

LOCAL TALK

NEWARK • IRVINGTON • EAST ORANGE • ORANGE • WEST ORANGE • SOUTH ORANGE • MAPLEWOOD • BLOOMFIELD • MONTCLAIR & MORE

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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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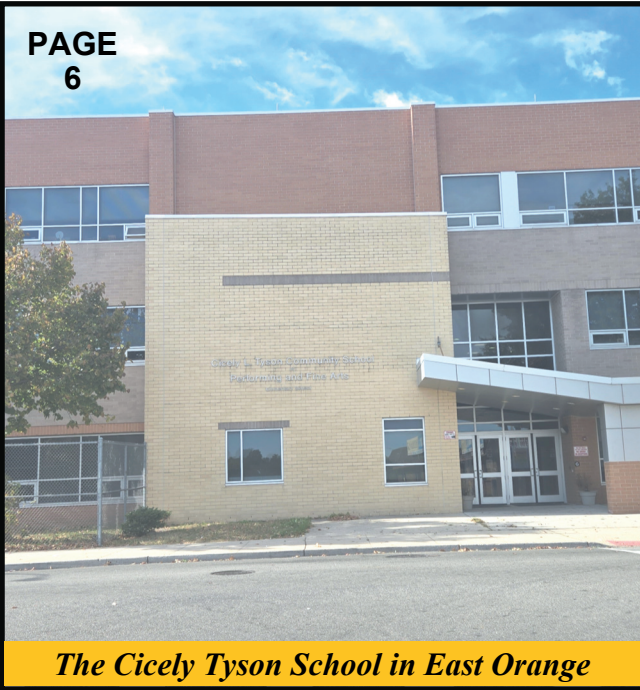
PLAY STUPID GAMES ... WIN STUPID PRIZES

PAGE
2

EAST ORANGE SCHOOL DISTRICT CUTS 93 JOBS

NOV. 5 GENERAL ELECTION PREVIEW

PAGE
6



The Cicely Tyson School in East Orange

PAGE
4



HEARTBREAK HITS RESIDENTS IN TWO LOCAL FIRES

PAGE
8



Resident Linwood Duncan explains what happened at the Eckert Avenue fire. Photos By Thomas Ellis II



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Turn
To
**PAGE
9**



Editorial
Kristopher Seals
 Content Editor

Hello Readers,

There is a saying: “Play stupid games ... Win stupid prizes.”

Full disclosure: I’m not a “Trump guy.” I’m an American who investigates things, which may get me cancelled. Guess what? I’m a black man in America... I was born cancelled.

Unless you’ve been living under a rock, the biggest story in America right now is the 2024 Presidential Election. It features the current Vice President Kamala Harris running against former President Donald Trump.

On the surface, it should not be close. One person has been twice impeached, sued, indicted, and even convicted. However, that person may very well win the election. How is that possible?

Here’s how. On January 6,

2021, events unfolded at the Capitol that made Donald J. Trump the most hated person in the world. The word “insurrection” was used. Trump was called a “threat to democracy.” There’s just one problem... He isn’t.

To those disagreeing with me, ask yourself this question: If Trump was a threat to democracy, then why wasn’t he charged in 2021?

I don’t want to hear about other cases on the docket. Defendants get their cases pushed back all the time. A case against Trump would have been priority one.

Their actions sure didn’t match their words. If someone is a threat to the very fabric of the nation, surely that person would be taken off the field as soon as possible. Yeah... that didn’t happen.

So, why not? It’s simple. Democrats didn’t need him to be an actual threat to democracy. He just had to be a perceived threat. That way, they could use him as a platform to win elections. They even got a kick out of how divided the GOP was, with some loyal

to Trump and others who loathed him. If Trump was a threat to democracy, they should have helped the Republicans exorcise him from the Party and politics altogether. Instead, the Dems sat back and let Kevin McCarthy become the first House Speaker to be ousted during his term.

The “eyes wide open” moment for me was when Pennsylvania Democrats ran ads during the 2022 GOP Primary supporting the Trump nominee, because they thought it was a better matchup for them in November. I’m sorry, but if Trump was a “threat to democracy” you wouldn’t risk it!

This was nothing more than good old fashioned electioneering. Like George W. Bush and the War on Terror, the Democrats were using fear to win at the ballot box.

Then, something happened. Other Americans woke up to it as well. We started looking at everything with a critical lens, rather than a fearful eye like we were told to.

First, the Fraud case, where Letitia James hit him for over \$450 million. Okay, if something

was out of sorts, then why not press charges on the banks who approved the loans? If you’re not charging the banks, and they had the money paid back to them, and they didn’t bring a case against Trump, then what the heck are you charging him for?

An appeals court may soon throw the whole thing out, meaning that “Tish” James wasted taxpayer money on her very own glorified election interference.

The Hush Money case: What kind of judge issues a one-sided gag order? Also, jury instructions should have “guilty beyond a reasonable doubt” at the center, not “if you think something was wrong, then vote guilty.” What was Judge Merchan thinking, if he was even thinking at all?

In July, the Supreme Court made an unusual but consequential ruling on Presidential Immunity, meaning that this case may get tossed also.

The Documents case: If they’re trying to lock him up, why not Biden, who had top secret documents in a Corvette? Meanwhile, Judge Aileen Cannon threw this one out, based on

(Continued on page 12)

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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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NOVEMBER 5 GENERAL ELECTION PREVIEW

By Walter Elliott

NEWARK - Election Season 2024 - which has been unlike any other since 1788 - is ramping up to an 8 p.m. Nov. 5 crescendo.

Essex County Clerk Christopher Durkin's Election Division office has been receiving Vote By Mail Ballots either by mail or through designated dropboxes. Eight early voting polling stations among five "Local Talk" towns will be open from 10 a.m. Oct 26 until 6 p.m. Nov. 3.

The public may hopefully get an idea who will be the 47th President of the United States and which major party has control of Congress soon after the polls close, the drop boxes are locked and the postmarking of VBMB stop at 8 p.m. Nov. 5.

"Idea" is the operative word as certifying the tabulations may take longer than the traditional 14-day period. "This May Take a While," first headlined by "Local Talk" in 2020, may be appropriate again - and it may not be because of late VBMBs, malfunctioning voting machines or recount challenges.

