for children and their parents.

According to the UN human rights office, OHCHR, this is at least the 21st strike on a school, each serving as a shelter, since July 4, which have resulted in at least 274 fatalities, including women and children.

Mr. Haq said the Secretary-General was dismayed to see that provisions of UN Security Council resolution 2735 (2024) remain unimplemented.

Adopted in June, the resolution proposes a comprehensive three-phase ceasefire deal between Hamas and Israel to end the war in Gaza, now in its 10th month.

The first phase would include an immediate, full and complete ceasefire with the release of hostages; the return of the remains of some hostages who have been killed, the exchange of Palestinian prisoners, withdrawal of Israeli forces from

populated areas in Gaza, the return of Palestinian civilians to their homes, and the safe and effective distribution of humanitarian assistance at scale throughout the enclave.

The second phase calls for a permanent end to hostilities in exchange for the release of all other hostages in Gaza and a full withdrawal of Israeli forces from the area, while phase three would see the start of a major multi-year reconstruction plan for Gaza and the returns of the remains of any deceased hostages still there to their families.

Mr. Haq said the UN chief welcomes the mediation efforts of the United States, Egypt, and Qatar leaders, and urges both sides to rejoin negotiations and conclude the ceasefire and hostages release deal.

Mr. Guterres reiterated his urgent appeal for an immediate ceasefire and the unconditional release of all hostages, while again underscoring the need to ensure both the protection of civilians and unimpeded and safe humanitarian access into and across Gaza.

"The Secretary-General underlines that international humanitarian law, including the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precautions in attack, must be upheld at all times," he concluded.

EUROPE



DOZENS ARRESTED IN UK PROTESTS

Over 150 people arrested in connection with violent protests have already faced their day in court, data released August 9th has revealed.

The rapid action taken across the justice system by police, prosecutors and those working in courts has led to 118 of those individuals being remanded into custody in a collective effort to keep communities safe and free from further violence.

(Continued on page 13)

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ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE INVESTIGATING POLICE-INVOLVED SHOOTING IN NEWARK

TRENTON - The Attorney General's Office is investigating a police-involved shooting that occurred on August 12, 2024, in Newark. One adult male sustained a gunshot wound. His identity is not being released at this time.

According to the preliminary information, at approximately 8:34 p.m., two uniformed officers from the Newark Police Department in a marked patrol vehicle noticed a reportedly stolen SUV parked in the area of Clinton Place near the intersection of Hawthorne Avenue in Newark. Upon investigating, they observed an adult male seated in the parked vehicle's front pas-

senger seat. The officers approached the vehicle and, as they were detaining the passenger, a second male exited a nearby store, entered the vehicle, and got behind the wheel.

Officers then attempted to detain the male who had gotten into the driver's seat. A struggle ensued, and the vehicle accelerated, initially backward and then forward. One police officer fired his duty weapon, striking the driver. The vehicle struck the officers' patrol car, which was positioned at an angle in front of the reportedly stolen vehicle. The vehicle then traveled forward across the street, onto a sidewalk, and crashed into a

building and then into unoccupied vehicles parked along the street.

Officers provided medical aid to the driver, who was later transported to University Hospital in Newark, where he is in critical but stable condition. Two police officers were also transported to University Hospital, where they were treated for minor injuries and released.

N.J.S.A. 52:17B-107(a)(2) requires the Attorney General's Office to conduct investigations of a person's death that occurs during an encounter with a law enforcement officer acting in the officer's official capacity or while the decedent is in custody.

It requires that all such investigations be presented to a grand jury to determine if the evidence supports the return of an indictment against the officer or officers involved. Attorney General Law Enforcement Directive 2019-4 (the "Independent Prosecutor Directive") directs that the Office of Public Integrity and Accountability investigate all incidents involving police use of force that result in death or serious bodily injury likely to result in death.

The investigation is ongoing and no further information is being released at this time.

NJAG REPORT

(Continued from page 1)

choke a victim during a domestic violence incident.

PO Erica DONALD. Nine day suspension for becoming argumentative and belligerent while being corrected by her supervisor. The belligerence led to an argument and physical altercation with a fellow officer.

