

LOCAL TALK

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

VOLUME 25 • ISSUE 19 * MARCH 13, 2025 - MARCH 19, 2025

25¢

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

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

ESSEX COUNTY • EAST ORANGE • ORANGE BOARD OF EDUCATION

1576 Springfield Avenue • Maplewood, NJ 07040

Phone: 973-622-1111 • www.localtalkweekly.com

E-mail - Newspaper: localtalk@aol.com * Printing: localtalkprinting@gmail.com

2025 STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS

PAGE 5

NEWARK DETECTIVE DIES IN THE LINE OF DUTY

14-Year-Old Arrested in Shooting

By Thomas Ellis II

The Newark Police Department is in mourning after the loss of one of their own. Detective Joseph Azcona was shot and killed while sitting in his car by a 14-year-old in the North Ward of Newark. Another NPD officer who was shot in the incident is still recovering from his injuries in the incident on Broadway and Carteret Street around 6:30 p.m. on March 7.

NPD was working in the area trying to get illegal guns off the streets, something that has been plaguing the city for years. Getting illegal guns off the streets makes the neighborhood a safer place to live, play, work, go to school, go to church, and raise children.



It's really sad, and not safe at all when teenagers are running around the city with loaded guns. Where are they getting these weapons from?

For what reason would a 14-year-old need to carry a high-powered weapon in the community, putting the whole community at risk, not to mention putting his or her own life at risk?

There are too many illegal guns in the community, and we truly need the police and

their special units to work the streets and get these dangerous weapons out of the hands of irresponsible people and teenagers.

Detective Joseph Azcona was a product of Newark, born and raised in the city. He was a young officer on the force for just 5 years who was working in the intelligence unit of NPD. You can just imagine the excitement and Joy Officer Azcona had when he first joined the force. A hometown boy giving back by serving the community where he grew up, and then such a tragic thing happens. He lost his life because a 14-year-old took a loaded gun and committed an act of cruelty.

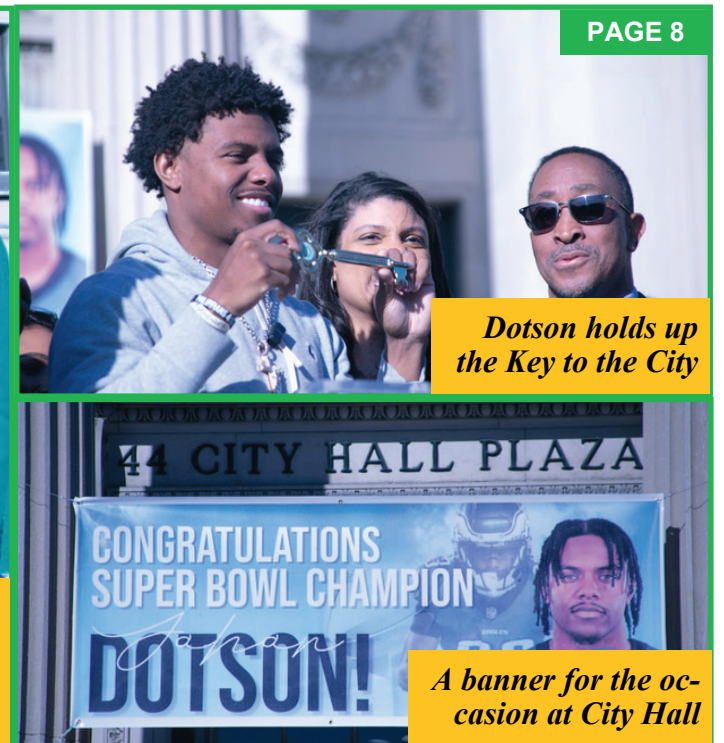
Family members all mentioned how they are going to miss Joseph, and how much he was loved. What a great inspiration he was to other family members and friends as someone they looked up to.

