

LOCAL TALK

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OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

ESSEX COUNTY • EAST ORANGE • ORANGE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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TICKET VENDING MACHINES STILL NOT TAKING CARDS

PAGE 8

TWO ARRESTED IN \$10 MILLION NEWARK WATER LINE REPLACEMENT SCAM

By Walter Elliott

NEWARK - The chief executive officer of a construction company and his foreperson are facing federal charges since Oct. 3 for allegedly defrauding the City of Newark \$10.2 million for its part in the 2019-21 Lead Service Line Replacement Program.

U.S. Attorney Philip Sellinger announced that Thursday here that Michael P. Sawyer, 57, of Burlington, and Latronia "Tee" Sanders, 55, of Roselle were respectively arrested and charged on a count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud. They each face a potential 20-year maximum sentence in a federal prison plus between \$250,000 and twice the gross loss suffered by the victims should they either plead or are found guilty and are sentenced by a U.S. Magistrate Judge.

Sawyer and Sanders, as officers of JAS Group Enterprises, Inc., are accused of failing to replace lead water service lines between Newark water department mains and customer water lines with copper lines as per their contract with the city. They had taken pictures of copper lines put in place at other sites and passed them off as their own replaced lines to the city.

The Princeton-company

bills itself on its website as a contractor and subcontractor in the Newark LSLRP. It said that it had served "on different phases of the project to replace over 5,000 service lines in Newark."

JAS received a \$10.2 million emergency services subcontract from the city as its part of the \$170 million LSLRP. \$120 million thereof came from Essex County Improvement Authority bonds, which city taxpayers are paying back to the ECIA 2019-49.

"As our complaint alleges, Sawyer and Sanders worked for the company hired by the city to replace lead pipes but, instead, intentionally left lead pipes in the ground," said Sellinger. "By causing misleading photographs and verification documents to be submitted, Sawyer and Sanders concealed that they intentionally didn't replace the lead pipes and defrauded Newark by collecting payment for work they didn't properly perform. Today, we begin the process of holding them accountable."

JAS was one of several companies Newark awarded emergency no-bid contracts to replace 23,190 lead lines found in the city and in parts of Belleville and Hillside served by Newark Water De-

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ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE RECEIVES 2024 HIGHER EDUCATION EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY AWARD

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Essex County College President Dr. Augustine A. Boakye with members of the College's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee. Photo Courtesy ECC



GOTHAM FC SOCCER WINS AGAIN

Photos By Felicia Laguerre Owens

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NEW JERSEY SUES TIKTOK

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Editorial
Dhiren Shah
 Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

First Deputy Mayor of NYC Sheena Wright and Deputy Mayor of Public Safety Mohamed Bahi have resigned. Not long ago, Bahi was charged for using his power to interfere with investigations. Also, Winnie Graco, a long time Mayor's Aide to Mayor Adams has resigned along with Phil Banks. Right now, there are top 10 top positions open in Adams' administration.

New York Governor Kathy Hochul has the power to remove Adams but has not made up her mind to do so. Corruption is affecting politics all over the United States. It is hard to prove

when politicians are using their power for corruption practices. If there is no direct corruption, it is even harder to prove it. We all have to wait and watch until the November 5th election

It is a crucial election when the power of the people is at stake. The politicians are taking away our rights and using their power to shut the mouths of activists. It is not only in Newark or the "Local Talk" area, but also all over.

Once again, I would like to state that the power in the hands of the mayor, county executive, and governor, and letting them appoint judges is a big problem. The council works with the mayor, freeholders (now commissioners) work with County Executives, and the Assembly works with the Governor to accept the suggested judges. In my opinion, the head of the city, county or state can nominate judges, but all the attorneys

should vote to elect the judge, so the judges would not be partial to the politicians.

Only days ago, Hurricane Helene impacted and disrupted the life of many. Within a little over a week, more natural disaster devastation may hit Floridians. Hurricane Milton reached the highest level Category 5, but it will likely be Category 3 when it hits Florida, especially Tampa Bay. After three years, a major hurricane may hit Tampa Bay again. I hope the hurricane subsidies, which will reduce the impact on millions of innocent people.

The election is only four weeks away on November 5, 2024. Both candidates are working very hard to win the hearts of the people. They are placing their advertising mostly in swing states. The seven swing states, Arizona, Nevada, Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Georgia will make

it or break the election. No one has a clear favorite according to the polls. There is under 2 points difference in all seven states, and the margin of error is 3 to 4.5 points. So, it is anyone's game.

Some are favoring Kamala Harris, and some Donald Trump. However, who will benefit the country is the big question. It is a gamble, but we all must decide. Whoever runs the country better in your opinion, I would say vote for them. It is essential for this election; do not miss your vote. This election might break all records. However, over the next four weeks, please listen to both candidates and both vice presidential candidates and vote for the best candidate in your opinion. If your candidate does not win, then at least you don't feel guilty that you did not vote for the candidate of your choice.

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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NEW JERSEY SUES TIKTOK FOR UNLAWFUL PRACTICES THAT HARM YOUTH

Video App Violates New Jersey's Consumer Fraud Act

TRENTON - Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin and the Division of Consumer Affairs announced Oct. 8 that after a multi-year investigation, they are suing social media giant TikTok for deceptive, unconscionable, and abusive business practices that harm the health and safety of New Jersey's youth.

The complaint, which was filed temporarily under seal in the Superior Court of New Jersey, Chancery Division, Essex County, alleges multiple violations of the New Jersey Consumer Fraud Act (CFA). Other Attorneys General are filing similar lawsuits across the country.

"Our investigation shows that TikTok knows about the dangerous effects of its platform on young users, and can mitigate these harms, but has deliberately chosen not to do so," said Attorney General Platkin. "As a parent and as the chief law enforcement officer for New Jersey, I'm here to tell TikTok, as I have told other social media companies in the

past, that our kids are more than just data points to be monetized to advertisers to the detriment of their mental and physical health."

"The ugly truth is that TikTok misrepresents its platform as being safe for young users when, in reality, it is designed to turn a generation of children into social media addicts for TikTok's profit," said Cari Fais, Acting Director of the Division of Consumer Affairs. "Our lawsuit seeks to put an end to this egregious exploitation of New Jersey's children and hold TikTok accountable for its unlawful conduct."