This is the first Presidential Election since Georgia and some other states enacted counting changes - some of which were made law with several weeks to spare.

There may also be legal challenges that will keep the results unofficial until the Year End Holidays. There were 70 voting challenges lodged in federal and state courts in November and December 2020.

The expression "All Politics Are Local" applies here this time. Voters will also have a say on who will represent them at the county Hall of Records here, in City Hall and on the Boards of Education.

Irvington is having a special election to fill a "to be announced" unexpired council member's term. South Orange voters are to decide on whether its village officials should sell its water infrastructure to a private company.

Herewith are the offices and candidates up for votes as they basically arrear on the Essex County Sample (Block) Ballot:

U.S. PRESIDENT

Democratic: Vice President Kamala D. Harris, of Oakland, Calif., pending a majority of popular votes and the Electoral College, could become the first woman and first of African American and South Indian descent. Gov. Tim Walz, of St. Paul, Minn. is running as her vice presidential candidate.

Republican: Donald J. Trump, whose voting address is Palm Beach, Fla., looks to become the first President since Caldwell, N.J. native Grover Cleveland to hold two nonconsecutive terms. U.S. Senator JD Vance, of Middleton, Ohio, is his VP running mate.

The Libertarian Party has nominated Chase Oliver, of Tennant, Ga., and Mike ter Maat, of Kinsale, Va. to run.

The Socialism and Liberation Party has fielded Claudia de la Cruz, of Washington, D.C., and Karina Garcia, of Queens, N.Y.'s Elmhurst section.

The Socialist Equity Party is supporting Joseph Kishmore, of Oak Park, Ill., and Jerry White, of Queens, N.Y.

Socialist Workers Party is endorsing Miamian Rachele Fruit and Oakland's Margaret Trowe.

The U.S. Constitution Party brought back Randall A. Terry, of Arlington, Va, and introduced Stephen E. Broden of Irving, Texas.

Next on the ballot is the former independent team of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of South Walpole, Mass. and Nicole Shanahan, of Oakland, Calif. Kennedy suspended his campaign and threw his support to Trump Aug. 23 - too late to have his name removed from ballots here and in other states. Voting for Kennedy-Shanahan will not be counted as votes for Trump-Vance.

The Green Party has entered Jill Stein, of Fall River, Mass., and Rudolph Ware, of Santa Barbara, Calif.

U.S. CONGRESS

Senator

There are five candidates on the ballot looking for voters' consent in succeeding Robert "Bob" Menendez, of Paramus, who re-

signed Aug. 20. He had talked about filing petitions to run as an independent before his being convicted this summer by a federal New York jury for being an unregistered foreign agent.

Andy Kim (D-Moorestown), should he be elected as the state's junior senator, would be giving up his Bordentown-based Third Congressional Seat in the House of Representatives.

Curtis Bashaw (R-Cape May) is a hotel businessman. Kenneth R. Kaplan (L-Parsippany) was a Newark native who was raised in West Orange. Patricia G. Mooneyham (SL-Turnersville) is under her "Vote Better." Banner. Joannie Kuniansky (SWP-W. New York) had previously run in the Eighth Congressional District primary and for governor. Christina Khalil (G-Hackensack) is a MSW degree holder from Ramapo College.

House of Representatives

Eighth Congressional District: Newark's East and North Wards, Union County's Elizabeth and 10 Hudson County towns whole or in part.

Rob Menendez (D-Jersey City) is the incumbent who is seeking his second elective term. The younger Menendez is also on the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey directors board. Anthony Valdes (R-Newark) is a multiple dwelling inspector for the N.J. Department of Community Affairs. Pablo D. Olivera (Labor - Newark) is a former Belleville Public Schools teacher. Lea Sherman (SWP - Secaucus) had previously run for Congressional and N.J. General Assembly office. Christian Robbins (G-Old Bridge) is a UPS operations supervisor.

10th CD: Newark's Central, West and South Wards; Irvington, East Orange, Orange, Montclair's Fourth Ward/South End; Caldwell, Essex Fells and Verona in "West Essex;" Hudson County's "Central" Jersey City plus eight Union County towns.

LaMonica McIver (D-Newark) and Carmen Bucco (R-Nutley), are squaring off for the second time in three months. (Continued on page 6)

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SPORTS WRAP



Photos By Felicia Laguerre Owens

By William Hathaway, Jr.

This past weekend the New York Red Bulls finished their regular season with a tough loss at the Columbus Crew 3-2. Leading Columbus was forward Aziel Jackson, who gave the

In the National Football League, Eagles running back Saquon Barkley got his revenge at the Giants, with Philadelphia swooping into MetLife Stadium and trashing Big Blue 28-3. Meanwhile, the Jets fared no better in Pittsburgh, with Aaron



crew the upper hand two minutes in on a goal assisted from Cucho Hernandez. In the 14th minute, Jackson was on the other hand, assisting Yevhen Cheberko for a 2-0 lead.

The Red Bulls got it together in the second half. Midfielder Emil Forsberg scored at 78' and again at 87' off a penalty kick to tie it up. However, right at the end of stoppage time, Malte Amundsen netted the winner for the Crew.

These two teams will meet again in the first round of the playoffs in the same venue.

Rodgers have another bad game and Gang Green losing 37-15 to the Steelers.

Finally, after being the first team in the history of the league, the New York Liberty won their first ever WNBA Championship. The historic win came this past Sunday night at the Barclays Center in a 67-62 overtime victory over the Minnesota Lynx. The Liberty will be honored by the city of New York in a ticker tape parade.



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EAST ORANGE SCHOOL DISTRICT CUTS 93 JOBS

Lev D. Zilbermints

EAST ORANGE - Schools in the East Orange school district have cut 93 positions due to a huge mistake in expecting more state aid when putting together and approving this year's budget.

"Local Talk" did its usual diligent research. Several sources, such as nj.com, RLS Media, Shore News Network, and the East Orange School district and other sources, were checked for information. What follows is the article.

Last week, on October 17 and 18, the school district had two half days for its 9,303 students. According to nj.com, the teacher's union president, Keith Hinton, said that last Thursday's closure was due to school staff calling out sick as educators face losing their jobs before the end of the year.

