

LOCAL TALK

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25¢

"LET'S TALK FOR THE BETTERMENT OF OUR COMMUNITIES"

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

ESSEX COUNTY • EAST ORANGE • ORANGE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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BELOVED HIGH SCHOOL SET TO CLOSE THIS YEAR

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LOCAL RESIDENTS AMONG PARDONED JAN. 6 DEFENDANTS

By Walter Elliott

NEWARK - When President Donald J. Trump issued full and unconditional pardons to the some 1,500 people who have been convicted of or awaiting jurisprudence on Jan. 6, 2021 insurrection charges Jan. 20, it meant that they can walk out of prison, jail or court as free men and women.

Trump, in his sweeping executive orders, also commuted the sentences of 15 former Proud Boys and Oath Keepers officials. One of those commuted was Enrique Tarrío, who was released later that Monday from a federal medium security prison in Louisiana for Miami. The Proud Boys leader was serving a 22-year sentence for seditious conspiracy.

Some of them - whose charges range from trespassing to assault to seditious conspiracy - may be walking about their former haunts here in "Local Talk" land as of press time.

It is not clear whether Trump's pardons and commutations would expunge records of those who have already served their sentence - as in the case of Elias Irizarry, who was a Montclair High School student who spoke before the Township Council in Feb. 22, 2017.

Irizarry, the 17, spoke before the council over its pending resolution to designate the township as a "welcoming" community instead of a "sanctuary" community. He was representing himself as Chairman of the Essex County Teenage Republicans and in opposition to "sanctuary"



status.

Irizarry told the council and the council chamber gallery audience that Montclair was diverse except for anybody with right-wing opinions." He added that "We need to put Montclair citizens first, not undocumented foreigners."

The "welcoming" communi-

ty measure was passed 4-2 with one council member absent.

Irizarry came to Washington, D.C. Jan. 6 by way of Charleston, S.C. The MHS Class of 2018 graduate was accepted to The Citadel military college there. He was given a gold star

(Continued on page 5)

ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE WOMEN'S TEAM SHOWING PROMISE FOR THE FUTURE

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Photos By Felicia Laguerre Owens




RONALD L. RICE ARTS CENTER WEST OPENS FOR YOUTH EXPLORATION OF ARTS AND MUSIC

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Photo Courtesy Newark Press Office



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Editorial

Dhiren Shah
Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

The two main wars in the world involve Russia and Ukraine and Israel and Hamas. So many innocent people have been killed in those countries. The history of war we all have read is just anti-humanity. It only takes a few politicians and leaders to divert the people's minds and drag countries or groups of people to war.

The United States and Russia has agreed to meet at Saudi Arabia without the presence of Ukraine. As per some news, Ukraine was invited, but Ukraine President Zelensky wants the European Union to be a part of it.

When two parties like Ukraine and Russia are involved

in a war and one party is not involved to the negotiations, can there really be a solution to end the war? I don't think so. However, everyone knows that Ukraine was strong due to the support of the United States. I hope Russia and the U.S. make a suitable plan and invite Ukraine to join the negotiations and find a common solution. Zelensky already said that he wants a guarantee of protection and entry to NATO. However, the war started because some leaders of the world wanted Ukraine to be a part of NATO. A NATO membership meant that member countries could develop military resources in Ukraine, which is right next to Russia. In the 1960s when Russia wanted to have a nuclear base in Cuba, the U.S. objected, suggesting a safety issue. In the same way, Russia is objecting to NATO membership for Ukraine.

CNN reports: "Speaking to reporters after meeting Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov

in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Rubio said 'concessions' will have to be made by 'all sides' in order for the conflict to end."

If Trump's suggestion to develop the Gaza Strip goes forward, then the Palestinians must have some rights to buy properties at a discounted price. Many rich people from around the world may buy property in Gaza if Trump's plans are accepted. The economy of the Gaza Strip will improve drastically.

At the Daytona 500 in Florida, William Byron won the race for the second straight year. Before the race, President Trump's armored limousine took a lap around the track. He received great applause, similar to what he got at the Super Bowl and the Army-Navy Game. While a lot of the voters in the country, mainly from this area, still have great anger towards him, the other half likes what he represents. Time will tell if he can convince the other side to have faith in him.

U.S. District Judge of Manhattan Dale Ho has ordered the Department of Justice and Eric Adams's lawyer to explain a highly unusual request. The Judge will not remove the case because of the deal made between Trump's DOJ to remove the charges in return for Adams's help or cooperate with ICE for removing undocumented immigrants from the city.

My main goal in starting the newspaper was to improve the quality of life for the "Local Talk" area residents. It might have improved a little bit in the past 20 years, but not significantly. There is too much politics in our area. Nepotism is a disease, and it has not improved yet. I don't know the solution, but if anyone has an idea, please write to us. We will be glad to publish it.

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>
Snow likely	Sunny	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy / Rain	Partly Cloudy
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Advisory Council Created to Address HIV, STIs, and Viral Hepatitis

TRENTON - Governor Phil Murphy has signed Executive Order No. 381 establishing an Advisory Council on HIV, STIs, and Viral Hepatitis (Advisory Council) to help bolster the State's efforts to uplift public health. The Advisory Council will be responsible for coordinating initiatives designed to combat the HIV epidemic, the rising cases of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and viral hepatitis, and the risks of contracting such diseases through injection drug use.

The Advisory Council on HIV, STIs, and Viral Hepatitis, which will be led by the New Jersey Department of Health, repurposes the over 20-year-old Governor's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS and Related Blood Borne Pathogens with a broader mission. The Advisory Council will now bring together government officials and members of the public with an updated mandate to tackle these pressing communicable disease threats to public health with specific attention to the disproportionate impact of HIV, STIs, and viral hepatitis on New Jersey's Black, Hispanic, Latino, and LGBTQIA+ communities.

This action is particularly timely as, in recent weeks, the federal government has removed critical public health information and services from federally maintained websites, threatening to impede the progress that has been made in combating these diseases as well as impacting the ability to treat those living with HIV/AIDS, STIs, and viral hepatitis.

"For decades, the State has been hard at work to combat the HIV epidemic and, while we have made progress, more work remains to prevent transmission and to support the long, healthy lives of those living with HIV/AIDS. My action today is prompted by

the devastating, disproportionate impact of this disease in New Jersey's LGBTQIA+ communities and communities of color. Paired with the increasing threat of STIs and viral hepatitis, now more than ever it is critical to continue pursuing initiatives that will keep our state and residents healthy. We cannot waver when it comes to public health," said Governor Murphy.

"I commend my predecessors for taking on this challenge and I am proud to underscore New Jersey's commitment to combat the spread of these often co-occurring diseases by establishing the Department of Health's Advisory Council on HIV, STIs, and Viral Hepatitis."

The Advisory Council's main purposes are:

- Coordinating efforts among public and private health care agencies and providers, community-based organizations, and other strategic partners to promote public awareness and education on the prevention and treatment of HIV, STIs, and viral hepatitis and how to access related services in New Jersey;
- Identifying or developing opportunities or strategies that may be used to combat the HIV epidemic, STIs, and viral hepatitis, including, but not limited to, efforts to implement the Strategic Plan to End the HIV Epidemic in New Jersey by 2025; and
- Recommending policies, projects, programs, initiatives, or services designed to improve health outcomes and reduce health outcome disparities, including efforts to address systemic inequities affecting HIV, STI, and viral hepatitis health care.

Through New Jersey's End the HIV Epidemic Plan, the State is committed to reducing the number of new HIV infections, expanding access to HIV testing, and promoting access and linkage to care for individuals diagnosed with HIV.

The Advisory Council will be chaired by the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Health or their designee and will consist of senior officials from across state government whose responsibilities are crucial to supporting public health.