TikTok is owned by Chinese company ByteDance Ltd. In December 2017, ByteDance entered the American market by acquiring Musical.ly, a popular video app for lip-syncing and dancing that later had to pay the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) \$5.7 million to settle allegations that it had illegally collected and used personal information from children without parental consent in violation of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). Despite this prior settlement, in August 2024, the

FTC, along with the Justice Department, filed a federal lawsuit against TikTok for continuing to violate COPPA.

Today, TikTok maintains two platforms: a restrictive one for the Chinese market, and one for the rest of the world, which mainly targets the United States. The complaint alleges various examples of how TikTok engaged in unconscionable, abusive, and deceptive business practices that are designed to hide the true purpose of the video app in the U.S - to encourage excessive, compulsive, and habitual use of the platform by young users to mine their data and sell targeted advertising. The allegations assert that TikTok knew user safety was an issue but misled users and failed to address and remediate features that encouraged compulsive use.

Highlights of the complaint's allegations include, but are not limited to:

TikTok knows that the recommendation system that powers the "For You" video feed incites excessive, compulsive, and habitual use by children.

TikTok populates the "For You" video feed using what it has learned from how a user has engaged with past videos. TikTok then maximizes engagement by using variable rewards to prompt unpredictable dopamine responses in vulnerable young users - the same psychological trick that underlies the addictive nature of slot machines. In addition, TikTok uses multiple features to compel usage of the app, such as filters, autoplay, endless or infinite scroll, TikTok Stories and TikTok LIVE, push notifications, "Likes," comments, and other interactions.

TikTok deceptively advertises the app as safe, well-moderated, and appropriate, despite being aware of parental concerns. Moreover, it misrepresents and conceals the harmful effects of the app and design features.

There is perhaps no better example than the way the company misrepresents its position on safety for children than a recent string of tragedies. In 2021,

reports began to surface of children dying because of the "blackout challenge," after they watched videos teaching them how to asphyxiate themselves.

The company told the press, "At TikTok, we have no higher priority than protecting the safety of our community, and content that promotes or glorifies dangerous behavior is strictly prohibited and promptly removed to prevent it from becoming a trend on our platform." And in 2023, its CEO Shou Zi Chew testified to Congress that "safety, particularly for teenagers, as a top priority for us." But the complaint's allegations assert that TikTok has repeatedly subordinated young users' health and safety to its goal of maximizing profits by prolonging young users' time spent on the platform.

At the same time, TikTok's lack of transparency about its practices and failure to disclose critical information about the platform's risks has prevented families from making truly informed decisions about their children's use of the app.

TikTok disregards the dangers to young users because profit comes first.

Research shows that TikTok use by young users causes harms including dysregulated sleep, trouble completing work and school assignments, and impaired social connections. Other negative effects include loss of analytical skills, memory formation, contextual thinking, conversational depth, empathy, as well as increased anxiety. Teens also report—and research confirms - increased levels of depression, anxiety, self-harm, suicidal ideation, and eating disorders due to social media use.

TikTok deceives New Jersey consumers about the efficacy of its so-called time management tools.

Among other measures, the app claims to have a 60-minute limit for teens. But this so-called "limit" is easily bypassed by reentering a passcode or using other simple workarounds. Despite this "limit" proving to have negligible impact, the company

(Continued on page 12)

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SPORTS WRAP



By William Hathaway, Jr.

This season, the Gotham FC Soccer Team is doing well, winning key games at the right time. Their winning ways continued this past Saturday night at Red Bulls Stadium in Harrison, as the local FC defeated the Bay FC 5-1.

The highlight of the night was Gotham netting 4 goals in

played in her 150th game played in the game.

Before the game, Gotham celebrated women's sports fans outside the stadium. There was a fanfest held for fans outside the stadium. Also at the game was Latin Grammy winner Mireya Ramos and her Band. Finally, Ali Krieger hosted a meet and greet with the fans in the inner plaza at the stadium.

Photos By Felicia Laguerre Owens



14 minutes. First up was Jenna Nighswonger, who scored on a Penalty Kick for the 1-0 lead nine minutes in. Bay would strike back, with Asisat Oshoala tying it in the 18th minute.

Then, after some fine defense that extended into the second half, Gotham blew the doors open. At 70 minutes in, Rose Lavelle gave the home team a 2-1 advantage. Then, Esther Gonzalez scored at 72' and 74', with CeCe Kizer putting a cherry on top at 84' for the win. Team captain Lynn Williams

As for the usual tenant, the New York Red Bulls suffered a tough loss on the road at Atlanta United FC 2-1.

Finally, in the NFL, the Jets went over to London and lost to Minnesota 23-17. Coming back home, they shed excess weight by firing head coach Robert Saleh. On the other side of the world in Seattle, the Giants stunned the Seahawks with a 29-20 win. Big Blue secured the win on a blocked field goal attempt and TD runback.



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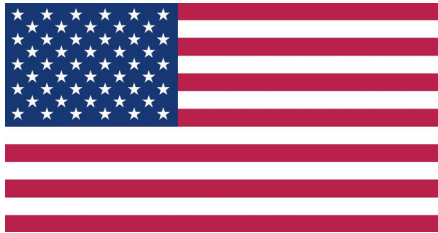
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UNITED STATES



TWO MORE HUMAN CASES OF BIRD FLU

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has confirmed two human cases of H5 bird flu from specimens submitted by California. The cases occurred in people with occupational exposure to infected dairy cows. An investigation led by California is ongoing.

The identification of H5 in people with exposure to infected animals is not unexpected and does not change CDC's risk assessment for the general public, which continues to be low. At this time, there is no known link or contact between the first and second confirmed cases in California, suggesting these are separate instances of animal-to-human spread of the virus.

CDC continues to collaborate closely with California and other state public health officials to support state-run efforts to control the spread of H5N1 from infected animals to humans; California's active monitoring highlights the steps being taken at the state level to lower the risk to farm workers who may be in contact with animals with H5N1. In the coming days, CDC will conduct additional characterization of the viruses, including sequencing, isolating and growing the viruses, if possible.

These are the first human cases of H5 in California, where H5N1 outbreaks among dairy herds were first reported in August 2024. H5N1 bird flu was detected for the first time in cows this year in the United States. The virus is widespread

in wild birds and has caused ongoing outbreaks among poultry in the United States since 2022. It has caused rare, sporadic infections in people who work with infected animals, such as dairy cow workers and poultry workers.