According to Shore News Network, the layoffs will take place December 15.

The East Orange School Board met in a public meeting for five hours on Wednesday, October 16. That meeting, according to reports from nj.com,

was very contentious, with emotions running high.

Teachers laid off hours before the School Board Meeting

According to RLS Media, "For many teachers, the cuts feel deeply personal. Some were notified of the layoffs through Rice letters - a legal requirement in New Jersey that informs employees when their jobs will be discussed by a public body, giving them the opportunity to attend the meeting and request the discussion be held in public.

Many received these letters just hours before the meeting, heightening the sense of shock and frustration.

"I've been just as much in the dark as many of you through this process," one local union representative said in a statement to fellow educators. "We fought to ensure there would be a transparency and inclusion in these decisions, but I realize that in many ways, I was kept at a distance, much like many of you were," RLS Media reported.

The October 16 East Orange School Board meeting



According to nj.com, "At Wednesday's school board meeting, East Orange Superintendent Christopher Irving said the district faced a \$5 million shortfall when he started his job earlier this year. While state aid to the district has been consistent, the cost of running the schools has increased, he said.

The current \$25 million budget shortfall will impact the May and June payroll, Irving said at the meeting, which was attended by more than 450 peo-

ple. The job cuts will largely affect substitute teachers, social workers, literary coaches and math coaches.

The staff cuts include 22 substitutes, 36 math or literacy coaches, 12 social workers and five Spanish teachers, according to TapInto East Orange/Orange.

"If we don't do something soon, the state will step in," Irving said at the meeting.

In the nj.com piece, "The

(Continued on page 8)

ELECTION (Continued from page 4)

There are four other on-ballot candidates for voters who want to upset the major party joust.

A majority of CD10 voters chose McIver in an Aug. 14 special election to complete the late Donald Payne, Jr. 's unfinished term through Jan. 3. They are now competing for a full two-year House term.

Cynthia A. Johnson (SL - Glen Ridge), an Essex County College adjunct professor, is running under her own "C4C 2024" slogan. Michelle Middleton (SE - Millburn) says she is running "For All of Us!" The former NYPD officer had independently run in the 2022 Newark West Ward Council race.

Donna Weiss (USC-North Bergen) calls herself a "Social Activist." Jon Carlos Serrano, (G-Hasbrouck Heights) is part of the Green Party ticket.

11th CD: West Orange, South Orange, Maplewood, Bloomfield, the rest of Montclair, Belleville, seven "West Essex," four "Southwestern" Passaic County and 25 Morris County towns.

Mikie Sherril (D- Montclair), a former military helicopter pilot, is seeking re-election.

Joseph Belnome (R-Belleville) is a prop-

erty maintenance inspector. Johsua Lanzara (SL-Chester) is running under the "Truth Freedom Prosperity" flag. Lily Benavides (G-Lake Hiawatha) has had political activism from Montclair State University to Chicago.

ESSEX COUNTY

Sheriff

Amir Jones (D-East Orange) and Nicholas Pansini (R-Montclair), who both have law enforcement experience, are looking to succeed Sheriff Armando Fontoura. Fontoura (D-Fairfield) has decided to retire after 10 straight terms.

Register of Deeds and Mortgages

Incumbent Juan M. Riveria, Jr. (D-Newark) and challenger Jeffrey M. Polewka (R-Nutley) are to square off on the ballot.

MUNICIPAL RACES

IRVINGTON has a pair of "fresh yet familiar" faces to fill an unexpired Township Council term in a special election.

Yasmina C. King, who has run for ward council before, is flying her own, "Your Voice My Mission" banner.

Also vying for the unexpired seat, as

"Democrat for Council" is Anthony A. Vauss, Jr. - as in the son of Mayor Anthony "Tony" Vauss, Sr.

The elder Vauss, as "Team Irvington Strong" campaign manager, has annually entered council and board of education candidates for election. The younger Vauss, however, is running on a separate slogan.

Another curious factor is that the two replacement candidates are vying for "an unexpired term" for a still-sitting council member. None of the current at-large council members - Darlene Brown, Sean Evans and Charnette Frederic - have announced his or her stepping down as of press time.

WEST ORANGE - Two incumbents and four challengers are vying for three four-year Township Council seats on the ballot.

Incumbents Michele Casalino and Tammy Williams are running on their own respective "Always Working for West Orange" and "Moving Forward Together" slogans.

Incumbent Dr. William "Bill" Rutherford can only be re-elected by write-in. The former council president was left off the ballot after a Superior Court-Newark judge ruled that he did not have the minimum petition signatures.

Doug Adams is on his "A Bridge Forward" platform.

(Continued on page 7)

ELECTION (Continued from page 6)

Former Councilman Joe Krakoviak says "Together We Can Do Better." He is making a return after a self-imposing term limit.

Jonathan Redwine says he has "Principled Leadership for West Orange."

Joyce L. Rudin advocates "Improving Your Quality of Life."

MAPLEWOOD - Former mayor and incumbent Nancy J. Adams and newcomer Malia Herman are running as Democrats for the two Township Committee seats. They are running unopposed since the Republican Democratic Committee did not file any petitions.

BLOOMFIELD has its mayor and a special at-large council seat before voters. Incumbent Democratic First Ward Councilwoman Jenny Mundell is dueling with Republican challenger David Tucker. They are looking to be mayor-turned-State Assemblyman Michael Venezia's successor.

Councilman Ted Gamble upset Mundell and Venezia when council colleges appointed him as mayor on the latter's resignation. Gamble, however, lost to Mundell in the June 4 primary.

Democrat Monica Charris Tabares and Republican Russell Mollica seek to complete an unexpired council term. Charris Tabares was appointed as interim member upon Gamble's promotion to mayor.

The two **GLEN RIDGE** Borough Council candidates - Incumbent Rebecca Meyer and newcomer Steve Zimet - are running unopposed and under "Glen Ridge Civic Conference Committee" endorsement.

The CCC seeks to curtail partisan borough politics by interviewing and endorsing prospective municipal and school board candidates. Glen Ridge's Democratic and Republican committees are part of the larger party. One can run and win without such endorsement.

Council President Ann Marie Morrow declined re-election.