PO Omar GALLARDO. 20 day suspension for taking an extra 23 days off after being put on Medical Certification in May 2023.

PO Samuel GONZALEZ. 15 day suspension for violating Use of Force Policy; chest bumping the complainant.

PO Terrell GRACE. 30 day suspension for using InfoCop to access a civilian's phone number, after having a brief interaction with same, and trying to contact her by Instagram.

PO Aleem JOHNSON. 8 day suspension for being photographed asleep in a marked patrol car and in full uniform.

PO Ricardo MENDIETA. 44 day suspension for a domestic violence that escalated into a physical altercation, resulting in his arrest.

PO Richard PACELLI. 30 day suspension for losing firearm while investigating motor vehicle accident scene. 15 day suspension for mistakenly removing a civilian in a suspected stolen car, pursuing another car

solely on a motor vehicle violation.

SGT Richard PISANO. 10 day suspension for failing to submit a pursuit investigation as instructed by a Captain.

PO Luis SANDOVAL. 30 day suspension for being excessively absent after a police surgeon instructed him to return to work on light duty.

PO Alonso VINUEZA. 15 day suspension for conducting an unauthorized strip search and failing to report thereof.

PO Darne WILLIAMS. 8 day suspension for being photographed asleep in a marked patrol car in full uniform.

EAST ORANGE

SGT. John BOCCHINO. 10 day suspension for using a profanity and applying a chokehold on a handcuffed suspect.

Off. Antione BUGGS. 10 day suspension for neglect of duty. Was School Resource Officer when notified by the disciplinarian's office on a minor's possession of marijuana, drug paraphernalia and a knife. Officer accused of walking into the room, seeing the items and walking out without taking action or notifying his supervisor.

Off. Michael DiGUGLIEMO. 10 day suspension and loss of time for striking a domestic violence suspect, who was fleeing on foot, with his marked patrol car Sept. 9, 2021.

Off. Kendrick HAMLETT.

Six day suspension and loss of time for a female prisoner escaping his custody while at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center 4:33 p.m. Feb. 22, 2023.

Off. Rian HILL. 180 day suspension and loss of time for neglect of duty, unbecoming officer behavior, DWI. Struck two unoccupied vehicles July 9, 2022. Arrested after failing a sobriety test.

Off. Wilbert REGALADO. 180 day suspension, loss of time for actions during, after April 29, 2022 motor vehicle accident. Arrested for DWI, pleaded guilty for reckless driving in exchange for other charges dropped. Failed to notify EOPD of his arrest.

BLOOMFIELD

Off. Brian DiMARCO. 10 day suspension for violating several NJAG and BPD vehicle pursuit guidelines, including not advising his supervisor of the pursuit, direction of travel, speed and reason for pursuit.

Off. Rana KHALID. Six day suspension for failing to report payroll overpayment. He was paid \$18,408.18 on Jan. 1, 2023 instead of \$280. He had reimbursed the township after the overpayment was brought to his attention.

Det. Thomas LUTZ. 20 day suspension for workplace harassment. Hearing officer, after listening to the complainant, had his 20 day suspension reduced to five forfeited days and the other

17 days held in abeyance for a year.

ORANGE. Off. Lamar PAYNE. Six day suspension for taking more than his allotted sick time and for a pattern of calling out sick on weekends.

WEST ORANGE

Off. David PREZIOSI. 60 day suspension for neglect of duty: failing to notify his supervisor and Detective Bureau of a residential/motor vehicle burglary, conducting an improper investigation, failing to properly document and drafting three contradictory reports of the incident.

MONTCLAIR

Off. Matthew DOBROWSKI. Terminated. Used a racial epithet in presence of other MPD officers during a March 2022 off-duty PBA event. Hearing officer sustained the administrative charges and recommended his firing from the department.

BELLEVILLE

Lt. Graham KOSHNIK. Five day suspension for providing false information and "all other conduct." Has misled his commanding officer regarding his attendance at a promotional examination.



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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 - A prominent Lower Broadway community institution is calling for Municipal Council intervention to keep the local Burger King owner from converting the fast food restaurant to a Chick-fil-A.