Including this most recent case, 16 human cases of H5 have been reported in the United States during 2024, bringing the total to 17 cases since 2022. Cases during 2024 have been reported in Texas (1), Michigan (2), Colorado (10), Missouri (1) and California (2). Six of the 16 reported human cases have been linked to exposure to sick or infected dairy cows. Nine cases had exposure to infected poultry. The source of infection for the one case in Missouri has not been determined. Serologic testing of contacts of the case in Missouri is ongoing.

CDC has recommendations to protect people against H5N1 bird flu in dairy cattle. These include avoiding contact with wild birds and sick or dead animals and not preparing or eating unpasteurized (raw) milk or raw cheese. If you work with dairy cows or other animals that could be infected with H5N1 bird flu, wear personal protective equipment (PPE) when in contact with (or around) dairy cows, raw milk, other animals, or surfaces and other items that might be contaminated with virus. CDC recently issued updated personal protective equipment guidance (PPE) to prevent H5N1 bird flu infection.

CDC recommends that if you get sick after close contact with infected animals, contact your local health department and a health care provider for testing. Symptoms of H5 include eye redness (conjunctivitis), mild flu-like upper respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches.

MASS SHOOTING UPDATE

Information recent as of 10-8-2024 at 12 p.m.

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

- Total Mass Shootings: 478

- Total Dead: 570
- Total Wounded: 1971
- Shootings Per Day: 1.70
- Days Reached in Year 2024 as of October 8: 282

MIDDLE EAST



In a message to mark one year since the Hamas-led terror attack during which more than 1,250 Israelis and foreign nationals were brutally killed on October 7, UN Secretary-General António Guterres has called on the international community to loudly condemn those "abhorrent acts" which have triggered a shocking wave of violence across the region.

"Today marks one year since the horrific events of October 7th when Hamas launched a large-scale terror attack in Israel killing over 1,250 Israelis and foreign nationals, including children and women," Guterres said.

"More than 250 people were abducted and taken to Gaza, including many women and children.

"The October 7th attack scarred souls - and on this day we remember all those who were brutally killed and suffered unspeakable violence - including sexual violence - as they were simply living their lives.

"This is a day for the global community to repeat in the loudest voice our utter condemnation of the abhorrent acts of Hamas, including the taking of hostages.

"Over the course of the past year, I have met with the families of hostages...learned more about the lives, hopes and dreams of their loved ones...and shared in their anguish and pain.

"I cannot imagine the torture they are forced to endure every day. I demand once again the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

"Until then, Hamas must allow the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit those hostages.

"The 7th of October is naturally a day to focus on the events of that awful day. I express my solidarity with all the victims and their loved ones.

"Since October 7th, a wave

of shocking violence and bloodshed has erupted.

"The war that has followed the terrible attacks of one year ago continues to shatter lives and inflict profound human suffering for Palestinians in Gaza, and now the people of Lebanon.

"I have spoken out about this often and clearly. It is time for the release of the hostages. Time to silence the guns. Time to stop the suffering that has engulfed the region. Time for peace, international law and justice.

"The United Nations is fully committed to achieving those goals.

"In the midst of so much bloodshed and division, we must hold on to hope. Let us honor the memory of the victims, reunite families and end the suffering and violence in the whole Middle East.

"And let us never stop working for a lasting solution to the conflict where Israel, Palestine and all other countries of the region can finally live in peace and dignity and with respect for one another."

AFRICA



FEARS OVER EXECUTIONS IN SUDAN

A UN-designated human rights expert on Sudan has called for the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), along with their allied militias, to take immediate steps to protect civilians in greater Khartoum amid escalating violence and alarming reports of summary executions.

The warning on Oct. 3 comes as the SAF launched a major offensive last month to regain control of key areas currently held by the RSF. The two armies led by rival generals have been locked in a brutal power struggle since April 2023.

The fighting has driven more than 11 million people from their homes in Sudan, including around 2.9 million forced into neighboring countries as refu-

(Continued on page 7)

WORLD NEWS

(Continued from page 6)

gees. Together with climate shocks and devastating disasters, the fighting has destroyed countless livelihoods, plunging the country into a deep hunger crisis.

According to the UN human rights office, OHCHR, the latest offensive - which started on Sept. 25 - has involved SAF airstrikes and artillery targeting RSF positions, particularly around major entry points to the capital Khartoum, including the strategically important Halfaya Bridge.

These attacks have reportedly resulted in dozens of civilian casualties and severe damage to essential infrastructure.

Radhouane Nouicer, the Expert designated by the UN High Commissioner for Human on the situation in Sudan, said the escalation in greater Khartoum "echoed the horrors" of the initial period of the conflict in April 2023.

It could result in a large number of civilian casualties among people trapped next to strategic locations, serious human rights violations and massive displacement, he warned.

As fighting rages, the UN-designated expert highlighted disturbing reports of the summary execution of dozens of young men, particularly from the Halfaya neighborhood in Khartoum-North (Bahri). Up to 70 young men are believed to have been killed in recent days.

Allegedly, these executions were carried out by SAF forces and the Al-Baraa Bin Malik Brigade, a militia that has voiced support for the SAF.

"Videos circulating in media have shown the bodies of young men, purportedly killed based on suspicion of affiliation or collaboration with the RSF. This is beyond despicable and contravenes all human rights norms and standards," the expert said.

One video reportedly showed armed men in SAF uniforms stating they are from Khartoum-North and that they had killed six men accused of looting.

Mr. Nouicer called for all parties to respect their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights laws, emphasizing the need to protect civilians from arbitrary executions and violence.

He also urged a swift, independent investigation into the killings, with those responsible being held accountable under international standards.

"Even in war, there are rules," Mr. Nouicer said, stressing that impunity for such acts must end immediately.

**HAITI
GANG LEAVES 70 DEAD**

An attack by a notorious gang in the town of Pont Sondé, Haiti, left at least 70

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people dead on Oct. 3, after gunmen armed with automatic rifles opened fire, a spokesperson for the UN human rights office, OHCHR, said on Oct. 4.

Among the victims at the hands of the so-called Gran Grif gang were 10 women and three infants.

"As the attacks unfolded, gang members reportedly set fire to at least 45 houses and 34 vehicles, forcing a number of residents to flee," said Thameen Al-Kheetan in a statement released in Geneva.