The Senate President and Assembly Speaker will each be responsible for recommending two members of their Legislative bodies and the Commissioner of Health will appoint a minimum of 25 public members - including public health care professionals, policy experts, social and direct care organization representatives, advocates and individuals who have lived experience with HIV, STDs, or viral hepatitis - to serve on the Advisory Council.

FDA Approves First Rapid-Acting Insulin Biosimilar Product for Treatment of Diabetes

On Feb. 14, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved Merilog (insulin-aspart-szjj) as biosimilar to Novolog (insulin aspart) for the improvement of glycemic control in adults and pediatric patients with diabetes mellitus. Merilog, a rapid-acting human insulin analog, is the first rapid-acting insulin biosimilar product approved by the FDA. As a rapid-acting insulin, Merilog helps to lower mealtime blood sugar spikes to improve control of blood sugar in people with diabetes. The approval is for both a 3 milliliter (mL) single-patient-use prefilled pen and a 10 milliliter (mL) multiple-dose vial.

Merilog is the third insulin biosimilar product approved by the FDA and joins the two long-acting insulin biosimilar products approved in 2021 by the FDA. Approval of biosimilar products can increase patient access to safe and effective treatment options.

"The FDA has now approved three biosimilar insulin products to treat diabetes," said Peter Stein, M.D., director of the Office of New Drugs in the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. "Today's approval highlights our continued efforts to improve the efficiency of the biosimilar approval process to help support a competitive marketplace and increase options for costly treatments, like insulin. Increasing access to safe, effective and high-quality medications at potentially lower cost remains a continued priority for the FDA."

Biological products include medications for treating many serious illnesses and chronic

health conditions, including diabetes. A biosimilar is a biological product that is highly similar to, and has no clinically meaningful differences from, a biological product already approved by the FDA (also called the reference product). Patients can expect the same safety and effectiveness from the biosimilar as from the reference product. To date, the FDA has approved 65 biosimilar products for a variety of health conditions.

More than 38 million people in the U.S. have been diagnosed with diabetes, a disease that occurs when blood glucose (sugar) is too high. Approximately 8.4 million Americans rely on insulin therapy, either rapid-acting and/or long-acting, to manage diabetes. Insulin, a hormone made by the pancreas, helps glucose get into a person's cells to be used for energy. With diabetes, the pancreas doesn't make enough insulin to keep blood sugar levels in the normal range, which can lead to serious health problems for patients.

"For the millions of people who rely on daily injections of insulin for treatment of diabetes, having a biosimilar option for their rapid-acting insulin injection can truly make a difference, as biosimilar products have the potential to increase access to these life-saving medications," said Sarah Yim, M.D., director of the Office of Therapeutic Biologics and Biosimilars in the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research.

Like Novolog, Merilog should be administered within five to ten minutes prior to the start of a meal. Merilog is administered subcutaneously (under the skin) by injection into the stomach, buttocks, thighs or upper arms. Dosing of Merilog should be individualized and adjusted based on the patient's needs.

Merilog may cause serious side effects, including hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), severe allergic reactions and hypokalemia (low potassium in blood). Other common side effects may include injection site reactions, itching, rash, lipodystrophy (skin thickening or pitting at the injection site), weight gain and swelling of hands and feet.

The FDA granted approval of Merilog to Sanofi-Aventis U.S. LLC.

RONALD L. RICE ARTS CENTER WEST OPENS FOR YOUTH EXPLORATION OF ARTS AND MUSIC

Newark, NJ - February 18, 2025 - Mayor Ras J. Baraka, the Office of Violence Prevention and Trauma Recovery (OVPTR), Invest Newark, members of the family of the late New Jersey State Senator Ronald L. Rice, and other dignitaries opened the Ronald L. Rice Arts Center West. The facility is located at 460-462 South 18th Street in the West Ward.

In his more than 40 years of public service, the late Senator also served as Newark's West Ward Council Member and as Deputy Mayor. In keeping with his legacy of investing in the city's youth, the mission of the center is to provide a safe, educational space for learning, creating, and sharing their artistic visions and talents with the community. Music recording, video editing, and photography classes will be offered to youth living in the West Ward and throughout the city.

In addition to healing trauma through music and the electronic and digital arts, the center will offer youth support services with a therapeutic focus, serving residents aged 12-24. It will operate from Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., with social workers embedded to offer therapeutic services that include family counseling. Classes begin on March 1.

"This ribbon cutting is bittersweet for me," said Mayor Baraka. "On one hand, I'm proud and happy that we are dedicating this center to State Senator Rice, who was a stalwart champion of social justice for more than four decades as a public servant - and who from his first day in the Senate to his last, wrote legislation to help Newark's kids. On the other hand, I'm sorry that the kids who come here will never have the privilege of sitting with him like I did, and learning

firsthand how to see issues with clarity, how to discern the right path to progress, and how to stay true to your vision in every situation, every conversation, and every relationship. But that's the spirit this center was built on, and it's my hope that the energy of positivity and persistence helps all who come here find their calling and carve their future."

The center supports a neighborhood that has long faced challenges. Recognizing that trauma often leaves deep emotional wounds, it is dedicated to harnessing the unique power of the arts to help youth process their experiences, build strength, and find hope. Through a range of art therapy programs, creative workshops, and community events, the center aims to:

- Provide a protective, nurturing, environment for creative expression.
- Empower youth to transform personal and collective pain into art.
- Foster resilience and healing through collaborative and innovative programming.

The Senator's son, Ronald C. Rice, and his daughter, Yuki Rice, were on hand to witness the community's gratitude and praise for their father's unwavering commitment to Newark and the West Ward he loved so much. Both have dedicated themselves to public service and improving the lives of the most vulnerable. Mr. Rice served as West Ward Council Member from 2006 to 2014, representing the neighborhoods of Vailsburg, Ivy Hill, West Side, Fairmount, and Roseville.

Ms. Rice devotes her training and skills to the instruction of healthcare providers and the development of programs for dementia, brain trauma, and end-of-life patients, cur-

rently serving as Director of Resident Engagement & Program Development at a residential facility, and as Board Member of the National Certification Council for Activity Professionals. They addressed the crowd in a joint statement.

"We are overjoyed and proud that this community continues to honor our father's legacy. With the entire family, we are so touched that the city we love continues to value and build upon what our father worked so hard to accomplish for this and future generations. We are grateful to Mayor Baraka, OVPTTR, Invest Newark, and most importantly the residents and taxpayers of Newark for this honor," said Council Member Rice and Ms. Rice.

"The Rice Family prioritized the arts and mental wellness in this part of the West Ward with a recording studio at the old West Side Boys & Girls Club, created and funded by Shaquille O'Neal, as well as the Family Success Center at Georgia King Village, made possible through city dollars and Newark Now. Today, we look back with pride at the foundation our father laid, but set our sights on tomorrow as we take a big step forward in the West Ward's future."

Newark-based visual artist Gregg Banks was selected to provide a mural that embodies the center's intent, in addition to accentuating the building's architectural finishes. His work has been displayed at City Hall, the Gant-Gilbert Arts Collective, as well as The Newark Museum of Art.

Youth will be able to register for programs at the center or by calling the main OVPTTR office at 973-733-5655. The Spring and Summer schedules will be available on March 1.

JAN. 6 (Cont. from page 1)

for academics, was a member of the Gastonia, N.C. Civil Air Patrol and "Citadel Bulldogs for Trump" when the 2020-21 winter holiday break came around.

Irizarry drove to metro Washington Jan. 5 and stayed overnight in a hotel with two friends. U.S. Department of Justice documents have him seen entering The Capitol and was photographed watching the chaos below from the building's rooftop and holding a metal pole given to him by another rioter.

Although he did not attack any of the Capitol Police officers, we witnessed the violence and directed some of the rioters. He had entered the building through a broken window and was seen sitting in an atrium with the pole on his lap.