SOUTH ORANGE - BALLOT QUESTION REFERENDUM

Village voters, the majority of whom are likely South Orange Water Department customers, are being asked on whether to approve the sale of the department's infrastructure to New Jersey American Water for \$19.7 million.

The measure also carries NJAW holding off any water rate increases until three years after the proposed sale. The company then makes three percent annual increases on post-sale years three to five. Water service to municipal properties will be "at no cost for a period of years."

The question also includes the compa-

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NJAW, subject to N.J. Board of Public Utilities approval, would be buying the water supply infrastructure from the village. The company, with village approval, has been making repairs and managing the billing since Jan. 1, 2018, when South Orange's contract with the East Orange Water Commission ended.

BOARDS of EDUCATION

ORANGE has three candidates seeking as many school board seats. Saika Sherif, who was among the first elected Orange Board of Education panelists, is asking for re-election. Challenger India Williams advocates "Equity Over Equality." Incumbent David Kent Armstrong says it is "About Our Children." Board Member Derrick Henry has decided against re-election.

"Local Talk" is understanding should this be your first news of the annual OBOE elec-

(Continued on page 13)

HEARTBREAK HITS RESIDENTS IN TWO LOCAL FIRES



**Story & Photos By
Thomas Ellis II**

This past Saturday night around 11:45 pm, a fire broke out at 26 Eckert Avenue in the South Ward of Newark after a birthday party, which left two girls dead, ages 6 and 8.

I spoke with Mr. Linwood Duncan, who lived on the 3rd floor. He told me that he decided not to stay in his apartment that night because they were having a party on the 2nd floor.

He told me that the people on the 2nd floor put furniture and other items in the hallway to make space for the birthday party for one of the little girls.

“Thank God I was not at home,” said Duncan.

Shonda Simpson, a neighbor who lives next door to 26 Eckert, said she called 911 and within minutes they were on the scene. You could hear the screams, and you could see the people running out the house. The

whole community came together, and the Newark Fire Dept., EMS, and Newark Police did an amazing job.

“The little girls used to play with my children. This is so painful and shocking,” said Simpson.

Newark Mayor Ras J Baraka was also on the scene and comforted the firefighters, family members, and the residents on the block.

It's being reported that 7 families and 15 people have received services from the Red Cross, but by deadline of this article, the numbers may increase.

It's also being reported that the fire started when the two girls was playing with fire by a couch.

The girls attended Mt. Vernon School in Newark. This is so sad and hurtful for their school friends, teachers and community.

Now earlier in the week, 5 houses were damaged when a fire started at 71 Montgomery in an abandoned house and spread to 73,

75, 67 and parts of 65. The house where the fire started was burned to the ground.

While speaking with Ms. Jiana, whose lived on that block for 24 years and whose house is a few doors down, said the residents on the block have been trying to get that abandoned house knocked down for years, but nothing ever happened.

Unfortunately, I think the fire could have been avoided if the abandoned house would have been torn down.

“We wanted that house torn down because it was an eyesore,” said Ms. Jiana.

This fire displaced several families, and they too will be seeking assistance from the Red Cross or from whatever resources are available to them after they have lost everything.

In this fire, it's being reported that it was possibly started by squatters. Now, the damage has affected the children, families, and neighbors on the block and the Irvington community.

93 JOBS (Continued from page 6)

Essex County district, which serves 9,303 children, will do its best to help move cut personnel to other school districts, including Elizabeth, South Orange - Maplewood, Paterson, Union and Orange, the superintendent said.”

Key data

According to an October 18 nj.com article, “East Orange received nearly \$175.3 million in state aid for the 2024-2025 school year, according to state statistics. That is a \$199,500 increase, or about 0.1% more than the previous year.

The district has lost students over the last few decades. Enrollment in the district dropped 7.7% between the 2007-2008 and

2022-2023 school years, according to the most recent available enrollment data.

The superintendent told WNBC-TV he started his new position in July and found the district had a \$6 million to \$8 million deficit.

Working without a contract

In the same nj.com article, “The East Orange Education Association, the union representing the teachers, said in an Instagram post Wednesday (October 16) that they are working without a contract. The post said the teachers are “tired.”

“We are all fed up,” the post said. “We all want a fair and reasonable contract, but we must all come together collectively as one voice to be heard!”

But, the post also said it would not be legal for teachers to call out sick at once and

any job actions not sanctioned by union leadership needed to stop. They did not specify what actions teachers might take.

How did the East Orange school district get into the financial hole?

According to msn.com, East Orange Mayor Ted Green addressed the situation Friday, October 18, saying the new superintendent discovered the deficit, and now everyone is chipping in to help out.

“I think it's oversight. When sometimes you have folks in office and there's oversights, and then you have someone come in and they start dotting the 'I's and crossing the 'T's and looking into the fine print, it's an oversight. I believe that we've got to get better with that,” he told CBS News New York.

(Continued on page 12)



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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 - Those University Hospital trailers that occupy the block bordered by Bergen, Market and Cabinet streets and 12th Avenue, recently said the hospital's CEO, will be gone by this time next year.

What was meant to be temporary medical offices when erected for the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey Hospital in the late 1960s, said CEO Ed Jimenez to the Municipal Council Oct. 8, will be replaced by a new building to help University Hospital to meet current needs.

Jimenez added that the new building is part of a \$1.8 billion, nine-year renovation and expansion of University Hospital's mostly 1973-era campus buildings. The State of New Jersey allocated the first \$215 million in March to start work.

The emergency ward, for example, will be expanded by at least 30 percent. Jimenez said that the ward was built when Newark had six hospitals and Essex County another seven. They are respectively down to three and four.

"When they designed the ER on the first floor, they projected 50,000 patients," said the hospital president. "Fifty years later, 110,000 patients (on) the same real estate. No one thought that there would be no updates years later or this many people coming through the doors."

The trailers went up while the then-Martland Hospital and the city were negotiating a com-

munity service component. That pact killed the Interstate 70 connector between I-280 and I-87 and created the UMDNJ medical school.

University Hospital was separated from UMDNJ's renamed Rutgers Medical School in 2013. Rutgers, more recently, merged their Newark and New Brunswick medical campus, sending some Newark area patients to the latter.