The Central Planning Board unanimously approved the conversion of 2-28 Broadway on June 10 and memorialized its decision on June 24. The plan includes rerouting and doubling the eatery's drive-through lanes to accommodate an anticipated 35 cars per hour.

La Casa de Don Pedro, whose headquarters is practically across Broadway from BK, however, launched a petition on Change.org July 15 "To Keep Chick-fil-A Out of Newark, NJ." La Casa cited traffic and ideological concerns for calling in the council.

La Casa disputes Chick-fil-A's traffic study against Essex County and Newark crash data. The Broadway-Broad Street and Clay Street intersection was the site of 84 car collisions, mostly sideswipes and rear-enders, 2010-21. There were also "12 other types of accidents, including cars hitting pedestrians and cyclists."

Additionally, La Casa added that it had never been told of the site plan public hearing although it is within the 200-foot neighbor notification radius.

La Casa also cited Chick-fil-A's corporate headquarters having "a longstanding history of supporting anti-LGBTQIA+ groups and policies which don't

align with our diverse communities and values."

This argument was served to the N.J. Highway Authority and Bloomfield when a Chick-fil-A was planned for the Garden State Parkway's Brookdale South / Connie Chung Service Plaza in 2022. The company, back then, said that it had stopped contributing to said "anti" groups.

IRVINGTON - A township woman, who was babysitting a child that had died while in her care here Feb. 15-19, 2021, was convicted by a New Jersey Superior Court-Newark jury Aug. 9.

The jury's foreperson, after a seven-day trial, told Judge Ronald D. Wigler Friday that they found Claire Gelin, 44, guilty of manslaughter and two counts of endangering the welfare of a minor. Wigler then set an Oct. 7 sentencing date for Gelin and remanded her to the Essex County Correctional Center.

ECPO attorneys asserted that Gelin had physically abused a two-year-old boy while she was babysitting around the clock Feb. 15-19, 2021. Prosecutors said the married mother of two had physically abused the child Feb. 17-18 but did not call 911 until Feb. 19.

EMS technicians who had arrived at the Irvington address that Friday said that the boy was already in cardiac arrest. They rushed him to Newark Beth Israel Medical Center, where the toddler was later declared dead.

Gelin told ECPO detectives that the child's injuries were self-induced. Medical examiners contradicted her statements. She faces up to 10 years' imprisonment or 8.5 years under the No Early Release Act, on the manslaughter count alone.

EAST ORANGE / SOUTH ORANGE / MAPLEWOOD

The swift rainstorms that raked through the "Local Talk" area the week of Aug. 6-9 brought a large tree down on two houses in East Orange Aug. 8 and called off Aug. 6's National Night Out events in South Orange and Maplewood, among other damage.

The "Local Talk" area was visited by three separate systems that Tuesday, Thursday and Friday that brought intense wind gusts and bands of rain. The ac-

cumulation caused the ground to oversaturate, prompting falling trees.

Residents of two houses along Roosevelt Avenue in the Fifth Ward's Presidential Heights section said that the curbside tree, which may be as old as the houses, toppled onto their three-story structures when the storm band passed through that Thursday.

City responders and a PSE&G utility truck arrived to survey the damage. Although the tree's limbs fell back onto one of the houses' back porch, there was no structural damage. There were no injuries or power outages reported.

Municipal officials were meanwhile looking to reschedule what would have been their participation in that Tuesday's 41st National Night Out. South Orange postponed its 5 p.m. NNO Movie Night at Flood's Hill while Maplewood and Orange set back their activities. All three towns' new dates were not posted as of press time.

Friday's stormfront - a remnant of Hurricane Debby that coursed through Florida, the Carolinas, western Pennsylvania and New York's Finger Lakes region - seeped through the Bloomfield Public Library's 1968 building's roof. Their 12 public computer terminals were off that day due to the moisture.

ORANGE - Property owners here may be anticipating or dreading what their next quarterly bills will look like in the wake of the City Council's Aug. 7 Budget Amendment virtual public hearing.

The council, in a 5-2 split vote at 7:33 p.m. that Wednesday, approved adding \$5 million to the 2024 Calendar Year Municipal Budget. The \$5 million will be raised from the remaining quarterly tax bills at an estimated average of 3.2 percent.