Irizarry returned to Charles-

ton, where he was arrested on a warrant by FBI agents Jan. 15. He was charged in federal court Jan. 16 with knowingly entering or remaining in any restricted building or grounds without lawful authority and knowingly engaging in disorderly or disruptive conduct in said restricted building or grounds.

Irizarry posted an unsecured \$25,000 release bond and returned April 16 to plead not guilty to all counts under arraignment. He pleaded guilty before U.S. Judge Tanya Chutkan in Washington, D.C. to the first count Oct. 26, 2022.

Chutkan sentenced him to 14 days imprisonment and \$500 restitution for the misdemeanor crime March 15, 2023. That restitution went towards \$2.7 million in repairing The Capitol. The Citadel meanwhile suspended the political science major for

"Conduct Unbecoming a Cadet" Dec. 14, 2022.

Although Irizarry, now 23, still has parents in Montclair, it is more likely that he will resume civilian life in Rock Hill, S.C. It was there where he had entered the Republican Primary for State House of Representatives District 43, namely parts of Chester and York counties, March 24, 2024.

Irizarry lost the June 6 primary to incumbent Randy Ligon. There were no Democratic Party candidates fielded for the June 8 or Nov. 5 elections there.

It is less clear whether the vice president of the Proud Boys North Jersey Chapter had ties to West Orange.

Although Shawn Price's official address during his jurisprudence was Morris County's Rockaway Township, FBI agents had linked through "his

cell phone records to a previous address in West Orange." Price had also resided in Hopatcong in Sussex County.

FBI agents had arrested Price in Rockaway on June 8, 2012 and was arraigned June 16 on the following counts:

- Obstruction of Justice/Congress, influencing or impeding an official proceeding or attempting to do so or to aid, abet, counsel, induce or command the commission thereof.
- Violent Entry and Disorderly Conduct on Capitol Grounds/Obstructing law enforcement during a civil disorder.
- Knowingly engaging in disorderly or disruptive conduct in any restricted property or grounds.
- Knowingly entering or re-

(Continued on page 12)



UNITED STATES



MORE ACTION COMING ON TARIFFS

As other nations responded to tariffs by levying some of their own, President Donald J. Trump signed a Presidential Memorandum ordering the development of a comprehensive plan for restoring fairness in U.S. trade relationships and countering non-reciprocal trading arrangements.

Per the White House website:

- The “Fair and Reciprocal Plan” will seek to correct longstanding imbalances in international trade and ensure fairness across the board.
- Gone are the days of America being taken advantage of: this plan will put the American worker first, improve our competitiveness in every area of industry, reduce our trade deficit, and bolster our economic and national security.

AMERICA WILL NO LONGER TOLERATE UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICES: The United States is one of the most open economies in the world, yet our trading partners keep their markets closed to our exports. This lack of reciprocity is unfair and contributes to our large and persistent annual trade deficit.

There are endless examples where our trading partners do not give the United States reciprocal treatment.

- The U.S. tariff on ethanol is a mere 2.5%. Yet Brazil charges the U.S. ethanol exports a tariff of 18%. As a result, in 2024, the U.S. imported over \$200 million in ethanol from Brazil while the U.S. exported only \$52 million in ethanol to Brazil.
- The U.S. average applied Most Favored Nation (MFN) tariff on agricultural goods is 5%. But India’s average applied MFN tariff is 39%. India also charges a 100% tariff on U.S. motorcycles, while we only charge a 2.4% tariff on Indian motorcycles.
- The European Union can export all the shellfish it wants to America. But the EU bans shellfish exports from 48 of our states, despite committing in 2020 to expedite approvals for shellfish exports. As a result, in 2023, the U.S. imported \$274 million in shellfish from the EU but exported only \$38 million.
- The EU also imposes a 10% tariff on imported cars. Yet the U.S. only imposes a 2.5% tariff.
- A 2019 report found that across 132 countries and more than 600,000 product lines, United States exporters face higher tariffs more than two-thirds of the time.

This lack of reciprocity is one source of America’s large and persistent annual trade deficit in goods: closed markets abroad reduce U.S. exports and open markets at home result in significant imports, both of which undercut American competitiveness.

- The United States has run a trade deficit of goods every year since 1975. In 2024, our trade deficit in goods exceeded \$1 trillion.
- Thanks to the proliferation of non-reciprocal barriers in just the last few years, the U.S. now runs a trade deficit in agriculture, worth around \$40 billion in 2024.
- Though America has no such thing, and only America should be allowed to tax American firms, trading partners hand American companies a bill for something called a digital service tax.
- Canada and France use these taxes to each collect over

- \$500 million per year from American companies.
- Overall, these non-reciprocal taxes cost America’s firms over \$2 billion per year.
- Reciprocal tariffs will bring back fairness and prosperity to the distorted international trade system and stop Americans from being taken advantage of.

THE ART OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEAL: President Trump continues to deliver on his mandate given to him by the American People to put America First when it comes to trade.

As President Trump said in the Presidential Memorandum on American First Trade Policy on his first day in office, trade policy is a critical component of our economic security and national security.

- In his first term, President Trump successfully ended the outdated and unfair NAFTA, replacing it with the historic USMCA to deliver one of the largest wins for American workers.
- When our national security was threatened by a global oversupply of steel and aluminum, President Trump took swift action to protect America’s national security by implementing tariffs on imports of these goods.
- In response to China’s intellectual property theft, forced technology transfer, and other unreasonable behavior, President Trump acted with conviction to impose tariffs on imports from China, using that leverage to reach a historic bilateral economic agreement.

Just last week, President Trump leveraged tariffs to force Canada and Mexico to make long-overdue changes at our northern and southern borders, ensuring the safety and security of American citizens.

MASS SHOOTING UPDATE

Information from 2-18-2025

2025 Mass Shooting Stats: (Source: Mass Shooting Tracker, <https://www.massshootingtracker.site/data/?year=2025>)

- Total Mass Shootings: 45

- Total Dead: 63
- Total Wounded: 165
- Shootings Per Day: 0.92
- Days Reached in Year 2025 as of February 18: 49

VATICAN AN UPDATE ON THE POPE

In a Feb. 18 evening press release, the Holy See Press Office says that Pope Francis has double pneumonia, but nevertheless “remains in good spirits.”

“Laboratory tests, chest X-rays, and the clinical condition of the Holy Father continue to present a complex picture.”

In a message to journalists, the Holy See Press Office gave the latest update on the Pope’s health since he was hospitalized on Friday to receive treatment for bronchitis.

The statement added that the Pope’s “polymicrobial infection, which has arisen in the context of bronchiectasis and asthmatic bronchitis, and has required the use of corticosteroid and antibiotics, makes the therapeutic treatment more complex.”

“A follow-up chest CT scan, to which the Holy Father was subjected to - prescribed by the Vatican medical team and the medical staff of the “A. Gemelli” Polyclinic Foundation - revealed the onset of bilateral pneumonia, requiring additional pharmacological therapy.”

“Nevertheless,” the press release adds, “Pope Francis remains in good spirits.”

The Press Office statement concludes by noting that the Pope had “received the Eucharist and, throughout the day, alternated between rest, prayer, and reading. He expresses his gratitude for the support he feels at this time and kindly asks that prayers for him continue.”

MIDDLE EAST RWANDA CRISIS GROWS

In an alert on Feb. 18, the UN human rights office, OHCHR, confirmed that three children were killed by Rwanda-backed M23 armed group in Bukavu, the city in South Kivu which fell to the fighters on Feb. 16.

“Our office has confirmed

(Continued on page 7)

WORLD NEWS (Cont. from page 6)

cases of summary execution of children by M23 after they entered the city of Bukavu last week. We are also aware that children were in possession of weapons,” said OHCHR spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani. “We call on Rwanda and M23 to ensure that human rights and international humanitarian law are respected.”