He called for a "prompt and thorough in-

vestigation" into the attack, for those responsible to be held to account and guaranteed reparations for the victims and their families.

The attack comes in the wider context of indiscriminate gang violence across Haiti, leading to an alarming escalation of human rights violations and large-scale internal displacement.

Over 700,000 people have been forced to flee their homes, making Haiti the country with the largest number of displacements globally due to crime-related violence.

(Continued on page 12)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

The Housing Authority of the City of East Orange (EOHA) is requesting proposals from qualified Computer Consultants and Vendors for:
COMPUTER CONSULTING AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES

PROJECT # 24-COM-RFP-02

Proposals will be received at the EOHA's offices at 160 Halsted Street, East Orange, NJ 07018, no later than 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, October 30, 2024. All proposals will be sealed in an envelope marked –

“PROPOSAL – COMPUTER CONSULTING AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES”.

All proposals must be made in accordance with the proposal format included in the RFP. A copy of the RFP with the evaluation criteria to be used to select the successful proposer and complete instructions for submitting the proposal can be obtained at the EOHA's office at the above address by calling 973-766-8896

or email your request to dsimpkins@eoha.org.

Wilbert O. Gill, PHM

Executive Director

POOL TABLE FOR SALE

East Orange Housing Authority (EOHA) has a one-piece slate pool table for sale “AS IS”. Bids will be accepted in writing through Wednesday, October 30, 2024, 3PM by emailing Duangrat Simpkins at dsimpkins@eoha.org, or via mail to East Orange Housing Authority at 160 Halsted Street, East Orange, NJ 07018, ATTN: Duangrat Simpkins.

The highest bidder(s) shall make payment by certified check, company check or money order payable to East Orange Housing Authority. Payment in full is due at time of pick-up of the pool table.

Bidders are welcome to view the pool table on Monday through Friday between 9 am to 4 pm. For more information, please call 973-766-8896 Ext. 10.

ONE WEEK LATER - TICKET VENDING MACHINES STILL NOT TAKING CARDS AT NEWARK PENN STATION

By Lev D. Zilbermints

NEWARK - A week after "Local Talk" reported about a major malfunction, Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) are still not accepting credit/debit cards. While there is a solution to this problem, NJ Transit has been slow in implementing it.

Three purchasing attempts from TVMs, zero success.

On Monday, October 7, 2024, "Local Talk" witnessed at least three instances of commuters trying to purchase tickets from TVMs in the Newark Penn Station waiting room. In all three cases, commuters came up empty-handed. The TVMs in the waiting room are No. 0140, 0141 and 0142. They are located right at the end of the NJ Transit ticket agent windows, and opposite the passenger benches.

Last Monday, Sept.30, as reported by Local Talk, TVMs 0140 and 0142 did not take credit card/debit cards, while 0141 was completely broken. This week, an incremental progress, if it can be called that, was made. TVM 0141 was now taking cash, but not credit or debit cards.

"Local Talk" saw a Hispanic female commuter trying to purchase tickets from TVM 0140 using credit card. The commuter had no luck with her purchase attempt. She succeeded in finally purchasing tickets from NJ Transit Ticket Agent Window #4. These windows are manned by NJT agents who take cash. The card readers at these windows work better than the Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs).

Why? The reasons are explained later in this article.

A second, male commuter tried using TVM 0141. The man tried at least twice using his credit card in the pinpad. He fared no better than the first commuter. The TVM would take cash, but not credit or

debit cards.

A third commuter tried TVM 0142. He fared no better than the first two commuters before him. "Local Talk" witnessed how the commuter realized the machine would not accept credit/debit cards, and left.

How the problem came to be.

There was a time when many transactions were done with cash or checks. Since the advent of credit cards in the 1950s, more business has been done via credit/debit cards. This is especially true of the 21st century, when most people do not carry large sums of money with them. Instead, most people rely on credit/debit cards, or plastic, in slang, to make purchases.

Newark Penn Station has at least five (5) automated teller machines (ATMs) where commuters can withdraw their money. That said, it is still a major departure from normal routine for a commuter to go to an ATM, withdraw cash, then buy tickets from the TVM. This fact alone demonstrates how much commuters at Newark Penn Station and other places depend on credit cards. As seen on September 30, if TVMs do not accept credit cards, it causes a major disruption for those commuters who use credit cards more often than cash.

Statement by NJ Transit about Ticket Vending Machines upgrades

NJ Transit states in its own, publicly available documents, that TVMs twice underwent upgrades, once in 2013 and again in 2020-2021. The second upgrade eliminated dollar coins, which were heavy and difficult to carry around. Instead, the TVMs now dispense paper money.

Below is a November 8, 2021 statement by NJ Transit about "the installation of 558 new, modernized

ticket vending machines (TVMs) throughout the system."

"NJ TRANSIT has completed the installation of 558 new, modernized ticket vending machines (TVMs) throughout the system, offering faster transaction times and contactless payment options.

"These new customer-friendly TVMs - now installed systemwide - represent just one aspect of a complete modernization of NJ TRANSIT's entire fare collection system including new handheld mobile devices for train crews, new on-board bus validators, and many new mobile ticketing options," said NJ TRANSIT President & CEO Kevin S. Corbett. "All of these methods include 'contactless' fare payment options, which have proven especially welcome and popular with customers returning to our system as we emerge from the pandemic."

NJ TRANSIT customers now can purchase tickets using contactless cards and mobile wallet applications and will no longer need to insert debit/credit cards into the machine. The machines also have improved functionality, with faster printers and new displays providing customers with important travel information and advisories. An overhead display will provide rail customers with travel information about arriving and departing trains at their station.

The new TVMs have improved features making them quicker and easier for customers to use, are easier for people with disabilities to use, and include audible as well as visual instructions. The height of the TVMs have also been adjusted to accommodate customers with mobility challenges.

This is just one phase of NJ TRANSIT's larger Fare Modernization program which also includes new onboard ticket validators on buses, handheld validators for train crews and a future new NJ TRANS-

IT fare card, providing additional payment methods for customers to utilize.

Possible Solution to the Ticket Vending Machine Malfunction

Returning to Newark Penn Station in the evening on October 7, "Local Talk" attempted to purchase tickets at TVM 0138. At this point it was found that if the credit card was held to the card reader device in the center of the TVM, access would be granted to the pinpad. At that point, the commuter had to enter his or her pin number. The credit card would be charged and the tickets would be disbursed in the tray below.