University Hospital, a Level One Trauma Center, remains open to patients regardless of income and/or insurance status.

IRVINGTON - Township officials and representatives of the 21st Street Redevelopment Group broke ground on a \$100 million housing and community center project in the East Ward here at 5 Standard Pace Oct. 17.

The "Sankofa Enclave at Twenty First Street" is to feature mixed housing. A five-story building is to contain 240 affordable housing units as the project's second phase. Five of the units are earmarked to support young women who are aging out of foster care.

The enclave's main building is to share space with 15 two-family homes. Those five houses are to be the first structures built in the three-to-five-year project. A four-story 30,000 sq. ft. community development center, to be open for all of Irvington but focused on programming for girls and women, is to follow.

21st Street Redevelopment Group is a public-private partnership between township and corporate entities. Two of the parties - Thatcher Duncan Group LLC founder Nana Duncan and Dr. Vika Gupta of Akshay Investment LLC were at the groundbreaking.

The partnership makes financing from the public and banking sectors possible. Some of the \$100 million includes the remnant of the \$2.6 million in USHUD grants awarded to Irvington and Brand New Day in 2010. Brand New Day and the township had projected 30 single family homes back then.

Mayor Anthony "Tony" Vauss said, at the groundbreaking, that Irvington resident will get first choice in residency and with construction jobs.

EAST ORANGE - An off-

duty city police officer, said Newark law enforcers became a victim of an armed "Bump and Jack." in one of its neighborhoods early on Oct. 19.

Newark Public Safety Director Fritz Frage said that the policeman was driving on Broadway when his vehicle was rear-ended at the Second Avenue intersection at 4:37 a.m. Saturday.

The EOPD officer pulled over and got out to inspect damage - and met three masked men with their handguns pointed at him. They demanded his keys and personal effects.

Frage said that the officer complied, and the suspects drove away with his car from the Lower Broadway crossroads.

It is not clear as of press time whether his service gun was in his vehicle at that time. Descriptions of the three suspects, the "bumping" car and the stolen vehicle have not been released as of press time.

ORANGE - City and Essex County elders saluted an Orange Valley restaurant owning and operating family for their 35 years' service Oct. 15-16.

Salvatore Granata Jr. and Sr. received proclamations hailing their work with Bella Italia Ristorante from the City Council and the Essex County Board of Commissioners at the latter's chamber in Newark Oct. 16. They also received a proclamation copy which Council President Adrienne K. Wooten and her colleagues had passed at the meeting the night before.

Orange's two-page Resolution 487-2024 in part states that Salvatore Granata, Sr. came from Southern Italy in 1972 and worked his way from sous chef to executive chef and owner of Bella Italia in May of 1989. Son Salvatore Granata, Jr. has continued casual dining with exceptional service.

"Bella Italia became known for its innovative recipes, gracious hospitality and exquisite catering services, making it one of New Jersey's most popular dining and catering facilities, welcoming guests from North and South Jersey as well as New York," read Orange's proclamation.

County Commission Vice President Tyshammie Cooper, of East Orange, in presenting her colleague's proclamation added,

"The Granata family embodies the spirit of community and service. Their impact on Orange and the surrounding area goes beyond just running a business - they've become a cherished part of our culture."

"The Sals" were joined by several other distinguished Essex County Italian-Americans in the county's salute that Wednesday night. They included Bloomfield mayor-turned Assemblyman Michael Venezia, Maplewood Madeline Hicks and Montclair Chief of Police Todd Conforti as part of the commission's 30th Annual Italian-American Heritage Month Celebration.

Bella Italia is an advertiser and a venue host for "Local Talk" events.

WEST ORANGE - Bringing Target into West Orange Plaza's anchor space took a step forward when the department store and Levin Management Corp., of Plainfield, signed a lease Oct. 10 to occupy the 211,500 square foot landmark space by next autumn.

The lease will more than clear out the remnants of Kmart, Kohl's, Caldor and EJ Korvettes. There will be an enlarged loading dock in the back, among other renovations, to upgrade the space that was largely vacant since 2020. (Essex County opened a temporary COVID testing and vaccination site here that summer.)

Those coming to the estimated October 2025 grand opening may also see some other West Orange Plaza improvements, approved by the township's planning board Oct. 5, 2023, under way.

The 32-acre shopping center's vast parking lot will be broken up by traffic islands for pedestrians and tree canopies. The first EV charging stations will expand to 45 in three years. The former bank building now occupied by Verizon by the southeast corner will have three new stores next to it.

The current Mavis Tire center on the lot's northside will be broken up into 11 store separated by a pedestrian plaza. Another three stores are to go on a concrete island pad alongside Prospect Avenue. The build out would be completed in 2026.

But will the Target store
(Continued on page 15)

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EDITORIAL (Continued from page 2)

Special Counsel Jack Smith not being properly appointed.

The Jan. 6 case. Fun fact: You can actually charge someone with an insurrection. Funnier fact: They didn't.

Wait, you call the whole thing an "insurrection," and yet you didn't charge the person you say was responsible with an insurrection?! Instead, they charged him with a bunch of goofy who knows what.

Contrary to Cannon, Judge Chutkan did not oppose Smith being in charge, and let him adjust the case to omit the presidential acts from it. Also, she allowed him to release documents pertaining to the case. Outside of bizzarro land, no intelligent lawyer would want documents out in the wild, because you open yourself up to appeals left and right.

It would be hard to win a case like that, unless the purpose isn't to win in a court of law, but in the court of public opinion. The only thing that remotely makes sense is that this is glorified election interference under color of official right - which is pretty much what Trump was accused of all the way back to the first impeachment.

Then, there is the Georgia RICO case. Fani Willis insisted on a mugshot for one of the most famous and recognizable people on the planet. Her reward? Having people stuff his campaign coffers in response. She might have realized this at some point, but she was too busy putting out the fire of an improper relationship with a coworker on the case. Thanks to all the appeals - because that's what happens when you stupidly stuff a bunch of people into a RICO indictment - that case got pushed back as well.

Now, in the time that Trump could have been stewing behind bars if he was taken care of in 2021, he gained momentum - and unified the once divided GOP. The struggles of the Biden Administration, Harris not performing with the border or anything for that matter, the first debate debacle, Trump surviving assassination attempts, the second debate that was overshadowed by the extreme bias of ABC, Walz not performing in his debate against Vance - all of this allowed the former POTUS to chart a path back to the White House.