The OHCHR spokesperson also condemned attacks on hospitals and humanitarian warehouses as well as threats against the judiciary, directly linked to the rapid advance of the M23 fighters across North Kivu and South Kivu.

The crisis has uprooted hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people in a matter of weeks in eastern DRC and between 10,000 and 15,000 people have now crossed into neighboring Burundi in a matter of days, according to the UN refugee agency, UNHCR.

Most of those arriving in Burundi are Congolese, and they have mainly come from the outskirts of Bukavu, where the situation is deteriorating.

These newly uprooted families and individuals join more than 91,000 refugees and asylum-seekers from DRC who arrived decades ago, said UNHCR spokesperson Matt Saltmarsh.

“The situation in the eastern DRC remains extremely challenging and fluid, with recent clashes in South Kivu forcing more than 150,000 people to flee,” he added. “At least 85,000 of these individuals are living in newly created spontaneous sites for internally displaced people, where basic services such as water, shelter and access to health are in extremely short supply.”

Eastern DRC is a mineral-rich region that has seen decades of instability amid a proliferation of armed groups which have forced hundreds of thousands to flee their homes, often seeking safety in displacement camps or in neighboring countries.

Fighting escalated sharply in late January as the largely-Tutsi M23 fighters seized control of parts of North Kivu, including areas near Goma, and advanced towards South Kivu and the eastern DRC’s second city of Bukavu.

Other worrying developments stemming from the crisis include breakouts from Kabare and Bukavu central prisons on Feb. 14, OHCHR’s Ms. Shamdasani noted.

“We have received protection requests from victims and witnesses; they fear retaliation from escapees, given their active participation in the trials against some of these prisoners convicted of grave human rights violations and abuses, some of which amount to international crimes,” she told journalists in Geneva. “We also have concerns for the safety of lawyers and other judicial staff.”

The OHCHR spokesperson added that

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- * COUPLES PROBLEM
- * MONEY PROBLEM
- * WORK PROBLEM
- * FAMILY PROBLEMS
- * HEALTH PROBLEMS
- * NEGATIVE ENERGY
- ETC.....



201-234-7765

journalists, human rights defenders and members of civil society organizations have also been threatened and forced to leave the area.

“Others are still stuck in Bukavu and Goma and expressed fear for their safety due to their active engagement for human rights and their denunciation of violations and abuses committed by Rwanda and M23 in various territories of eastern DRC.”

In response to the unfolding emergency, UN human rights chief Volker Türk called on Rwanda and M23 to protect all individuals in territories under their control.

UNITED KINGDOM
RIVER RAGE
ON THE THAMES

An appalling incident of river rage on the River Thames at Kingston-upon-Thames in July 2024 has ended with £4,334.54 in fines, compensation and costs at Staines magistrates’ court on January 28, 2025.

The perpetrator had navigated his boat

(Continued on page 13)

SPORTS WRAP

By William Hathaway, Jr.

This past week, the Essex County College women's basketball team was in action at home against Raritan Valley Community College. The Seahawks played well, but lost a tough one to RVCC 55-52 before a decent crowd. The young squad is led by head coach Jahreal Cadogan and look to have brighter days ahead. On sophomore night, Jakira Coar led with 28 points along with another sophomore Basirat Animashaun, who had 13 rebounds and four blocks shots.

ECC competes in the Garden State Athletic Conference. The team racked up wins against Howard Community College, Salem Community College, and Delaware Technical Community College 83-64, where Animashaun had 23 points. Other key players to keep an eye out for include Kayley Lynch and Natalie Fonseca.

In Division I college basketball action, the Seton Hall men's basketball team shocked the defending National Champions and 6th ranked team in the country.

The Pirates beat UConn in overtime 69-68, marking the fourth consecutive season in beating the Huskies at home. This broke The Hall's nine game losing streak.

Sophomore Isaiah Coleman led the Pirates with 23 points and 8 rebounds, and Godswill Erhericne had 12 points and 10 rebounds. Connecticut was led by Alex Karaban's 20 points and 6 rebounds while Solo Ball had 15 points and 7 rebounds and Liam McNeeley had 11 points and 9 rebounds. UConn turned the ball over an uncharacteristic 16 times. The win helped SHU to somewhat salvage a dismal 7-18 season.

Of course, the Seton Hall women's team have the opposite record at 18-7, thanks to a win on the road over Providence 59-38. Leading the Lady Pirates were freshman Jada Eads with 13 points and 4 rebounds and Faith Masonius with 12 points and 9 rebounds. Seton Hall is 18-7 10-4 in the Big East, and are looking good for making the Tournament in March.

In the Essex County Tournament high school boys' semifi-



Photos By Felicia Laguerre Owens

nals, top seeded Seton Hall Prep beat St. Benedict's 70-66. Dylan Guzzardo led Prep with 22 points while Alex Ante had 12 points and 8 rebounds. Leading St. Benedict's was Michai White with 34 points and Chase Bay had 11 points. In the other game, Payne Tech continued their 12 game winning streak after beating Arts High 55-43. Leading Payne Tech was Jamir Westry with 26 points and 4 rebounds and Gerald Edwell with 13 points and 20 rebounds. Arts High was led by Kareem Anthony with 17 points. Payne Tech is 17-5 and will play Seton Hall Prep in the Essex County Tournament finals at Essex County College at 1 pm this Saturday.

In the girls' bracket, West Orange defeated Glen Ridge 43-38. Rhyann Watt led 19-6 WOHS with 16 points and Anaya Karriem had 16 points and 14 rebounds. In the other game, Montclair Immaculate beat University 72-55. They will play West Orange for the Essex County Tournament Championship this Saturday at 3 pm at Essex County College.

Finally, Stephen Curry was named as All Star MVP in the NBA's reimagined All Star Game. Meanwhile, Tyler Herro won the 3 Point Shootout and Mac McClung became the first player to win three consecutive Slam Dunk titles.



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STATE GRAND JURY DECLINES TO CHARGE OFFICER IN CONNECTION WITH FATAL VEHICLE COLLISION

TRENTON - A state grand jury has voted not to file any criminal charges against an Elizabeth police officer at the conclusion of its deliberations regarding a December 10, 2023 fatal motor vehicle crash in Elizabeth. The crash victims have been identified as Juan Carlos Alvear, 54, and Ysabel Gonzalez, 63, both of Elizabeth.

Mr. Alvear's and Ms. Gonzalez's deaths were investigated by the Office of Public Integrity and Accountability (OPIA) and presented to New Jersey residents serving on the grand jury in accordance with the Independent Prosecutor Directive of 2019, which was issued following the enactment of a state law requiring the Office of the Attorney General to investigate deaths that occur during an encounter with law enforcement. OPIA issued standard operating procedures (SOPs) in July 2021 to ensure these grand jury presentations are conducted in a neutral,

objective manner, with appropriate transparency regarding the process, consistent with the directive.

The investigation included witness interviews, photographs, review of surveillance video footage, and autopsy results from the medical examiner. This evidence was presented to a state grand jury. After hearing the testimony and evidence, the grand jury concluded its deliberations on January 27, 2025, and voted "no bill," concluding no criminal charges should be filed against Elizabeth Police Officer Michael White.

According to the investigation, on December 10, 2023, officers from the Elizabeth Police Department responded to a call received at approximately 5:42 a.m., reporting the sound of gunfire in the area of Fourth Avenue and Centre Street in Elizabeth. Officer White was one of the responding officers, and he followed a vehicle of interest in his

patrol car through various streets in Elizabeth and onto Routes 1&9. It was later determined that the vehicle of interest was being driven by Jamie Fernandez, 21, from Elizabeth.

At the intersection of Grand Street and Routes 1&9, Mr. Fernandez's vehicle drove through a red light and collided with a taxi. Officer White's vehicle was not involved in the crash. The taxi driver, Mr. Alvear, and the sole passenger of the taxi, Ms. Gonzalez, were killed. Two of the three occupants of Mr. Fernandez's vehicle were arrested and later hospitalized with non-life-threatening injuries. The third individual exited the car and left the scene on foot.