"Local Talk" attempted to purchase tickets by using this method. When the credit/debit card is held in front of the card reader device, three miniature green lights flash. Access is granted to the pinpad. After entering the pin for the credit card, "Local Talk" was able to purchase tickets.

Unanswered Questions

There are a number of unanswered questions. First of all, why is NJ Transit taking so long to resolve such a simple matter as having Ticket Vending Machines repaired? All it takes is a phone call, an email or a text message. A week has passed, and what has been done?

Second, if the credit card reader allows commuters easy access to pinpad, why is NJ Transit not doing a major public relations campaign on social media and their own website? Why not put up flyers explaining how the credit card reader device in the center of the Ticket Vending Machine can help commuters pay their bill?



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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 - The fate of a controversial natural gas-fired power generator station proposed for the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission Wastewater Treatment Plant here is in a state agency's hands.

New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection has been weighing on whether to grant an air permit to PVSC in part on the comments made in the Oct. 1 public hearing here and comments coming by regular an electronic mail through Oct. 29.

The regional sewerage commission has been asking to build a gas-fired electric generation station on their Wilson Avenue property here since 2014. PVSC, which Newark is a municipal member, said that the generator is a backup in case of flooding and/or power outages.

Flooding and loss of power during Superstorm Sandy in 2012 caused them to dump 840 million gallons of sanitary sewage, which would be normally treated, into Newark Bay for two days. That discharge would be prevented by having the backup station at the ready.

Opponents who spoke at the Oct. 1 hearing here at Sport Club Portugues said that the generator is unnecessary since the PSE&G utility has been hard casing its generators, transformers and power grid. The generator, if approved, would be the fourth gas-fired plant in the Ironbound. Its approval would contradict Gov. Phil Murphy's drive to have the

state on all renewable energy.

The DEP, since July, has added "environmental justice" conditions to the proposed permit for consideration. Those conditions include having PVSC upgrade older equipment, install solar panels storage batteries and new pollution controls plus limiting the backup generator's operating hours.

The DEP's Kevin Greener is taking written and email comments now through 5 p.m. Oct. 29. He can be emailed at KevinGreener@dep.nj.gov and/or via physical mail at 401 E. State St., Second Floor, PO Box 420, Mail Code 401-02, Trenton, NJ 08625-0420.

Cissy Houston (1933-2024)

Music fans recently said goodbye to the iconic Cissy Houston, who passed away Oct. 7 at the age of 91. She had recently received care for Alzheimer's Disease.

Born Emily Drinkard in Newark, she would make her name in a singing group with her siblings, specializing in gospel music. After marrying John Houston, Jr. in 1964, she would take on his last name as part of her moniker, all while putting out music over several decades and singing back up for the likes of Bette Midler and many others.

Of course, Houston is most known for being the mother of perhaps the greatest vocalist of all time, Whitney Houston, who tragically predeceased her in 2012. Her granddaughter, Bobbi Kristina Brown, also perished before her time in 2015.

Cissy Houston is survived by many other relatives, including niece Dionne Warwick, another critically acclaimed vocalist. Warwick is set to be honored in her native East Orange on Oct. 11 with a street renaming ceremony.

IRVINGTON - Mayor Anthony "Tony" Vauss, since Oct. 2, has been pushing back on quality of life statements about the township supposedly made the day before by a banking website.

GOBankingRates.com, as reposted by Newsbreak.com Sept. 29, "5 Worst New Jersey Cities to Buy Property in the Next 5 Years, According to Real Estate Experts." It listed Cam-

den, Pennsauken, Trenton, Paterson and Irvington as "some N.J. cities presenting far more risk than reward over the next five years, as they struggle with economic stagnation, crime and low property values."

The News Break version called Irvington as it "may not be the most appealing place to buy real estate, not the least because it has a murder rate eight times the state average. Like Paterson, Irvington has potential thanks to its proximity to New York City and Newark, but it faces continuing problems with the local economy. High crime rates and declining property values mean buyers looking for a quick investment return may struggle here."

"Local Talk" found two discrepancies between the two web sites. The first is that the News Break posting was effectively dated as Sept. 29 while GoBankingRates.com posted on Oct. 2. GoBanking's article leaves off Irvington and starts its title with "4 Worst New Jersey Cities. . ."

Vauss cited annual State Police Uniform Crime Report and Irvington Police Department data to refute the "eight times the state murder rate" passage. Irvington's homicide rate has declined from 14 in 2015 to one in 2023.

Regarding "declining property values," the mayor rebutted with two examples from the township's tax assessor's office. 1086 Sanford Ave., which was sold for \$195,000 in 2019, "now holds a proposed value of \$405,700." 50-52 Lincoln Place's value went from its \$212,000 in 2012 to a "proposed \$479,200."

Whoever wrote the Irvington passage said Vauss had referenced from "a nearly 20-year-old 'New York Times' article and Wikipedia page rather than conducting meaningful research or consulting crime statistics.": He has turned the matter over to the township's legal department.

EAST ORANGE - Penn Station riders began noticing a rose taped by John Amos' portrait, among eight of the New Jersey Hall of Fame inductees' photos, posted where the pay telephone row used to be, since Oct. 4.

Amos, 84, whose five-decade acting career included

portraying stern but good hearted father figures, died in an Inglewood, Calif. hospital Aug. 21 but was announced by his family and publicist Oct. 1. His death certificate listed congestive heart failure; he was working on a family documentary series with son Kelly Christopher Amos, or K.C., in 2021 when he fell ill.

Born John Allen Amos, Jr., in Newark Dec. 27, 1939 and raised here 1950-65, Amos' resilience and creativity led him to award winning roles like James Evans, Sr. in "Good Times," (1974-79) the elder Kunta Kinte in 1977's "Roots" series and Admiral Percy Fitzwallace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in "The West Wing" (1999-2004).

Amos, who lived at 10 Division Place 1950-54 and 89 Crawford St. 1957-65, attended the Stockton and Columbian schools before graduating with the East Orange High School Class of 1958. He was running back No. 31 for the Panthers football squad all four years and was "News Cartoonist" for the student newspaper. "Amo" was a cast member of "The Man Who Came to Dinner" junior class play.