The "Why the extra \$5 million?" question was not directly answered. There was \$3.5 million in police and fire overtime that has been recorded since Jan. 1.

Finding a document outlining the budget increase amendment resolution was not immediate. That document was not posted on neither the city nor the council's websites. While the meeting notice was posted on the

council's site Aug. 5, it was not on the city's official site; some Facebook posters said that the said notice was not posted with at least 48 hours advance notice.

Both websites carried notices and agenda for the July 15 and 31 budget hearings - where no budget amendment resolution was discussed.

The amendment's increase marks the 11th straight year of property tax hikes averaging 6.59 percent. A public outcry had prompted the then-Mayor Eldridge Hawkins, Jr. Administration from making an 18 percent increase in 2011.

West Ward Councilwoman Quantavia Hilbert and South Ward Councilwoman Jamie Summers-Johnson, for the record, voted against the amendment. Council President Adrienne Wooten, Council Vice President/North Ward Councilwoman Tency Eason, East Ward Councilman Kerry Coley and at-large councilmen Wheldon M. "Monty" Montague III and Clifford Ross approved the measure.

WEST ORANGE - If one wants to do business with the township's chief financial officer this month, one will be meeting Victor Buono. Township elders hired Buono as Interim CFO by the Town Council to succeed the retired John G. Gross at their July 23 meeting. His contract is for \$200 an hour and not to exceed \$50,000.

Just do not take too long to congratulate Buono because he will be making way for the permanent CFO - John Ditinyak - on Aug. 29.

Ditinyak needed this month to help Roselle, where he has been CFO since January, find a successor. Ditinyak - when not running his own Ditinyak Group consultancy from Belleville - had been CFO and/or Treasurer for Orange, Bloomfield and Nutley going back to July 2011. His employment agreement runs until Aug. 31, 2028.

This is the arrangement the interim business administrator - Police Chief James Abbott - put to Mayor Susan McCartney and the council July 23. Gross' last official day was Aug. 1; he had tendered his retirement notice April 1 and had been using up his unused time since June 1.

(Continued on page 15)



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DOMINICAN NATIONALS EXTRADITED TO FACE GRANDPARENT SCAM CHARGES IN NEW JERSEY

NEWARK - Three residents of Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic, were extradited to the United States last week and made an initial appearance in Newark federal court on charges relating to their participation in a sprawling "grandparent scam" that defrauded elderly Americans out of millions of dollars.

Juan Rafael Parra Arias, aka "Yofre," 41; Miguel Angel Vasquez, aka "Miguel Disla," 24; and Jose Ismael Dilone Rodriguez, 34, are among 11 Dominican Nationals charged in a 19-count indictment filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey and unsealed on April 29. Following their initial appearance, the court ordered the three men detained pending trial. The extradition of Parra Arias, Vasquez, and Dilone Rodriguez follows that of their co-conspirators Rafael Ambiorix Rodriguez Guzman, aka "Max Morgan," 59, and Felix Samuel Reynoso Ventura, aka

"Fili" and "Filly the Kid," 37, who appeared in Newark federal court on July 22 to answer the indictment.

According to the indictment, Parra Arias, Vasquez, Dilone Rodriguez, and their conspirators engaged in a long-running "grandparent" or "family in need of bail" scam against hundreds of seniors across the United States, including in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. Parra Arias is alleged to have led a network of call centers in Santiago, Dominican Republic, while Vasquez and Dilone Rodriguez worked in these centers to recruit co-conspirators in the United States.

As detailed in court filings, members of the conspiracy referred to as "openers" called elderly victims in the United States and impersonated the victims' children, grandchildren or other close relatives. The call centers used technology to make it appear that the calls were coming from inside the United

States. Typically, the victim was told that their grandchild had been in a car accident, was arrested in connection with an accident and needed help.

Once openers tricked victims into believing their loved ones were in dire trouble, others working at the call centers, known as "closers," allegedly impersonated defense attorneys, police officers or court personnel and convinced victims to provide thousands of dollars in cash to help their loved ones. The cash was typically retrieved by couriers - including those recruited and dispatched by Parra Arias, Vasquez, and Dilone Rodriguez - from the victims' homes, or mailed by victims at the direction of the closers.