The Union County Prosecutor's Office handled the investigation and prosecution of the driver who collided with Mr. Alvear's taxi, Mr. Fernandez, and his passenger Joel Pieretti, 19, both from Elizabeth. Both defendants entered guilty pleas

on October 21, 2024. Fernandez pleaded guilty to two counts of death by auto and one count of unlawful possession of a weapon. He was sentenced to two consecutive four-year New Jersey state prison terms, a total of eight years, and must serve 85 percent of the sentence before becoming eligible for parole. He was also sentenced to a concurrent five-year prison term on the charge of unlawful possession of a weapon. Pieretti pleaded guilty to joyriding, with a time-served sentence.

Video footage from several surveillance cameras and audio from police radio communications relating to this fatal crash are being released, pursuant to policies established by the Attorney General's Office in 2019 to promote the fair, impartial, and transparent investigation of fatal police encounters. Investigators provided an opportunity to rep-

(Continued on page 13)



DISCLAIMER: The following items are primarily drawn from first responders. Responders' accounts may not be their full activity range. Grand juries hand down indictments when evidence presented them warrant a trial. Named suspects/defendants are innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

MONTCLAIR - The Archdiocese of Newark and the Immaculate Conception High School Board of Trustees announced at 6 p.m. Feb. 12 that their high school here will end a century of service June 30. It was founded by then-parish Pastor Edward Farrell in 1925.

The joint announcement 6 p.m. that Wednesday cited a "continued decline in enrollment, ongoing financial challenges and the condition of the aging facility" for the closing. The Sisters of Charity-run school had 246 students and 25 teachers in 2021-22, which is an improvement when the first Archdiocese call to close came in May 2014, when the school had 168 students.

ICHS classrooms are in a 1928 purpose-built 11 Cottage Place school building that can hold 400 and Tekawitha Hall, an 1899 building for the former IC Elementary School. ICES classes closed June 30, 2001 and its unpromoted students were transferred to other Catholic schools.

The announcement came at the tail end of Catholic Schools Week. ICHS and other Archdiocese schools went on their Feb. 14 "C-Day" holiday closing and Feb. 17-21 Winter Recess. A pledge by RCAN Catholic Schools Superintendent Barbara Solan to hold a resource information session four what would have been ICHS's Classes of 2026-28 has not been set as of press time.

Also telling in the Archdio-

cese-trustees communication is the lack of financial data. When RCAN said that the school would close June 30, 2014 due to a \$900,000 deficit, a nationwide month of alumni and community fundraising donated \$500,000 to keep the school open.

It appears that ICHS's Blue Lions are playing this last season for at least pride. Its 11-13 boys basketball team, who is defending its NJSIAA Non Public North B state championship, got as far as the Essex County Tournament when they were defeated by Newark's St. Peter's Prep, 67-51 Feb. 8.

NEWARK - "Local Talk" is among those waiting to hear the results of a Feb. 6 New Jersey Superior Court-Newark hearing regarding the April 15 school board election ballot.

Outside attorney Scott Salmon, representing the Newark City Clerk's Office, has asked the court to add on the school board election ballot a place for the unexpired Central Ward Council Member term. Salmon had filed for the incorporation as an injunction Jan. 15 against the Essex County Clerk, Essex County Board of Elections and the Newark Public Schools Board of Education.

The county clerk, board of elections and the Newark and Irvington public schools hold annual April elections for their board of education and school budgets. The City of Newark, through Salmon and the clerk's office, wants an election to succeed now-Congresswoman LaMonica McIver as soon as possible.

LaMonica resigned as Newark Municipal Council President Sept. 18 and as Central Ward Councilwoman Jan. 6 after winning a Sept. 18 special election to fill the late Congressman Donald Payne, Jr.'s unexpired term and the Nov. 5 General Election for a full two year term.

McIver, however, has left for the House of Representatives in New Jersey's 10th Congressional District - and with 18 months left on her ward council term as of press time. The city, through Salmon, is arguing that state law requires a special election to any vacant term with at least 12 months left on it.

The Municipal Council, until

the Central Ward vacancy is filled, is at eight members. Those eight can arrive at a 4-4 tie vote, which would send a measure to technical defeat. Mayor Ras Baraka, the way Newark's Mayor-Council is structured, cannot cast a tie-breaking vote. State superior and appellate courts ruled in 2012-13 that then-Mayor Cory A. Booker should not have cast a vote in an attempt to fill a council seat with now-State Assemblywoman Shanique Speight. Salmon - a partner in the Florham Park Jardim, Meisner, Salmon, Sprague and Susser law firm - was hired by the city as an outside special counsel.

The Superior Court Judge's ruling would either allow a partisan elected position to go on a nonpartisan school board election ballot - or prompt the Newark Democratic Committee to either file for a separate Central Ward council election and/or appoint an interim council member until May 2026.

IRVINGTON / MAPLEWOOD - Irvington native Robert F. Noesner, 82, was given a Funeral Mass at Maplewood's St. Joseph Church, up the street where he had been a 47-year resident, Jan. 14. His remains were interred at Kenilworth's Graceland Memorial Park. He died at home, surrounded by his family, Jan. 11.

Noesner, who moved to 719 Prospect St. in Maplewood's College Hill section in 1978, commuted to Union as a 25-year firefighter there. He retired to become Maplewood's fire inspector.

Noesner was born in Irvington General Hospital in 1942, where a mystery exists. He and his family were not found in either township's real estate and telephone listings until 1978; he may have been raised in Union.

He and wife Marie moved to College Hill to raise Robert, Jr., Thomas, Donald and Matthew. The amateur tool and die maker frequented South Orange's Memorial Park Duck Pond. He would test his self-made radio control model boats as a member of the South Orange Seaport Society and RC Model Boat Club.

Nine grandchildren also survive him. Brother Frederick predeceased him. Memorial donations may go to St. Joseph's

Church Maintenance Fund, 797 Prospect St., 07040.

EAST ORANGE - About all that is left with a weapons and narcotics possession case against a city man, now that he has pleaded guilty to three such counts in a Newark federal court Feb. 4, is his June 24 sentencing.

Ibraheem Muhammad, 41, said Acting U.S. Attorney Vikas Khanna that Wednesday, had pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Brian R. Martinotti to one count each of being a former felon in possession of a weapon, possessing a weapon in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime and possessing drugs with intent to distribute.

Court records state that EOPD officers and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives - Newark Field Office agents arrested Muhammad outside of his city apartment here May 9, 2022. City and federal detectives had alleged that they saw Muhammad leave his address and deal in narcotics. They found in his possession "envelopes of heroin."

Muhammad's apartment search yielded cocaine, fentanyl and heroin, packaging materials, about \$14,000 in cash, a Girsan semi-automatic handgun loaded with 14 rounds of ammunition and 15 more rounds of 9mm. ammunition.

Muhammad is facing between five years or life in prison plus a \$250,000 maximum fine for the firearm possession while drug trafficking charge alone. The drug charge carries up to 20 years' prison and a \$1 million maximum fine. Being a felon possessing a firearm carries up to 10 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

Khanna thanked East Orange Public Safety Director Maurise Boyd, among other law enforcers, for his department's part in the investigation.

ORANGE - Both Orange and ECPO detectives have been busy investigating two injurious shootings that happened just yards inside of city limits here Feb. 11 and 6.

OPD units went to Hillyer Street on gunfire reports in the early hours of Feb. 11. They found " a male victim suffering a gunshot wound."