And now, for a personal message to Democrats. Do me a favor... stop taking us for granted.

We DON'T have to vote for a "black" woman who made her name locking up black people in California left and right, but
(Continued on page 14)

93 JOBS (Continued from page 8)

According to the October 18 nj.com article, "East Orange Superintendent Christopher Irving told WABC-TV the school board mistakenly thought it would receive a larger increase in state funding to balance its budget. But, East Orange did not receive the same increases in state aid that some neighboring districts received for the 2024-2025 school year.

"Around us, Newark received \$100 million, and our colleagues in Irvington and Orange received almost \$15 - \$30 million respectively," Irving said. "And we got \$200,000. And for us we know that's unfair ... Irving did not explain why it took until October for the school board to address the budget problems when projected state aid numbers were announced in March, and the state budget was approved in June."

Parents react

Angry parents vented their frustration on the school district's Facebook page, nj.com reported.

"You are breaking up our school and destroying our school family by taking away our coaches and teachers," one parent wrote, all in capital letters. "What will happen to our kids now? We need our teachers and coaches," nj.com reported.

Another parent was upset that students would be out early after only a half-day of school.

One commenter wrote on social media, "They could've

sent a blast last night and gave parents an opportunity to make arrangements for their children."

According to RLS Media, "Parents in particular, worry that the cuts could lead to larger class sizes, fewer resources for students, and less individualized attention for those that need it most.

As reported by RLS Media, one parent said, "We put our children in the hands of these teachers and staff every day, and now we don't know what's going to happen. This feels like a betrayal."

According to msn.com, parents also expressed shock, as their children face another half day of school on October 18.

"Make this make sense. Where's the money?" Mother Maria Irvin said outside the school Friday. "The mayor needs to answer a lot of questions, lots. You see new parks being built, you see these high-rises going up, and you see this school system that's already terrible going down even more."

"They're knocking off teachers, and the kids need these teachers. The kids look up to these teachers, and they have a lot of things that they're going through throughout their homes, and the teachers are sometimes a psychiatrist," said Ilyas Williams, who brought his nephew to school. "To take away a mentor, as such, would just be detrimental to the kids," msn.com reported Mrs. Irvin as saying.

The superintendent said schools took a half day because many families and teachers are mentally exhausted from the or-

deal.

Statement by the East Orange School District

East Orange Mayor Ted Green, Superintendent Dr. Christopher Irving and Board President Andrea McPhatter released a joint statement, dated October 17, 2024.

"On Wednesday, October 16, the East Orange Board of Education made the challenging decision to implement layoffs, affecting 71 in-school staff members and four district employees. This step was taken as part of a broader plan to stabilize the financial complexities currently facing the East Orange School District (EOSD).

"We want to emphasize to all members of the East Orange school community that these adjustments are being made with careful consideration and will not diminish the quality of education that our students receive. Many of our instructional coaches, who possess valuable classroom experience, will transition back into school environments, thereby facilitating a seamless learning experience for our students even amidst the adjustments.

"In addition to supporting our students, we are fully committed to assisting all affected employees in their job searches. In the first week of November, we will host In-District Transition Career Fairs with six neighboring school districts: Elizabeth, South Orange & Maplewood, Irvington, Orange, Union, and Paterson, each of which has

expressed willingness to engage in job placement efforts for our laid-off staff.

"Currently, the EOSD is grappling with a staggering projected deficit of \$8 million for the 2024-2025 academic year. This financial shortfall has been exacerbated by significant overages in several critical areas, including food service, transportation costs, and out-of-district tuition. These challenges have compounded over time, making it imperative for us to take decisive action now to secure the long-term financial viability of the East Orange School District."

State intervention?

"You should assume all options are on the table. Our commissioner wanted to meet today, and they could not. I think early next week... he's going to meet Monday. We cannot have a community as big as East Orange continue like this," New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy said on Friday via msn.com.

Unanswered Questions

A crisis like the one in East Orange has many unanswered questions. Why did not the previous East Orange Superintendent do something about the financial shortfall? Why has the teachers' union been working for two years without a contract? Why did East Orange not act on the budget shortfall until after the school year had already begun? Where is the money going?

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ELECTION (Cont. from page 7)

tion. Its delivery crew noticed, for the first time in four years, that there were no such candidate signs, palm cards or banners posted in Orange as of Oct. 17.

Perhaps the campaign managers feel that no publicity was needed since there are three candidates running to fill three seats. Orange, in recent elections, have had less than 3,000 voters, from a registration pool of some 15,000, deciding who are in municipal and school board offices.

WEST ORANGE - Four candidates are seeking the two three-year terms and a fifth to complete an unexpired term.

Adam Kraemer, who has previously run for other public office, is making a solo run. Jeffrey Litchman is flying his own "For the Children" flag.

Incumbents Brian Rock and Eric Steveson share their "West Orange Forward" standard.

Dr. Dia Bryant is making her

first elective run -but only to complete an unexpired term the former school principal and "For Our Kids" banner holder was appointed to fill the vacancy last year. She is running unopposed.

SOUTH ORANGE / MAPLEWOOD voters face a ballot of seven candidates, among two slates and a solo runner, for three seats on their two-town board.

Former board member Jeff Bennett, of South Orange, Maplewoodian and U.S. Government Accounting Office assistant director Deidre Brown and South Orange's Meadowlark Media CEO Bimal Kapadia "Include, Achieve, Inspire."

Maplewoodian and former teacher Paul Stephan is running his own "Empowering Students Together" campaign.

Current board president Dr. Qawi Telesford and vice president Arun Vadlamani, both of South Orange, and newcomer Bethany Joseph, of Maplewood, are running on their

"Community, Collaboration, Stability" platform.

Former board president Kaitlin Wittleder, of Maplewood, has declined re-election.

BLOOMFIELD has two slates of three candidates each to choose three school board members from.

Incumbent Michael Heller, Vice President Shane Berger and member Viviana Rojas are on their "More Classroom Space" slate.

Jessica A. Alvies, Joelle Bernhard and Matthew J. Brewster are "All For Kids" challengers.