(Continued on page 13)

SUPER BOWL CHAMPION GETS KEY TO THE CITY



Mayor Ted R. Green, (center) stands next to champion Jahan Dotson at the ceremony
Photos By Felicia Laguerre Owens



Dotson holds up the Key to the City



A banner for the occasion at City Hall

PAGE 8



Primary Care Multi Specialty Group
THE HEART CENTER OF THE ORANGES
60 Evergreen Place, Suite 400, East Orange, NJ

Offering Same Day
Appointments for
**All Specialties and
DOT Exams**

Turn
To
PAGE
16



Editorial
Dhiren Shah
 Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

Is Trump doing good or doing right? Questions arise in many minds. First, in January, he pulled away from WHO (World Health Organization). Then, he threatened to pull away from NATO, which will have an impact on the relationships with our allies. However, the allies are not paying their fair share of NATO membership dues. With the NATO agreement, every country has to pay 2% of their GDP (Gross Domestic Product) on defense.

Russia was a NATO member. However, a breach of a 1990 agreement meant they were not renewed as a member since 2007. Right now, 32 countries are in NATO, out of about

195 countries. Everyone should share 2% of their GDP on defense. The U.S. has more than 2/3 of the GDP of all the other NATO countries combined. We have the most defense spending in the world.

On March 10, Ukraine launched the biggest drone missile attack on Moscow since the start of the war. This was in retaliation for an attack Russia did after the failed meeting with Trump. In the past, Hunter Biden was working in Ukraine, and President Joe Biden had a soft corner for Ukraine and sent them about \$340 billion. When Zelensky was coming to the U.S., he was welcomed with dignity and respect as if he is the President of a large, powerful nation. He was awarded whatever he asked for. The news media was favoring Ukraine to change the minds of the people in support of that country. I don't think Russian President Putin is right. He is a dictator. However, he doesn't want Ukraine to become a

NATO member, which would allow the U.S. and other countries to have a military base in Ukraine, right next to Russia.

When Russia (then the Soviet Union) secretly tried to have a base in Cuba in 1962, next to the U.S., President Kennedy and everyone objected and forced the USSR to remove their base, or otherwise start World War III. In exchange, the U.S. terminated a base that was close to the USSR. To stop the war, we must think of both sides in my opinion.

Fortunately, on March 11, Secretary of State Marco Rubio went overseas and struck a deal with Ukraine to get them to finally agree to a minerals deal with the U.S., as well as a ceasefire with Russia. The ball is in Russia's court to agree.

About 20 years ago, I asked a mayor how much money he received or would receive for a reentry program. He replied that it was about \$240,000 on one institution. I asked him how much money the township had

received for a prevention program to prevent people from going to jail. He then replied about \$40,000. I asked him why prevention programs have less support and money than prison reentry programs? He had no answer. The political leaders get more popularity to pinpoint easy programs for prison reentry. For prevention, there is no such program, but we have to keep teaching children non-stop. So, for politicians, it is not a single program they can take credit for.

Most of the leaders support prison reentry programs. However, we need to look hard for a variety of programs for prevention and spend more time and money teaching children of our community not to go in a bad direction. Children should not get tempted by gifts in their childhood. This is not easy, but that is my opinion.

Have a wonderful week.

I'll talk to you next week.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS FOR LOCAL TALK WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

Publisher & Editor-in-chief: Dhiren Shah
 Editors: Kristopher Seals • Anuj Shah
 Journalists / Writers: Kristopher Seals • Walter Elliott • Dhiren Shah • Anuj Shah • Akshat Shah • Asha Shah • Kinjal Shah • Thomas Ellis II • William Hathaway, Jr. • Lev D. Zilbermints • Dr. Robert Kennedy • Dr. Adil Manzoor • Fred Simpson • Andrea Dialect • Ahmed Screven, Esq.
 Photographers: Dhiren Shah • Kristopher Seals • Thomas Ellis II • Felicia Laguerre Owens • Douglas Adams, Jr.
 Designer: Local Talk
 Web Design: www.localtalkweekly.com

**Inquire about our advertising rates. Get exposure to thousands of readers every week.
 Email us at localtalknews@gmail.com or call 973-622-1111**

Subscribe to **LOCAL TALK** weekly newspaper
\$60 for one (1) year

**Send your name, address and check or money order to:
 Local Talk Weekly Newspaper • 1576 Springfield Avenue
 Maplewood, NJ 07040 • Tel: 973-622-1111**