(Continued on page 14)

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ATTORNEYS GENERAL RELEASE STATEMENT ON PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION ISSUED IN BIRTHRIGHT CITIZENSHIP

TRENTON - New Jersey Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin joined the attorneys general of California, Massachusetts, Delaware, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Nevada, New York, Vermont, and the City of San Francisco in releasing the following statement in response to a preliminary injunction being granted by a federal judge against President Trump's unconstitutional executive order terminating birthright citizenship in the multi-state lawsuit led by New Jersey.

"President Trump may believe that he is above the law, but today's preliminary injunction sends a clear message: He is not a king, and he cannot rewrite the Constitution with the stroke of a pen.

"The President and his allies made clear long before he was sworn in that they would pursue this illegal action, and our coalition was prepared to challenge it as soon as President Trump fulfilled this unconstitutional campaign promise on Inauguration Day.

"We immediately stood up for our Constitution, for the rule of law, and for American children across the country who would have been deprived of their constitutional rights - and today we delivered for them. This is not yet over, and we will continue to fight every single step of the way until President Trump is permanently prevented from trampling on the Fourteenth Amendment rights of all Americans."

To stop the President's unlawful action, which would harm hundreds of thousands of American children and their families, the coalition sued in the District of Massachusetts to invalidate the executive order and to enjoin any actions taken to implement it. The states requested immediate relief to prevent the President's Order from taking effect. The request was granted by Judge Leo Sorokin.

Birthright citizenship dates back centuries - including to pre-Civil War America. Although the Supreme Court's notorious decision in Dred Scott denied birthright citizenship to the descendants of slaves, the post-Civil War United States adopted the Fourteenth Amendment to protect citizenship for all children born in this country. As the Attorneys General's filings explain, the U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly confirmed that birthright citizenship does not depend on the immigration status of the baby's parents.

If allowed to stand, this Order - the first time since the Fourteenth Amendment was adopted in 1868 - would mean thousands of babies born each year in New Jersey who otherwise would have been citizens will no longer enjoy the privileges and benefits of citizenship.

The children whose citizenship would be stripped by the President's order would lose their most basic rights, and would be forced to live under the threat of deportation. They would lose eligibility for a wide range of

federal services and programs. They would lose their ability to obtain a Social Security number and, as they age, to work lawfully. They would also lose their ability to obtain a passport. And they would lose their right to vote, serve on juries, and run for certain offices.

Despite the Constitution's guarantee of citizenship, thousands of American children would - for the first time - lose their ability to fully and fairly be a part of American society as a citizen with all its benefits and privileges.

In addition to harming hundreds of thousands of residents, the President's order would significantly harm the States themselves, too. Among other things, this Order will cause the States to lose federal funding to programs that they administer, such as Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and foster care and adoption assistance programs, which all turn in part on the immigration status of the resident being served.

States would also be required - at their considerable expense - to immediately begin modifying their operation and administration of benefits programs to account for this change, which would impose significant burdens on multiple agencies that operate programs for the benefit of the States' residents.

(Continued on page 13)

JAN. 6 (Cont. from page 5)

maintaining in any restricted building or grounds without lawful authority.

Price was facing up to five years' imprisonment and \$250,000 maximum federal fine for the felonies.

According to court records, Price went to The Capitol grounds 1 p.m. Jan. 6 with "10 to 12" members of his Proud Boys chapter. The group, who attained notoriety as early as 2017, defined themselves as "pro-Western fraternal organization for men who refuse to apologize for creating the modern world, aka Western Chauvinists." Price himself attended several Trump rallies and Proud Boys events in autumn 2020.

Price came to The Capitol's Lower West Terrace with a pair of goggles, milk and other items to counteract any pepper spray or chemical irritants that Capitol Police officers or fellow insurrectionists would deploy. He would push four of his chapter colleagues through the police line, taking the irritants and a rubber police bullet in the process 1:30 to 1:45 p.m.

The then-26-year-old and a couple of other rioters then tried to pry one of their colleagues from Capitol Police officers' hands, insulting them in the process. He recorded the altercation on Facebook and called his mother in South River, N.J. by 3 p.m.

Released on his own recognizance, Price

pleaded guilty of interfering with law enforcement officers during a civil disorder before a U.S. District of Columbia judge Oct. 14, 2022. He and his Paterson attorney, at the April 3, 2023 sentencing hearing, said that Price had renounced Proud Boys membership, was working at a tire store and had a fiancée. They said that he was trying to turn away from earlier brushes with the law, including a 2021 drug arrest in Passaic County.

U.S. District Judge Carl J. Nichols sentenced Price to 12 months and a day in prison and \$2,000 restitution. Federal prosecutors had asked for between 12 and 18 months. Both the judge and prosecutors acknowledged that Price, after pleading guilty, had cooperated with the insurrection investigation.

Nichols, after serving time, tried to file petition signatures to run in the Aug. 23, 2024 Republican primary for a Pinellas County (Fla.) District Commissioner seat. That county elections board, however, had disqualified him from running.

Three others, according to Insurrection-index.org, either surrendered to authorities or were arrested in Newark. All three - Julian Elias Khater, Mick Chan and Lawrence "Larry" Dropkin, Jr. - were convicted.

Khater, who was arrested here March 15, 2021, was serving an 80-month sentence on Jan. 20, 2025 for federal assault of a federal officer with a dangerous weapon. The State College, Pa. resident was accused of dousing

Capitol Police Off. Brian Sicknick with pepper spray. That exposure had led to Sicknick, 42, formerly of South River, to die of two fatal strokes Jan. 7.

Khater had pleaded guilty to the count Sept. 1, 2022 and was sentenced Jan. 27, 2023. His 80-month sentence included 24 months' credit for time served plus another 24 months of supervised release and \$12,200 in fines and restitution.

Dropkin, of Raritan Township, surrendered here Oct. 1, 2021. The former route salesman pleaded guilty July 20, 2022 of four disorderly conduct, parading and being in a restricted zone - including being in The Capitol Rotunda. He was sentenced Oct. 7, 2022 to 30 days imprisonment, 60 hours of community service, a year of supervised release and \$500 restitution.

Chan, whose hometown remains unclear, also surrendered to the FBI-Newark Field Office. Sept 21, 2021. This was after he called an agent and asked if he was in trouble for "breaking into" The Capitol. He was charged Dec. 14, 2021 with being in a restrictive zone, being disorderly on said grounds, disorderly within The Capitol and parading or picketing in The Capitol.

Chan then pleaded guilty on all counts July 12, 2022. He was sentenced May 5, 2023 to three months imprisonment, another five months in home detention, a year of supervised release and \$500 restitution.

JURY (Cont. from pg. 9)

representatives of both Mr. Alvear's and Ms. Gonzalez's families to review the recordings before their public release.

A 2019 law, N.J.S.A. 52:17B-107(a)(2), requires the Attorney General's Office to conduct investigations of a person's death that occurs during an encounter with a law enforcement officer acting in the officer's official capacity or while the decedent is in custody. It requires that all such investigations be presented to a grand jury to determine if the evidence supports the return of an indictment against the officer or officers involved.

The grand jury is instructed on the elements of the potential criminal offenses, including criminal homicide offenses, that could be brought and, as required by statutes, the grand jury is instructed on self-defense and other forms of legal justification.

A conflicts check was con-

ducted pursuant to the Independent Prosecutor Directive and no actual or potential conflict of interest was found involving any individual assigned to the investigation. Prior to presentation to the grand jury, the investigation was reviewed by OPIA Executive Director Drew Skinner in accordance with the policies and procedures established for these presentations in the SOPs.

At the conclusion of these investigations, pursuant to the Independent Prosecutor Directive and SOPs, OPIA determines whether any principal should be referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency for administrative review in accordance with the AG's Internal Affairs Policy & Procedures. OPIA monitors any resulting review and takes such actions as are necessary to ensure that the review is completed in a timely fashion, and that appropriate actions are taken based on the results of the review.