Parra Arias, Vasquez, and Dilone Rodriguez each face multiple charges, including mail and wire fraud conspiracy, wire fraud, mail fraud, conspiracy to commit money laundering, and money laundering. If convicted, they each face a maximum pen-

alty of 20 years in prison for each count, a maximum fine of \$250,000 for each count of mail and wire fraud and a maximum fine of \$500,000 for money laundering conspiracy and money laundering.

"As alleged, these three defendants played a role in a scheme that relied on the love and devotion of elderly victims in order to cheat them out of millions of dollars," U.S. Attorney Philip R. Sellinger, District of New Jersey, said. "In this 'grandparents' scam,' some of the defendants allegedly impersonated grandchildren in distress, claiming, for example, they had been arrested after a car accident involving a pregnant woman who later miscarried, and they needed immediate cash for bail or a lawyer. Conspirators like Parra Arias, Vasquez, and Dilone Rodriguez allegedly operated the call centers or dispatched couriers to pick up mon-

(Continued on page 14)

FOUR MEN CHARGED IN CONNECTION WITH ARMED ROBBERY OF U.S. POSTAL SERVICE EMPLOYEE

NEWARK - Four Essex County men have been charged in connection with an armed robbery of a U.S. Postal Service employee, U.S. Attorney Philip R. Sellinger announced.

Troy D. Corbett Jr., 28, Dyshawn Williams, 28, and Antwuan Brown, 24, all of Newark, are charged by complaint with conspiracy to commit Hobbs Act robbery. Corbett and Williams are also charged with assaulting or impeding a federal officer using a deadly weapon. Brown and Kariem Stamps, 25, also of Newark, are charged with wire fraud and aggravated identity theft. Corbett is also charged with possession of ammunition by a convicted felon, possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine, and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime. Stamps is also charged with possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

Corbett, Williams, and Stamps were arrested in Newark on Aug. 1, 2024, and made their initial appearances before U.S. Magistrate Judge Leda Dunn Wettre in Newark federal court. Corbett, Williams, and Stamps were detained. Brown was arrested on Aug. 1, 2024, in Mecklenburg, North Carolina, and made an initial appearance before U.S. Magistrate Judge David Keesler in North Carolina federal court. Brown was detained.

According to documents filed in the case and statements made in court: In November 2023, three individuals - including Corbett and Williams - robbed a U.S. Postal Service

employee at gunpoint in Newark. The assailants stole the victim's cell phone, keys, and wallet - including a credit card and debit card. The robbery impeded the victim from delivering mail, which interfered with interstate commerce. Shortly after the robbery, Stamps and Brown used the stolen debit card to make separate purchases. Both transactions passed through servers located outside of New Jersey.

On Jan. 18, 2024, Corbett - who was convicted of felony offenses in 2018 - possessed a distribution quantity of suspected methamphetamine and a pistol loaded with 16 rounds of ammunition that was manufactured outside of New Jersey. On Aug. 1, 2024, Stamps - who was convicted of a felony offense in 2020 - possessed a Glock 29 Gen5 handgun with an extended magazine and approximately 25 rounds of 9-millimeter ammunition.

The counts of conspiracy to commit Hobbs Act robbery and assaulting or impeding a federal employee carry a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The counts of wire fraud carry a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison and a \$1 million fine. The counts of aggravated identity theft carry a mandatory two-year prison sentence. The counts of possession of ammunition or a firearm by a convicted felon carry a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The count of possession with intent to

distribute methamphetamine carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$1 million fine. The count of possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime carries a mandatory five-year prison sentence - which must run consecutively to any other sentence imposed - and a maximum potential penalty of life in prison.

U.S. Attorney Sellinger credited postal inspectors with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service in Newark, under the direction of Christopher A. Nielsen, Philadelphia Division, with the investigation. He also thanked special agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge James E. Dennehy in Newark; deputies of the U.S. Marshals Service, under the direction of U.S. Marshal Juan Mattos Jr.; police officers and detectives of the Newark Police Department, under the direction of Public Safety Director Fritz G. Fragé; officers of the New Jersey State Parole Board, under the direction of Chairman Samuel J. Plumeri Jr.; and special agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Newark Division, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Ross A. Marchetti.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Eli Jacobs of the General Crimes Unit in Newark.