MONTCLAIR voters have six candidates - one slate and three independents - to put into three board seats.

Challenger Andrew Gideon, board appointee Sean L. Long and newcomer June Raegner are running on the "Every Student Thrives" pennant.

Jada Roman is on her own "Inclusive Educational Community" ticket. Holly Shaw wants to

have "Every Student Counts." Incumbent Eric Scherzer wants "Accountability, Continuity, Transparency."

Board Vice President Mfreke "Monk" Inyang and members Yvonne Bouknight and Brian Fleischer are not seeking re-election.

GLEN RIDGE has three candidates running for as many school board seats. Incumbents Anthony Bonnett and Kristin O'Neil and debuting candidate Roy DeLorenzi are running with Civic Conference Committee endorsement. David Campbell, who ran with Bonnett and O'Neil in 2021, declined re-election.

BELLEVILLE voters are to choose from four candidates to fill two Belleville Board of Education Trustee seats.

Kenia Nicole Arroyabee wants to be "Bridging the Gaps." Incumbent Nicole Coviello-Daddis wants to put "Belleville's Children First."

(Continued on page 14)

EDITORIAL (Cont. from page 12)

only changed course due to her political ambitions.

We DON'T have to vote for someone who is Nancy Pelosi's personal pet project, and who is said to be "bold" but is afraid to hold a press conference.

We DON'T have to vote for someone because Barack Obama said so. News flash: We did that in 2020!!! He told us to vote for Joe and look what happened. Like "someone" once said, "Never underestimate Joe's ability to 'F' something up!"

Speaking of celebrities, we DON'T have to vote for someone just because Taylor Swift said so.

A lot of her fans feel that they owe it to her to vote the way she does. Here's the truth. Brace yourself, because it gets pretty... expensive.

To all her fans: You spent your money on her old albums, you spent your money on her new album, you spent your money on her re-released albums, you spent your money on her "Eras" tour, you spent your money on travel for her tour, you spent your money on hotel or motel rooms for her tour, you spent your money on merchandise for her tour, you spent your money to see the music documentary of her tour, you spent your money on Disney Plus to rewatch the music documentary of her tour with special added

features, you spent your money on her other new album, you spent your money on the special version of her other new album.

You dipped into your savings, maxed out your credit cards, and took out loans for everything Taylor Swift, and you made her a billionaire. When it comes to YOUR vote, guess what? You don't owe Taylor Swift a DAMN thing!

(By the way, if she sees this, she better not get any ideas about dissing me in a song either. I have a pen. I know people who make beats - and I ain't Jake Gyllenhaal. I can, and WILL defend myself.)

Finally, we DON'T have to vote for a Party that does the very things they accuse Trump of doing...

Dog whistles: When someone says she's against fracking, but then says she's for it, but immediately says "my values haven't changed..." that sounds like a dog whistle to me.

Retaliation: Remember that Primary not long ago, where Tulsi Gabbard destroyed Kamala? It was so bad, that Kamala was the first to drop out. And now, not long after Kamala was INSTALLED - like a dictator - as the nominee, Tulsi ended up on a "special" Quiet Skies list, in which they harass her and her husband.

Gaslighting: Saying that Kamala Harris wasn't the Border Czar, when she WAS the Border

Czar. Calling something the "Inflation Reduction Act" when it was the "Green New Deal" in wolf's clothing.

At the debate, Kamala said there were no active military serving right now. And yet, some military personnel were watching, and said, "Where the heck are we right now?" And they didn't say "heck" either.

They want you to have "joy" despite the current state of the country. They insist that everything is fine. There is a meme online that perfectly encompasses this. It's the one with the dog in the burning room, and the dog says, "This is fine. I'm okay with what's happening." THAT is the Democratic Party right now.

And last but not least... the Threat to Democracy: Never mind Project 2025, the REAL threat to this nation is "PROJECT 1984" being run by the Democrats. For those who have not read "1984" here is what is happening RIGHT NOW. The Democrats have seized control of the media. This is their plan: "Control The Messaging... Control The People."

For example, transgender topics on YouTube. Anything pro-Trans gets boosted and celebrated. However, if someone wants to share their story about any regrets they have or the pitfalls that come with it, the video either gets suppressed or demonetized, or the account gets a

strike or is even banned. That is a blatant violation of free speech.

Do you remember all those Kamala staffers who QUIT because they couldn't stand her? Thanks to the media, it was swept under the rug.

That nasty sound you hear is Edward R. Murrow rolling over in his grave whenever he hears ABC News. The sound of CBS News makes the spirit of Walter Cronkite shrug in disgust. You want to know how you combat this? Boycott ABC News and CBS News!

Remember CNN? Sure, they're still not completely unbiased, but they're not as bad now. Why? Because people stopped watching for a bit. When that happened, they moved away from the far left and closer to the middle. That is how you straighten out "owned" news media.

The Democrats have executed one of the best examples of "political backfire" in history. To think, all of this could have been avoided if they had just finished it in 2021. They played stupid games, and on Election Day, they're going to get stupid prizes: Another Trump Presidency, and everything that comes with it.

Have a nice week. Someone will talk to you next week.

Remember, if I have an "accident" after writing this, it wasn't an accident.

ELECTION (Cont. from pg. 13)

Esteban Leon is campaigning under "A Better Belleville" banner. Mayor Michael Melham has been fielding himself and other trustee and township council candidates under his SBB brand for several years.

Jean Rodriguez Gillis says she is among "Teachers for Belleville." Trustee Nelson Barrara has opted not to run for reelection.

NUTLEY voters have four candidates to fill three board seats. All three incumbents and the one challenger are running under their own slogans.

Current board Vice President Joseph Battaglia has no slogan on ballot. Incumbent Daniel Frignals features "Foundation

and Future." Stephen Gilberti says he has "7 Million Reasons." to run again. Member Nicholas Scotti says he is putting "Nutley Families First."

The following Early Voting Stations are open 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. weekdays and Saturdays and 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Sundays:

- BLOOMFIELD - Watsessing Park Community Center.
- EAST ORANGE - City Hall
- IRVINGTON - Municipal Building
- WEST ORANGE - South Mountain Reservation Complex Berson Family Center
- NEWARK: Branch Brook Park Cherry Blossom Welcome Center, Essex County Complex Parking Garage -

West Market Street Entrance, Weequahic Park Community Center - Elizabeth and Meeker avenues Entrance, West Side Park Community Center 600 South 17th St.