WORLD NEWS (Cont. from pg. 7)

dangerously and used abusive language at other river users. He was also found guilty of obstructing a boat race and interfering with the safety of persons gathered, failing to comply with a harbor master's notice, and failing to register his boat for use on the Thames.

Scott Keen, of Morden, Surrey, steered his boat, Barney McGrew, along the Thames into a closed area of the river being used for Kingston Amateur Regatta, an event established in 1852, narrowly avoiding colliding with and swamping rowers.

The court heard how Keen was advised by an umpire that the river ahead was closed and he should return to a navigation channel. He ignored the request and continued past the umpire, cutting across the racing line and narrowly missing one of the boats, which had to take last-minute evasive action to avoid a collision. His cruiser then caught the anchor rope of a race stake boat, before he stopped and launched a foul-mouthed tirade against participants, yelling that 'they did not own the (expletive) water.'

His actions and the way he navigated his vessel endangered the safety of those present at the Regatta, included young scullers in rowing boats. An eyewitness captured the full extent of the drama on a mobile phone.

Environment Agency officers carried out a detailed investigation into the incident and discovered that Barney McGrew was also an unregistered vessel. Keen was invited to a voluntary interview but failed to attend. A

summons was subsequently issued for his appearance at Staines magistrates' court on January 28. Again, he failed to attend.

Maria Herlihy, operations manager at the Environment Agency and harbor master of the Thames, said, "This incident was a disgrace. Keen showed no regard for the safety of other river users and could easily have caused a tragedy. Quite frankly, it was no surprise to discover that his boat was unregistered, and we are happy with the court result.

"We hope that this serves as a clear warning to all - anti-social and dangerous behavior on our rivers will not be tolerated, and we will take robust action to deal with those who disregard the rules and regulations for boating on the River Thames."

The magistrates fined Keen the maximum penalty of £1,000 for interfering with the boat race and navigating his boat without due care and attention. The court explained that it used its discretion to go outside the sentencing guidelines to deal with the matter robustly.

The court heard the incident was shocking in its totality, with clear criminality that endangered the safety of other people, including the young people involved in the regatta. The court also complimented the Environment Agency's investigation, and the evidence submitted.

Also charged in court, on the same day, for separate and unrelated incidents was Paul Campbell of West Molesey, who was found guilty in his absence of having not registered his boat, Enigma, for 2024 and failing to

PUBLIC NOTICE

In accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, Public Notice is hereby given that the East Orange City Council will have an Educational Retreat on Saturday, March 1, 2025, 10:00 AM – 8:00 PM at the Ocean Hotel, 500 Boardwalk, Atlantic City, New Jersey for professional development.

No formal action will be taken.

Vernon Pullins, Jr.
City Council Chairman

Justin R. Brown
Deputy City Clerk

ATTORNEYS (Cont. from pg. 12)

The States' filings explain that they should not have to bear these dramatic costs while their case proceeds because the Order is directly inconsistent with the Constitution, the Immigration and Nationality Act, and two U.S. Supreme Court decisions.

In court, this matter is being handled by Solicitor General Jeremy Feigenbaum, Deputy Solicitor General Shankar Duraiswamy, and Deputy Attor-

neys General Viviana Hanley, Shefali Saxena, and Elizabeth Walsh.

States that have joined New Jersey in this lawsuit include California, Massachusetts, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin, as well as the District of Columbia and the City of San Francisco.

comply with directions to move his vessel from its location at West Molesey riverbank. He received a total of £2024.24 in fines, compensation and costs to be paid within 28 days.

Ms. Herlihy added: "As these prosecutions show, we have no hesitation in bringing offenders to court who avoid their obligations and responsibilities to lawful river users. Just one day in court has resulted in more than £6,000 of fines and compensation, which should serve as a major deterrent."

Last year's crackdown on unregistered vessels in the Thames resulted in 40 boaters having to pay a combined total of over £55,000 for their offenses.

Renewal invitation letters for 2025 registrations on the River Thames were sent in November last year to everyone that registered their boat in 2024, and owners were encouraged to register early to ensure their boats were compliant by 1 January when the new season began.

The Environment Agency's approach to non-registration on the Thames has changed - boat owners are given ample opportunity to register their boat. However, once a summons has been issued, it won't stop court proceedings, even if the boat owner subsequently pays their registration fee.

Similar to excise duty for road vehicles, boat registration fees allow the Environment Agency to manage and maintain more than 600 miles of inland waterways across England, keeping them open and safe for thousands of boaters to enjoy.

The Observation Booth



OP-ED By Andrea Dialect

RAP BATTLES

Lyrical slaps when this guy speaks, and as he does my mouth salivates because I know that I'm about to get something quite valuable. And I climb at his feet every chance I get. One of the most cherished in my black book. If I don't know something and need it personified, which I often do because of my learning style, he's like Johnny-on-the-spot.

If busy at the time in a millisecond via text even if need be on borrowed time he will find a way to say that is or that even if it's a difficult carve, to do what I need him to do. Mr. Hemphill, my beloved mentor is the most humble and intelligent man that I know or have ever known.

Then there's Bruce. Another of my beloved geek types which are oftentimes so-called. One of the only ones I allow to say my entire name during greetings and at exit. Nothing of the least can be expected from such a sophisticated man of business to say the least. Like a monster he breaks those confusing concepts down to the smallest tidbits for me to chew.

He does it repetitively, over and over again, just like Mr. Hemphill do if I need him to. Another of the hierarchy in my beloved black book. If I can't say or have no clue, those two can and always do, so I am always prepared for whatever man. When those two spit those verbal cues, you'd best run for cover. Cause you bout to do what you gots to do. because they have they qualify to show you how to. These guys are just an example of those many unassuming participants of that rap game!

Even with my new Homies, AI and Google, hanging around, waiting to be beckoned and called, those wannabe rappers - despite all their gleaned and stolen knowledge - could never usurp true logic. Presentation is lame when it comes to lyrical finesses and flow. Besides, despite all that dead-on specificity (though it's of great benefit - cute and all), it shall never be a substitute for the intelligence of the human mind and the necessity of that mindful human touch,



Photo Courtesy Andrea Dialect

which shall never be replicated by shapely wired bodies and a sleek iron head or boxy iron anatomies.

Google's word play makes things easier to find, and AI makes thoughts interestingly harder those verses are shallow - and although I beg to differ when that copycat comes to the same end - I opt in for real talk. Then - voilà - it kinda knows what I meant as spewing my words. That alone makes my mental antenna kick in. So that means when it comes down to it their rap games are still wack and that's when I tell smarty pants aka AI to fall back - **No free speech here, buddy!**

If you're into hard hittin' mind blows check out the draft below. These "wordsmiths" rap game will catapult ya places where... who knows? Visit **Localtalkweekly.com** to read the full story in the Entertainment section. While you're at it, check out the archives and get familiar with all things Andrea Dialect. You'll also want to come along on my Andrea Dialect Facebook

Lab live session. Buried treasures turn up every morning. Come and join me live as I develop my daily "PORTAL" sessions. I'll see you between 5-6 a.m. Set those notifications. Remember, everything I do on social is raw, homegrown, and experimental mockups. Follow my **msdialect Instagram**, and let's grow out loud together! Like, follow, and share.

SPITTIN'

RAP MUSIC - a style of popular music, developed by disc jockeys and urban Black performers in the late 1970s. (GOOGLE THAT)

This all started when meeting the five. They were in the park rapping at the time, and as I was just joshin' with 'em while walking by, I hollered out that they couldn't - using so many words. I told them that none of them could, and oh boy... they spent the next hour or so proving me wrong. I had so much fun with those lyricists who had truly proven me wrong that day. Souped me up, told me that I was part of the crew. Now imagine that!

TO BE CONTINUED ...

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.