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



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WORLD NEWS

(Cont. from page 6)

More than 500 prison places are also being brought online to boost capacity over the coming weeks and ensure there are cells ready to receive all those sent to custody by the courts.

The data released shows that as of August 8:

- 176 defendants had a first hearing scheduled in the magistrates’ court and 154 have already taken place
- 6 were sentenced in the magistrates’ court
- 50 have been sent to Crown Court for sentencing
- 72 have been sent to Crown Court for trial
- 26 cases will have another hearing in the magistrates’ court

All these numbers will increase over the coming days and weeks as more and more suspects are arrested, charged and sent to court.

Lord Chancellor and Justice Secretary, Shabana Mahmood, said: “The mindless minority who caused and took part in the disgraceful scenes we witnessed were warned they would soon feel the full force of the law. This data shows that many have already seen the inside of a courtroom and will see a stint behind bars too. Where they have gone, more will follow.”

“I would like to pay tribute to the thousands of dedicated professionals across the criminal justice system who have worked tirelessly so such swift action could be taken.”

AFRICA WHO MONITORING MPOX CASES

The UN World Health Organization (WHO) has raised the response to the mpox outbreak in over a dozen African countries to the highest level, mobilizing efforts across the agency.

The continent is witnessing

an “unprecedented” spike in mpox cases since January, with 15 countries reporting outbreaks. As of Aug. 8, 2,030 cases and 13 deaths were confirmed this year, compared with 1,145 cases and seven deaths in the whole of 2023.

Mpox is a viral illness caused by the monkeypox virus (commonly abbreviated as MPXV), a species of the genus Orthopoxvirus.

Common symptoms include a skin rash or mucosal lesions that can last for two to four weeks accompanied by fever, headache, muscle aches, back pain, low energy and swollen lymph nodes.

It can be transmitted to humans through physical contact with someone who is infectious, with contaminated materials, or with infected animals.

Treatment is supportive and aimed at alleviating the symptoms. Various therapeutics that may be effective against mpox are being developed and tested.

According to WHO, the

Democratic Republic of the Congo accounts the highest number (90 percent) of the reported cases, including a new variant that emerged last September. Cases from that variant have also been reported in neighboring Rwanda and Uganda, as well as Kenya, while analysis of cases is ongoing in Burundi.

Matshidiso Moeti, the agency’s Regional Director for Africa, highlighted that the “priority is to rapidly interrupt the transmission of the virus.”

“We are collaborating with partners in support of countries to reinforce outbreak control measures and ensure that communities are central to ongoing efforts to effectively end these outbreaks,” Dr. Moeti said.

WHO is working through country teams and experts deployed on the ground to support national authorities to strengthen key response areas, including disease surveillance, diagnosis testing and clinical care, infection prevention and control.

The Observation Booth



OP-ED By Andrea Dialect

HOODSCAPES

“What the world needs now is love, sweet love” & “Put a Little Love in Your Heart”- Jackie DeShannon

Hello there, how are you today? I find that to be quite a fitting statement because I care, and thus, I care to know. When talking to many of my muses, that question echoes out now even more so. It hits differently now - ironically, we've been talking a lot lately. Usually, I barge into their lives like some kind of Army General barking commands, and they're much obliged. They have become my balance in many ways, just as my children and granny's children have.

I laughed at myself yesterday

as I was chatting with Brent, one of my mentees and another young man we stumbled upon while on our mission to nowhere; he stuck around. This happens quite often when my permanent muse and I are out and about. Most of them always tell me that that's their favorite part - the going nowhere in particular, just hanging out. Taking photos, making videos, laughing, crying, whatever.

Most of the material they never see, nor do they ask. Like a mama bear of sorts, I've always told them that they must become the picture - something they can be proud of. The photo is simply a tool that allows us to see ourselves from the outside. They get it!