Amos' path towards the New York School for Cartoonists and Illustrators, however, was diverted to Colorado State University by way of Long Beach City College and the U.S. Army Reserve. The CSU Rams player graduated with a sociology degree but played for the ACFL Jersey City Jets and several minor league teams before trying out for the then-AFL Denver Broncos.

The Broncos cut him on the second day of training camp after he pulled a hamstring; he expressed his disappointment in reading his own "The Turk" poem before fellow players on his way out. He switched to acting gigs and staff writing jobs in New York and Hollywood until his big break came as weatherman Gordy Howard in "The Mary Tyler Moore Show."

K.C. said former viewers would come up to him, shake his hand and say, "Your father was my father." K.C., daughter Shannon and second wife Lillian Lehman are among his survivors; first wife Noel Mickelson predeceased him. He was privately

(Continued on page 12)

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TOWN WATCH

(Continued from page 10)

cremated Aug. 30.

ORANGE - A city man, who was found by a State Superior Court criminal jury Oct. 2 of shooting an East Orange man in 2022 by a supermarket wall, remains held in Newark's Essex County Correctional Center until his scheduled Jan. 6 sentencing before Judge Michael J. Ravin-- or should a yet-to-be-filed appeal be successful.

The jury - after a three-week trial and 80 minutes' deliberation that Thursday morning - told Ravin that they found Darienne Murray, 37, of Orange, guilty of first-degree murder, second-degree unlawful possession of a weapon and third-degree possession thereof for an unlawful purpose.

Murray was accused and found guilty of murdering Melja T. Oliver, 37, of East Orange, along 533 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd./Main St. June 3, 2022. The location is where the Brick Church Shopping Plaza is being transformed into the Crossings at Brick Church.

Responding East Orange police officers found Oliver unconscious from a gunshot wound to his head alongside one of the Brick Church Shop-Rite's walls. at 12:51 a.m. that Friday. The supermarket then, as now, was open 24 hours. Oliver was declared dead at 1:31 a.m. at Newark's University Hospital.

ECPO Homicide and Major Crimes Task Force detectives arrested Murray June 8, 2022. A surveillance recording found Murray confronting Oliver. pulling out a handgun and shooting him. It is believed that Murray and Oliver never knew each other.

Murray is facing a 30-year-to-life prison sentence.

WEST ORANGE - Township elders' desire to bring back motion picture production here, for the first time in 123 years, took

a major step forward when its municipal council awarded Matrix Development Group as its Film Services Overlay District agent Sept. 24.

The council, that Tuesday, approved Matrix, or MGD, in building an up to 350,000 square foot movie and television production studio. The building, to consist of up to six studios plus a full range of amenities - from equipment storage and editing to catering and security, will be built for \$10 million on the overlay's 12.2 acres.

Once completed, the structure is to generate up to 600 full-time employees. They will be using 200 parking spaces for cars and 60 for trucks.

The completed building will go up in literal sight of the original Black Maria site and its Main Street reproduction. Thomas A. Edison and his employees are credited with building the world's first movie studio, where the Edison water tower now stands, 1892-1901.

Various short films were made there for Edison kinetoscopes and nickelodeon arcades until replaced by a New York City studio. Its replica was built in view of Main Street in 1954.

What MGD is building will be standing where the 1974-constructed West Orange Department of Public Works and animal shelter are to the Edison National Historical Park's east. That building went up after two 1910-era Thomas A. Edison Industries factories were imploded.

Matrix, of Monroe, is tasked with the following: close on purchasing the lot in 18 months, conduct any environmental remediation and find an actual video production partner. It will meanwhile make an annual \$400,000 Payment in Lieu of Taxes to the township, based on a 2023 assessment, until the studios are finished.

Several council members and public speakers, however, asked why Matrix was the only bidder. Resolution 282-24 was passed 3-2: Council President Rev. William

"Bill" Rutherford and council members Michele Casalino and Tammy Williams voted "Yes;" councilors Asmeret Ghebremichael and Susan Scarpa dissented.

SOUTH ORANGE / MAPLEWOOD - The Village Council became the second "Local Talk" town, after Maplewood's Township Committee Sept. 3, in passing a resolution endorsing Ranked Choice Voting here Sept. 23.

The council unanimously approved Resolution 2024-227 that Monday night, which supports State Assembly Bill No. A4042 and Senate Bill S1822, which would authorize municipalities and public school to use RCV.

South Orange joins Maplewood, Montclair, Hoboken, Jersey City, Princeton and Red Bank in endorsing the state bills, which would allow municipalities to vote on the question as a referendum.

Maplewood's Township Committee passed their supporting resolution Sept. 3. The Montclair Council passed its approval Sept. 24.

Ranked Choice Voting would be employed on municipal and school board elections. The process would start when a voter checks off or writes in his or her first, second and/or third choice candidates for an office.

Should no candidate receive a "50 percent plus one" or a majority of votes cast, the county clerk's election workers add the candidate's second choice votes to the first, and so on, until a final majority tally is reached.

New York City, as the nearest jurisdiction, used RCV for its 2021 mayor and council elections. Alaska and Maine use the process for statewide offices on down. RCV's appeal is that voters are given greater choice in who would represent them.

MONTCLAIR / NUTLEY - The news of John Allen Griffith's Sept. 23 passing in Williamsburg, Va. was felt in Montclair's municipal building, on Nutley's Park Oval, in *(Continued on page 15)*

WORLD NEWS

(Continued from page 7)

Mass displacement has led to widespread insecurity in the nation, with almost half of Haiti's 11.9 million civilians in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

The gang violence against the Haitian population has spread from the capital, Port-au-Prince, to isolated rural areas. The pervasive assaults include sexual violence, kidnapping, looting, roadblocks to intimidate and rob civilians and forced recruitment by armed gangs.

The UN refugee agency, UNHCR, is calling for increased and urgent attention, support, and solutions for Haitians affected by violence and insecurity,

including those who have been forcibly displaced.

"Now more than ever, Haitians need our collective support, and we cannot turn a blind eye," said UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Operations Raouf Mazou after a three-day visit to the nation.

"Increased funding, enhanced security and international solidarity are essential to providing life-saving humanitarian assistance and restoring stability and hope in Haiti," he added.

Despite the growing urgency of the crisis, funding for Haiti's humanitarian response remains critically low and the 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan asking for \$674 million is currently only 39 percent funded.