TOWN WATCH (Cont. from pg. 10)

An EMS unit was summoned to take the victim to University Hospital for treatment of non-life-threatening injuries. Hillyer, a north-south street, is two blocks west of the border with East Orange's Brick Church section.

OPD's night shift officers had responded to a late night Feb. 6 shooting along the "500 block of Cary Street." They found an awake 44-year-old East Orange man "with a non-life-threatening gunshot wound in the area on the NJTransit Morris & Essex Line railroad overpass.

Ambulance medics took him to a local hospital for treatment after he gave an account of what happened to police. Police taped off that block of Cary in the Orange Valley was three blocks

east of the West Orange border.

WEST ORANGE - Township Council members and perhaps housing board members may be talking with an apartment complex owner and one of his tenants before the latter's complaints come to municipal court.

Maureen Robinson, at the council's Feb. 11 meeting, said that she is preparing to take SELA Realty Investments, owner of the Cedar Crest Apartments at 200 Mt. Pleasant Ave., to court over "subpar" living conditions and "unfair and inequitable disparity" in rent. Although she came to Mayor Susan McCartney, Council President Joe Krakowiak - not Mayor as mistakenly indicated in the previous edition - and other township elders before and has had housing offi-

cials over, she said she was preparing to sue her landlord.

Robinson said that she had Geniece Gary-Adams - the township's zoning and code enforcement and property maintenance officer - over to her apartment Jan. 22 over mold, a bathroom handicap bar and other longstanding conditions she had previously brought to Cedar Crest/SELA.

Gary-Adams, before leaving, told building management that they had a week to make repairs. Those repairs, said Robinson, were not made as of Feb. 11.

Robinson said that she had noticed that none of the 178 apartments in the 11-building complex have water meters - which makes "delegation for fees for water usage is determined at the discretion and whim of property owners."

Robinson said that she pays a separate \$50 monthly water use fee. She had asked about installing an in-apartment portable washer-dryer unit but was told that she would then incur an additional \$50 monthly fee.

Cedar Crest was built on a cliff face on Mt. Pleasant Avenue's west side in 1967. Neither property management or SELA have publicly commented on Robinson's accusations.

SOUTH ORANGE - Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, on Feb. 10, has hired a New York law firm to review another New York firm's 2019 investigation - and perhaps put an end to questions surrounding newly appointed Seton Hall University President Joseph Reilly.

Tobin said that Ropes & (Continued on page 15)

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 14)

Gray, LLC will review the report made by Watkins & Latham, LLP on who knew and when of the sexual misconduct of one of his predecessors - the defrocked Theodore E. McCarrick.

Reilly was a Monsignor and on several SHU boards when McCarrick's abuse of seminary students surfaced and were investigated. McCarrick, now 94, was laicized by Pope Francis in 2019 and was last seen "living a life of penance and seclusion" in a Kansas halfway house.

"Questions have been raised about Msgr. Reilly had acted appropriately," said Tobin. "The review by Ropes & Gray will include on how the findings of these reports relate to him, including whether they were communicated to any and all appropriate personnel at the Archdiocese, SHU and Msgr. Reilly and, if so, by what means and by whom."

Tobin had personally installed Reilly as SHU's 22nd president last November. Reilly had been removed from several of the school's boards and as its seminary dean in 2021 after an internal report had named him among the officials "who knew."

SHU said that its lawyer firm on retainer, Gibbons, of Newark, will cooperate with Ropes & Gray. Pope Francis appointed the then-Archbishop of Indianapolis Tobin to Newark and named him a cardinal in 2017.

BLOOMFIELD - David Quinlan, 72, the 35-year minimum wage janitor for Bloomfield Public Schools and the face of a disabilities discrimination suit, died on Jan. 29.

Quinlan had died in a local hospice from a bladder infection that kept him from working at Bloomfield Middle School since 2020. He, his family and BPS had reached a \$150,000 settlement in State Superior Court-Newark Jan. 14.

Quinlan had been working diligently since his Sept. 1, 1985 hiring by the district. He cleaned classrooms and hallways, mowed lawns and picked up trash on the BMS property despite being unable to read and barely speaking.

The district had hired him as a part-time per diem minimum wage worker. He started earning \$7 an hour and was at \$12 an hour before he got sick. His colleagues got twice that wage plus a full range of benefits.

The family and their Closter attorneys, Eric and Lawrence Kleiner, said that Quinlan never received health benefits, sick leave or vacation pay. They brought BPS to court in 2022, saying that the district wrongfully dismissed him and had violated New Jersey's Law Against Discrimination. The district's attorney said that he was paid based on his part-time hours, that his hours did not qualify

him for benefits and that he voluntarily resigned.

David Joseph Quinlan, Jr., who was born here Dec. 12, 1952, and his family received \$100,000 with the Kleiners splitting the other \$50,000. The settlement came with BPS with non-wrongdoing admission and non-disparagement clauses. O'Boyle Funeral Home handled his last rites.

GLEN RIDGE - An unnamed motorist may have answered to his alleged Jan. 15 road rage incident here in Glen Ridge Municipal Court by now.

The driver would have given his testimony in response to simple and vehicular assault charges levied against him by the borough police department just after 8:13 a.m. that Wednesday at Ridgewood and Woodland avenues.

Responding GRPD officers said that they had responded to a car collision and "road rage" at that borough intersection. They found two cars with crash damage and their two drivers - one of whom was apparently nursing a wound.

The wounded driver had stopped to let school children cross Ridgewood Avenue when that motorist's car was "intentionally rear-ended." The other driver was said to have exited the second car, "verbally berated the first driver" and struck the driver in the face.

It is not clear whether the incident happened just north or south of Ridgewood's intersection with Woodland. The intersection - marked by the Glen Ridge train station, two banks and the post office - has marked crosswalks, a double yellow centerline and signaling for pedestrians.

NJ Motor Vehicle Commission law, like most states, requires drivers to "stop and stay" before pedestrians using marked or unmarked crosswalks. The accused party is considered innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

BELLEVILLE - Township detectives spent the bulk of the Presidents Day weekend investigating a two-car collision, one of which leaving Route 21 North, at about 9:15 p.m. Feb. 14. The crash sent one of the drivers to University Hospital for treatment. A Feb. 15 BPD release said that officers went to Rt. 21 Mile Post 7.4 on multiple reports of the collision and that one of the cars had crashed through the guardrails and had "plunged into the Passaic River."

The first arriving police units found a 2005 Honda Accord not in the river but on the riverbank. Its driver, a 41-year-old man from Paterson, was trapped inside. First responders took him to hospital while BPD officers closed all northbound 21 lanes. The other driver, who stayed at the scene was uninjured and faces no charges as of press time.

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"Gulf" Shirt Flap Probed

Interim Belleville Public Schools Superintendent Nicholas Perrapato said on Feb. 4 that he was investigating whether Belleville High School teachers had recently worn "Gulf of America" t-shirts in class - but do not expect to hear much more from him about it.

Perrapato, in a Feb. 4 open letter, said that the administration is investigating "a small group of staff members wore coordinated clothing that some students and staff found offensive. As this is a personnel matter, we're unable to discuss specific details. We're addressing this in accordance with district policies and details." A BHS staff member alerted Perrapato's office after several teachers had worn "Gulf of America" t-shirts on Jan. 31 dress down day.

President Donald J. Trump had signed an executive order Jan. 20 renaming the Gulf of Mexico the "Gulf of America." and proclaimed Feb. 9 "Gulf of America Day." Although Google and some other websites followed the renaming while international reference sites retained "Gulf of Mexico. The President's Office has indefinitely banned Associated Press reporters from Presidential events and Feb. 14 over the latter's retention of "Mexico" in their style-book.

About 71 percent of the BHS student body identify themselves as of Hispanic or Latino origin - its largest single demographic group. Belleville is 53 percent according to the 2020 Census. While there are no known photos of people wearing the shirts, there may be pictures taken on cell phones.



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