To serve you in the best manner, we request that you send your comments, community calendar events, news and other information and queries related to advertisements to the editor on e-mail :
 localtalknews@gmail.com

LOCAL TALK POLICIES

• We reserve the right to accept or reject any news item, article or advertising, which is not in accordance with Local Talk's Statement of Purpose. We further reserve the right to edit, correct and modify all copy submitted. Letters, articles, and news events are welcomed; but Local Talk will not assume any responsibility for them. • We regret that the volume of mail and pressure of deadlines precludes sending acknowledgements of receipt; nor can advance notice be given if articles are accepted or rejected for publication. • Unused materials may be used at a later date (if not date sensitive) and therefore, they cannot be returned. • The printing of articles or advertising in Local Talk does not necessarily imply either endorsement or agreement by the editorial staff of Local Talk. • This publication will not be responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the space occupied by the error. • We will not be responsible for errors within material disseminated by offices that release matter for public record.

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>
Cloudy	Cloudy, Then Sunny	Cloudy	Rain & Wind	Rainy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy
HI 50	HI 56	HI 59	HI 65	HI 59	HI 58	HI 60
LO 40	LO 46	LO 50	LO 50	LO 38	LO 42	LO 46

TRANSFER YOUR PRESCRIPTION HERE!



358 Main Street
East Orange, NJ 07018
973-266-9900
mikespharmacyllc@gmail.com



353 Main Street
Orange, NJ 07050
973-266-1002
orangerxpharmacy@gmail.com



13 William Street
Newark, NJ 07102
973-500-3660
newarkrxpharmacy@gmail.com



F/DESIGN SOLUTIONS · 862-448-9307

24H Covid-19 Testing
OTC Cards accepted
Blister Pack available

Free Delivery

NJ Lottery

Money Transfer

Western Union & RIA Money Transfer

Bill Payments

UPS Access Point

Fax, Print & Copy

SCAN & SAVE OUR
INFORMATION



WE ACCEPT WALK-INS! APPOINTMENT NOT REQUIRED!

WE ACCEPT ALL MAJOR HEALTH INSURANCE.



STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARED OVER INTERSTATE 80 SINKHOLE

During a visit to the Interstate 80 (I-80) sinkhole site in Morris County, Governor Phil Murphy announced that his Administration has requested emergency relief federal funding to repair damages to the highway and affected area. The Governor was joined by Superintendent of the State Police Pat Callahan, New Jersey Department of Transportation Commissioner Fran O'Connor, legislators, and local elected officials for a tour of the affected area, which was damaged due to a collapsed mine under the highway's eastbound shoulder near Exit 34.

New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) crews have been performing around-the-clock emergency repairs and stabilization work to address the hazards. To expedite repair, the Governor declared a State of Emergency in Morris County, allowing the State to apply for federal funding which may be provided by the Federal Highway Administration if a road has suffered serious damage due to a natural disaster or another external cause.

"For several weeks now, the residents of Wharton and commuters all across New Jersey, have endured major delays and disruptions as a result of the sinkholes that have opened up here on I-80," said Governor Murphy. "By declaring a State of Emergency in Morris County, we can take the first step toward accessing federal funding to help us to repair this damage. While there is no immediate danger to the public, we will continue to do everything we can to help New Jersey commuters and families can get their lives back on track."

"I want to thank Governor Murphy, the New Jersey State Police and local officials for their support and cooperation as we continue repair operations so we can safely reopen the highway," NJDOT Commissioner

Fran O'Connor said. "Safety is our primary concern – for the crews working around the clock, for the motorists that have been impacted, and for the residents and businesses in the neighboring communities. As the proactive drilling and grouting continues, we are narrowing in on the area that will require a more extensive repair."