That young man we stumbled upon yesterday was a twenty-seven-year-old, and just as



Photos Courtesy Andrea Dialect

Brent does, the two trailed behind like ducklings. When we do the unthinkable people are intrigued by it. The bus stop was a blaze yesterday as we haphazardly created those shots. We come across this so often now that it's mindboggling.

WORLDVIEW

Do me a favor right now, if you can - pull up the melody by Jackie DeShannon or Diana Ross's remake of “What the World Needs Now Is Love.” The challenge is to listen to it often, so that you can feel then see where we really are in our world today, and you will see, I promise, but only if you allow yourself to.

I also smiled to myself yesterday while sitting on that bench with the guys when my father came to mind. ...



Read this article in its entirety at www.localtalkweekly.com and type The Observation Booth, Andrea Dialect and/or Entertainment Section in the search bar. If you are interested in participating in a challenge, project sharing a topic, news or if you have any questions, comments or concerns, send them to localtalkandrea@gmail.com.



SCAM (Cont. from page 12)

ey from the victims. My office is committed to protecting the rights of all victims, and we will relentlessly prosecute those who allegedly target vulnerable seniors to steal their hard-earned savings.”

HSI, SSA-OIG, NYPD and the FBI are investigating the case. The Justice Department's Office of International Affairs provided significant assistance in securing the arrest and extradition from the Dominican Republic of the defendants with assistance from the United States Marshals Service. Justice Department officials also recognized the critical cooperation of the Dominican government in effecting the extradition of Parra

Arias, Vasquez, and Dilone Rodriguez pursuant to the treaty between the two countries.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Carolyn Silane for the District of Jersey and Trial Attorneys Jason Feldman, Joshua Ferrentino and Emily Powers of the Civil Division's Consumer Protection Branch are prosecuting the case.

If you or someone you know is age 60 or older and has experienced financial fraud, experienced professionals are standing by at the National Elder Fraud Hotline at 1-833-FRAUD-11 (1-833-372-8311). This Justice Department hotline, managed by the Office for Victims of Crime, can provide personalized support to callers by assessing the needs of the victim and identifying relevant next steps. Case managers

will identify appropriate reporting agencies, provide information to callers to assist them in reporting, connect callers directly with appropriate agencies and provide resources and referrals, on a case-by-case basis. Reporting is the first step. Reporting can help authorities identify those who commit fraud and reporting certain financial losses due to fraud as soon as possible can increase the likelihood of recovering losses. The hotline is open Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. ET. English, Spanish and other languages are available.

More information about the department's efforts to help American seniors is available at its Elder Justice Initiative webpage. For more information

about the Consumer Protection Branch and its enforcement efforts, visit https://www.justice.gov/civil/consumer-protection-branch?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery. Elder fraud complaints may be filed with the FTC at <https://reportfraud.ftc.gov/> or at 877-FTC-HELP. The Justice Department provides a variety of resources relating to elder fraud victimization through its Office for Victims of Crime, which can be reached at <https://ovc.ojp.gov/>.

An indictment is merely an allegation. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 10)

Municipal governments, by state law, need to have a CFO in town hall.

Abbott's interim position is thanks to the council - and Gross. The longtime BA-CFO had retired from the former position June 1, 2023.

The council was to approve Buono as temporary CFO July 13 but, because of the lack of its members, postponed their approval to July 23.

Buono's presence will remain in the township's computer memory. The VB Logic LLC founder had previously created the Finance Department's software.

BLOOMFIELD - Bloomfield and Montclair riders on the 705 and 709 Community Transport-run bus routes will have to look hard to find any immediate service changes here on Aug. 16-17.

NJTransit, on Aug. 9, announced that they will have Academy Express, of Hoboken, operate those and 18 other local bus routes that CT had been running in Bergen, Passaic and Hudson counties until after Aug. 16. The statewide public transportation carrier will keep fares, routes and hours unchanged for the time being.

Aug. 17-Sept. 1 will be more of a transition period for the 705, 709 and seven other mainly Passaic County routes. Academy will be using their drivers and buses then while still under the new NJTransit contract. Community Transport's nonrenewal, according to its 60-day WARN notice to the state labor department, will affect up to 250 CoachUSA drivers.