TIKTOK *(Continued from page 4)*

publicly boasted about its efficacy.

TikTok deceives children and parents about features like beauty filters.

These features increase user engagement and promote overuse of the app, despite a growing body of evidence that they worsen the mental health of adolescents, primarily girls. Using augmented reality filters to alter one's appearance is increasingly tied to the perpetuation of certain beauty stereotypes, such as structural facial features and skin color that favor Caucasian or European features, and has been

shown to contribute to body image issues, eating disorders, body dysmorphia, and related problems.

The lawsuit seeks a number of remedies, including an injunction to stop TikTok, ByteDance, and associated entities from violating the CFA; civil penalties; and the disgorgement of any profits generated in New Jersey through this unlawful behavior.

This complaint follows a lawsuit New Jersey filed against Meta, owner of Instagram and Facebook, for similar behavior. That complaint alleged that Instagram and Facebook were purposely designed with harmful features to keep children and *(Continued on page 15)*

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ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE RECEIVES 2024 HIGHER EDUCATION EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY AWARD

October 7, 2024 - Essex County College (ECC) is the recipient of the 2024 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from Insight Into Diversity magazine. The magazine is the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education.

The annual HEED Award recognizes American colleges and universities that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion. ECC was one of only 16 community colleges in the nation, and one of just two colleges/universities from New Jersey to earn this recognition.

“Essex County College is the only community college in New Jersey bearing the distinction of being both a Predominantly Black Institution (PBI) and a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). I’m proud to say that diversity, equity, and inclusion are at the heart of our mission and part of the fabric of who we are as an institution,” stated President Dr. Augustine A. Boakye. “Our ACCESS TO SUCCESS: Strategic Plan 2024-

2029, and our inaugural Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan affirms this ongoing commitment to our students, faculty and staff.”

ECC was selected for the prestigious award by the magazine due to the institution’s impressive work in improving student outcomes through initiatives focused on student equity and providing students with a sense of belonging. Some of these initiatives included the development of a student Welcome Center, a redesign of the developmental education curriculum, and a comprehensive expansion of student wrap-around support services - all while rigorously assessing student learning to ensure their success.

In 2023, President Boakye formed the College’s first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee, tasked with implementing the inaugural DEI Plan.

The sum of these initiatives has made a clear impact on student outcomes. Over the past four years under President Boakye, graduation rates for first-time, full-time Afri-

can American students rose from 10.0% to 17.8%. During the same four-year period, graduation rates for first-time, full-time Hispanic students more than doubled from 7.3% to 16.1%.

“The HEED Award process consists of a comprehensive and rigorous application that includes questions relating to the recruitment and retention of students and employees - and best practices for both - leadership support for diversity, campus culture and climate, supplier diversity, and many other aspects of campus diversity and inclusion,” said Lenore Pearlstein, publisher of Insight Into Diversity.

“We take a detailed approach to reviewing each application in deciding who will be named a HEED Award recipient. Our standards are high, and we look for institutions where diversity and inclusion are woven into the work being done every day across their campus,” she stated.

The Observation Booth



OP-ED By Andrea Dialect

WHEN MAMA GETS MAD

Whatever form of disaster Mama Nature conjures up with her sassy self, when changing her identity at will, I choose to live. Whatever man contends with as choosing to utilize nature's distinctive black hues when painting dark, I shall survive. Be it in a crampy closet or from beneath a tarp-covered wagon of sort, me and mine. My kinfolk, my people gonna be alright as long as I'm at the helm as this woman who is the man of the house. As for me and mine, we gonna live. We're gonna do life or die as life doin'. Humanity must live on. What about you?

LIFIN' IS FOR GROWN FOLK

My mama always says, "Give credit where credit is due." So that means that I have to thank my niece Timiyah for our dead-on title for this week's draft submission turned story.

I can't remember exactly where we were at, but we were out and about. "We" being her, her sister, and my granny's son. I believe it was some sort of function. The three were often hired hands, though they didn't always get paid, helping out with my photo sessions or whatever I had been doing that day. The one thing that sticks in my mind is when I was talking, as usual, with three women. The conversation was about people taking advantage - self-defense of some sort. I remember Miss Timiyah, who had been eavesdropping, barging into the huddle interjecting her two cents into those grown folks' conversation.

When jumping in after my theatrical performance about letting the girls know that I wasn't anyone's punk or flunky in no sense of the word. I was giving her the eye when she began her sing-song apology as begging mercy and forgiveness. Then



went on with it as she speedily replied, "Auntie, when you get mad, they better run!" And off she went, back to playing with the other two, like it hadn't been done.

We all got a kick out of that, mostly because of the way she put me on blast - eyes wide, hands gesturing, and expressions that outdid my own theatrics. But like she said thus so it goes for Mother Nature. When she gets mad - whoa...When she gets mad, it's something else.

Sometimes I mentally hold my breath because life, as we've known it, has significantly changed. I have to remind myself to breathe as I'm dragged along, tripping on the skirt-tail of change, pulled by the rough, calloused hands of the unknown.

I often say that had I been a little girl at this moment in time, those number count backs before

slumber would be pretty sweet. Because daddy would be there. Since my father left us, I tend to find myself looking back at me through the eyes of that child. I have yet to cry since his passing - I mean really, really cry. Because all those sweet memories of the man keep seeping through. ...

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 pg. 1)

partment infrastructure.

The emergency was called after periodic New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection readings found high lead content in 2017-18.

There is no real "safe" amount of lead in water, which is measured in parts per billion in a gallon of water. Lead exposure can lead to brain damage, hampered nervous system development, low birth weight and miscarriage.

How Newark and Essex County handled the lead crisis became a national model of remediation up to now. New Jersey based Newark's model to start a statewide program in 2022. Both plans include minori-

ty and women owned business hiring and training components.

Cong. Frank Pallone (D-New Brunswick) announced Oct. 8 that New Jersey will be getting \$44 million in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency funds from a bipartisan federal infrastructure bill that will help replace LSLs by 2034.

It is not clear how the U.S. Justice Department is involved outside of Sawyer and Sanders' alleged use of telephonic airways and/or landlines to transmit the phony line replacement pictures.

It does appear that JAS became suspect through one or up to three water line audits performed by the DEP since January. What started out as three lines or fittings found with lead

content became 12 of 90 sampled in the March 21 audit and 32 of 705 Sept. 6.