"Local Talk" 24/7 Ballot Drop Box Locations until 8 p.m. Nov. 5 are:

- BLOOMFIELD - Firehouse No. 3, 124 E. Passaic Ave.
- EAST ORANGE - City Hall
- GLEN RIDGE - Municipal Building.
- IRVINGTON - Police Department portico, Beasley Civic Square
- MAPLEWOOD - Police and Court Building, 1618 Springfield Ave.

- MONTCLAIR - Municipal Building, 205 Claremont Ave.,
- NUTLEY - Town Hall, 1 Kennedy Dr.,
- ORANGE - Freddie Polhill Law and Justice Complex, 29 Park St.
- SOUTH ORANGE - Firehouse Gazebo, 26 Solan St.
- WEST ORANGE - South Mountain Complex Parking Deck, Town Hall - 66 Main St.
- NEWARK - City Hall, Essex County Hall of Records.

Nov. 5 voting machine polling station locations will be announced in advance. Details and answers may be found at Essex-clerk.com.

TOWN WATCH

(Continued from page 10)

keep its anchor crown? The Whole Foods supermarket (formerly Pathmark and Hills) is to enlarge to 311,000 sq. ft.

Neither party said why it took a full year since WOPB approval to sign the lease. What is now West Orange Plaza at 235 Prospect Ave., opened on the former Horn golf driving range and ice cream stand in 1957.

SOUTH ORANGE / MAPLEWOOD - A State Superior Court-Elizabeth appellate judge panel has dismissed two libel lawsuits filed by a former South Orange-Maplewood School District teacher against two Muslim rights organizations Oct. 15 -- but allowed a third, against a noted township fencer to proceed.

The three judge panel that Tuesday ruled that former Seth Boyden Elementary Demonstration School teacher Tamar Herman "is a public figure and must prove that statements made against her were malicious."

Judges Thomas W. Summers, Jr., Ronald Susswein and Stanley L. Bergman, Jr.'s ruling, which upheld a lower court ruling, that dismissed libel suits against NJCAIR and one other group. They meanwhile greenlighted Tamar Herman vs. Ibtihaj Muhammad to proceed.

Herman had filed suit against the three defendants Oct. 3, 2023. She also has a separate suit against SOMSD's administrators and board of education.

The chain of events started in 2012 when Herman noticed a girl in her classroom wearing a pullover hooded sweatshirt and tried to pull its hood back. She had testified that she moved the hood back when she had noticed the hajib the girl was wearing underneath.

The girl told her parents what had happened - who, in turn, told their friend Muhammad. The Olympic medal-earning team fencer, a Boyden and Columbia High School alumnae, posted on Instagram the next day that the teacher had pulled off her hijab.

Muhammad's message was picked up by NJCAIR and the other group, launching a social media barrage against Herman and the school district. The school board put her on immediate administrative leave. Herman said that her home had to have police protection.

BLOOMFIELD - Bloomfield Police Department detectives - and not those from the ECPO Homicide and Major Crimes Task Force as of press time - are continuing their investigation of a Newark motorcyclist's fatal Oct. 14 crash.

Bloomfield Public Safety Director Samuel DeMaio said that some of his of-

ficers responded to several Broughton Avenue residents' 11 p.m. 911 calls that Monday of a motor vehicle accident.

Arriving officers found a man - identified as Cristobal C. Moronta, 42 - lying on the ground with severe injuries. It had appeared that he had been thrown from his bike. Moronta, despite BPD officers and local EMS aid, died at the scene.

Last rites for Moronta, who was born Oct. 12, 1982, were held at Newark's Alvarez Funeral Home Oct. 21-22. Mother Juana and daughters Marielys and Mia are among "Cris' " survivors. A GoFundMe.com page has been set up for funeral expenses and as the daughters' college fund.

BPD did not call their county colleagues since they found no suspicious activity in the accident. Details of where the crash happened along Broughton nor of any other damage have not been disclosed as of press time.

MONTCLAIR - The Glenfield Middle School PTA, with state PTA supervision, will be holding an Oct. 29 or 30 vote here to replace its board.

The new election will also be overseen by Interim GMS PTA President Jeremy Pohlwattana, who was installed by PTA members at their Sept. 25 meeting. Members present that Wednesday night ended a contentious meeting by voting 59 -0 to remove incumbent president Dee Thompson.

Thomson, post Sept. 25, said that "a disgruntled group of vigilante individuals brought their family and friends to interrupt the meeting. They interrupted the meeting enough that no business could be conducted. We had no choice but to adjourn the meeting before it could officially begin."

NAACP Montclair Branch President and former PTA president Diane Tyree-Anglin, who was at that meeting, said Glenfield PTA sessions are rarely contentious. She considers the ouster or disruption as "miscommunication and a poor transition."

Thompson was elected to a two-year term in May 2022. Her critics said that her "corrosive leadership" has led to a lack of transparency of the PTA's finances. Six board members had resigned and Thompson had stayed on without calling for a May 2024 election.

"While I'm disappointed on how we got here, I'm excited about the path we're about to take to strengthen our Glenfield PTA community and to temporarily lead us to resolution," said Pohlwattana. "I'm happy to take on the role of interim president. I assure you that our children and mine are in good hands."

BELLEVILLE - Township firefighters finished what a "runaway boiler" at

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Carmer Avenue started in evacuating a residence there on Oct. 15.

The first BFD units responded to calls of smoke coming from a house on the avenue's 70 block at 10 p.m. that Tuesday. Evacuated residents said they were also experiencing high heat "and loud noises."

All BFD hands, concerned about a possible boiler explosion, ran hose lines to the building's basement, taped off a perimeter and called PSE&G. One of the utility's work truck crews soon arrived to shut off the boiler's gas feed line.

Fire units from Bloomfield and Nutley arrived at the scene for mutual aid. Other units from Orange, West Orange and Montclair supplied BFD station coverage.

There were no reported injuries. The state's heating season began on Oct. 1.

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