The Paramus-based CoachUSA division informed NJTransit on July 10 that it will not pursue renewing its operating contract. Its nonrenewal is part of CoachUSA, as the nation's largest private bus company, holding a bankruptcy liquidation.

NJTransit found itself taking over the Orange-Newark-Elizabeth's Nos. 24, 31 and 44 local buses when Coach announced getting out of that division's service last autumn. Some individual buses and drivers on those routes have since been using Academy's buses and/or drivers - as will be on the 705 Passaic-Wayne (via Montclair State University) and 709 Bloomfield-Paramus routes.

Riders on two other CoachUSA divisions - Community Coach 77 and Northeast Megabus - are still awaiting their fate as of press time. CC77, which runs among Livingston/West Orange, Orange, East Orange and New York City, is also garaged in Paramus. The Renco Group, a New York venture capital firm, has expressed interest in CC77's charter and equipment.

The budget Megabus, until recently, shared the same Elizabeth garage with

Coach USA's ONE division.

MONTCLAIR - Michael LaPolla, who has been Interim Town Manager for a year, will be seeing the end of his service here sooner or later.

The Township Council, under Mayor Sean Spiller's administration, hired LaPolla as an interim manager in August 2023. The former Union County Administrator, who said "I'm here until July (2024)," would leave once a permanent manager was found.

The council, under now-Mayor Dr. Renee Baskerville's administration, is launching a town manager search. LaPolla, however, told a reporter July 23 that he was invited by the new council members (the all new council was sworn in with Baskerville July 1) but declined.

"It was never my intention to stay here," said LaPolla. "While I've enjoyed my stay here, they've decided to do a search. I told them I'll assist in any way and smooth the transition."

It is not like township elders do not like the job LaPolla is doing. The previous mayor and council made him an open-ended full-time employee in January.

The problem is that LaPolla is Montclair's fourth manager in as many years, starting with the firing of Timothy Stafford over harassment and retaliation charges. One interim manager, Tom Hartnett, had died in office.

BELLEVILLE - The roadbuilders' "The Inconvenience is Temporary, the Improvement Permanent" phrase posted on construction sites may be getting a test along five blocks of Washington Street this and next week.

Contractors for the New Jersey Department of Transportation, with permission from Essex County and Belleville elders, are milling and repaving the center two lanes of Washington between Cleveland and Rossmore streets. It is the first such phase that will eventually run Washington's full length in stages here.

Concrete Jersey barriers separating the two center lanes from the rest of the avenue were put in place along four blocks by Aug. 8. Curbside parking is prohibited, turning the curb lanes and right hand lanes on the north and southbound sides into through lane.

The contractors do mean "through lanes." The barriers are preventing motorists and pedestrians from crossing the intersection or jaywalking. There are two midblock openings for construction equipment.


This work will be more than milling and repaving. Former Board of Education Trustee and activist Michael Sheldon has posted NJDOT drawings of the N.J. Route 7 work on Facebook Aug. 13.


The drawings show corner curb cuts, repainted crosswalks and new intersection

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signals. "Local Talk," on Aug. 13, had noticed an electrical crew working on the said signals at the William Street intersection.

"Local Talk" will be looking for any NJDOT "town hall" meetings and/or feedback by business owners along the limited access street.

NUTLEY - U.S. Postal Inspection detectives are figuring out why - and who - dumped undelivered mail in dumpsters here behind the Abundant Life Academy July 30.

A resident was passing by the religious school at 390 Washington Ave. that day when he said he saw inspectors taking out the mail from the trash containers and sorting through piles of papers behind.

Inspectors are also examining the rounds of postal workers in or adjacent to Nutley, in the hope that no letter carrier did the dumping. Inspectors had also probed Vote By Mail Ballots that were left in bins - and not put in mailboxes - at two Belleville apartment building lobbies in April 2020.

The abandoned mail, whose dumping is a federal crime, is not connected to Abundant Life school or church, which had moved into the former ITT Avionics building in 1996.

ITT Avionics, best known for its 300-foot-tall research tower, had its campus built on a former country club here and in Clifton 1947-96. Part of the Nutley property became the Cambridge Heights townhouses. The Clifton Commons shopping center stands on the Clifton parcel.

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