Although the locations of the sampled and contaminated lines were not made public, city and state authorities detected a "where there's smoke, there's fire" pattern - where JAS did or allegedly did not work.

Federal court filings, however, listed sites along North 11th and 13th streets, Badger Avenue, Bergen Street and Chapman Street - among the 1,500 JAS supposedly replaced - as being partially done or not done at all.

City and federal detectives then interviewed JAS workers and other witnesses - who said that Sanders, when informed of a lead line, told them to leave it be.

Mayor Ras Baraka and Water and Sewer Director Kareem Adeem reiterated what they had said after the Sept. 6 audit report: that the found lead lines and fittings found were replaced in a day or two and that Newark's water sample reports to the DEP are down to zero PPB per gallon.

"We took blows from residents, other people and the media because people wanted to know information that we just couldn't give them because there was an investigation happening: said Baraka Oct. 3. "All we did was put our head down and try to change what we saw every time we found lead."

The FBI-Newark Office is continuing the investigation.

TOWN WATCH

(Continued from page 12)

Newark and Seton Hall University.

Griffith, 87, was a Montclair Councilman-at-Large and Deputy Mayor 1988-92. The St. Paul Baptist Church trustee board chairman was a guidance counselor at Montclair High School and a Katherine Gibbs School of Business director when the latter was in Montclair.

To Nutley, he was a high school history teacher who was also the Maroon Raiders track and field and assistant football coach. He had worked for PSE&G for 34 years out of Newark and Elizabeth.

Griffith's other activities included being then-Kean College's adjunct professor and on its board of governors, a Union County College governors board member, New Jersey State Board of Education President and a member of the African American Heritage Parade and Festival.

Born Dec. 14, 1936, in Greensburg, Pa., Griffith came here by way of Beaver, Pa. public schools, the Indiana University of Pennsylvania and Farleigh Dickinson University. The scholar-athlete left IUP in 1960 with a bachelor's degree in education and returned in 2013 to be enshrined in its hall of fame for his football accomplishments.

Griffith graduated with an MBA from FDU before completing guidance and counseling coursework in Seton Hall. A four-year hitch with the U.S. Army Reserve followed.

Wife Patricia, daughters Pamela and Jennifer and four grandsons are among his survivors. Last rites were held in Williamsburg's Historic First Baptist Church Oct. 2, followed by internment at Bloomfield's Glendale Cemetery Oct. 4.

BLOOMFIELD - Township Police Chief George Ricci reminds residents that "growing and cultivating" cannabis, marijuana, "pot," "weed," "ganja" or by any other name is illegal - and has a Sept. 27 Watsessing section search warrant as an example.

Members of Bloomfield's police and health departments plus the State Police Narcotics Bureau executed the warrant on a Thomas Street residence that Friday.

They were tipped off that the cannabis plants were being grown in the backyard, which they confirmed with their own observation. They then had a judge sign a warrant.

They counted 84 plants which they uprooted or otherwise removed as evidence. Their likely fate, after their being cataloged and photographed, is to go "up in smoke" without anyone inhaling.

A Hillside man, identified as Aman Hamlett, 25, was arrested on premises. He has been charged with maintaining a drug production facility and possession with

intent to distribute within 1,000 feet of a school (Watsessing Elementary School) and within 500 feet of a park (Watsessing Park) among other charges.

GLEN RIDGE - First responders here and from Montclair paid an unusual house call at a borough residence Sept. 29.

Glen Ridge police and EMS plus Montclair's firefighters converged on a Ridgewood Avenue home here by Tuxedo Road at 10:25 a.m. that Sunday.

They arrived to find a car that have gone off road by what MFD Chief Robert Duncan estimated at 75 feet through the wall of the house's garage. Its driver was getting out of the car when the responders arrived.

Glen Ridge Volunteer Ambulance Squad medics checked the driver and the house's occupants and found no physical injuries. MFD personnel installed a "T-Shore" to brace the garage's roof and remaining wall - and stayed two hours until they were satisfied that the house was structurally stable.

An initial GRPD investigation has the white four-door sedan being sent into the wall after an earlier collision with another vehicle. The matter is under investigation. The car has been extracted; no drivers have been ticketed and the homeowner has started repairs.

BELLEVILLE - The Belleville Zoning Board of Adjustment's "subject to change" clause on its October 3 agenda apparently came into play by the owner of a significant Main Street property.

Transform Lease OPCO, which owns the former Kmart here at 371-411 Main St., had filed for "a Certificate for Non-conformity" to the board for Block 9701, Lot 1. The filing made the Oct. 3 agenda as ZB-2024-09.

Then, before that Thursday night's meeting, Transform exercised its option to postpone the certificate hearing to maybe Nov. 1. The real estate company otherwise appears to be working within the township's 371-411 Main Street Redevelopment Plan.

The redevelopment plan, passed by the township Nov. 1, 2022, keeps the site within the BB-2 Zone for Retail, Grocery Stores and Retail Shopping Centers. The designation was passed after a plan was mulled to cut the 5.94-acre lot into quarters for residential development and two streets.

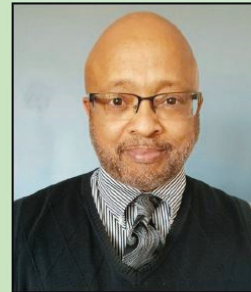
The application announcement noted that the Kmart was built "in or around 1977 with an addition constructed in or around 1986." The department store replaced a longtime wire rope factory. It had been vacant since Kmart-Sears closed it in April 2021.

Transdormco Properties, of Hoffman Estates, Illinois has meanwhile stated on

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its website that the property has been leased to Aldi. The German grocery store chain opened its Bloomfield branch in 2016.

One could fit four Aldis, or four of its rival Lidl, within the 77,800-square foot ex-Kmart. Lidl had opened in the former A&P/SuperFresh supermarket at 414 Main St., - directly across the street - Aug. 18, 2021.

TIKTOK (Continued from page 12)

teenagers online for ever-increasing amounts of time, while Meta falsely claimed the apps were safe. Both the Meta and TikTok complaints arose from the same national investigation, which began in 2022 and was co-led by New Jersey.

In addition to the lawsuits, Attorney General Platkin also co-sponsored a bipartisan letter to Congress last month urging a U.S. Surgeon General warning on all algorithm-driven social media platforms.

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