"The closure of Interstate 80 has created significant challenges for motorists, local residents, and first responders alike, but the public's safety remains our top priority," said Colonel Patrick J. Callahan, Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police. "We recognize the tireless efforts of the New Jersey Department of Transportation and their dedicated crews as they work around the clock to make the necessary repairs and reopen this critical roadway as soon as possible. We thank Governor Phil Murphy's leadership and commitment to securing the resources needed to expedite this project. The New Jersey State Police will continue to support our state and local partners to ensure the safety and efficiency of travel throughout the region."

"I saw firsthand this morning the huge impact this highway closure is having on Morris County towns along I-80," said Congressman Tom Kean, Jr. "This is a serious issue that we have to work together at all levels of government to fix and safety of our residents is our shared priority here. I will be advocating daily for all federal resources necessary to get I-80 restored to full capacity."

"As reconstruction efforts continue, I am also going to work with state and local officials to come up with transportation alternatives in the meantime. I think NJ Transit should offer residents in these towns some temporary incentives to use transit as an al-

ternative for travel both east and westbound. I will be looking more into that this week."

"The Governor's visit to the site today, along with the announcement of his request for federal relief funding, is welcome news to the residents, businesses, and commuters in this area. The Governor's request is an important step toward ensuring the NJDOT and the State Police have the resources necessary to make the critical repairs and restore normal traffic flow as quickly and safely as possible," said Senate Republican Leader Anthony M. Bucco. "I commend the Governor, NJDOT Commissioner Connor, State Police Superintendent Callahan, and their staffs for their swift response and coordination with local officials to keep drivers safe and minimize disruptions for residents and businesses in the area."

"This problem on I-80 has encumbered the lives of many, many people both locally here in Morris County and Interstate travelers," said Assemblyman Christian Barranco. "I support the Governor's decision to seek federal funding to expedite the crucial process of minimizing the impact these sinkholes have caused, and I commend DOT's Fran O'Connor for his daily diligence in making sure manpower is engaged 24 hours a day."

"I have been working closely with NJDOT and local officials to push for swift and effective repairs to this critical roadway for our state," said Assemblywoman Aura Dunn. "I appreciate Governor Murphy's efforts to secure emergency federal funding, as transportation is a necessity, not a luxury. Emergency funding for the sinkhole is essential to ensure public safety, repair vital infrastructure, and prevent further damage to our community."

(Continued on page 8)

PSE&G'S GAS MAIN REPLACEMENT PROJECT PROGRESSES IN EAST ORANGE

East Orange, NJ, March 7, 2025: Mayor Ted R. Green announced March 7 that PSE&G's Gas Main Replacement Project to replace more than 10.6 miles of aging cast iron gas pipes is well underway in East Orange, enhancing safety and progress in the city.

The work started in October 2024 and is expected to continue until the Fall of 2025 when the final resurfacing of the streets will be complete. Approximately 2,600 pipes will be replaced with new, more durable materials - ensuring the continued safety and reliability of the city's gas system well into the future.

This project is part of Mayor Green's ongoing efforts to improve the city's older infrastructure.

Work will take place Mon-

day through Friday between the hours of 7 a.m. and 5 p.m., with the potential for Saturday work and evening work. Officials warn that drivers and pedestrians may experience road closures, detours, and traffic delays during construction. Throughout the duration of the project, motorists are asked to abide by all "No Parking" signs, which will be posted 24-48 hours before work is scheduled to begin on each street.

PSE&G technicians will make arrangements directly with homeowners when it is time to connect the service line and gas meter to the new main pipeline. When this time comes, residents should expect to be without gas service for 2-4 hours. If you reside on one of the streets listed below, you should have already

received more detailed information about this project. If you have not, please call PSE&G at 1-833-661-6300 and leave a message.

The following streets will be impacted:

- Amherst Street
- Bedford Street
- Cedar Avenue
- Central Avenue
- Chestnut Street
- Crawford Street
- Edgar Street
- Elmwood Avenue
- Eppirt Street
- Evergreen Place
- Freeway Drive East
- Grand Avenue
- Halsted Street
- Halsted Place
- Harvard Street
- Lindsey Place

- Madonna Place
- McKay Avenue
- Melrose Avenue
- Oak Street
- Rhode Island Avenue
- Ross Street
- Sanford Street
- Shepard Avenue
- South Burnet Street
- South Center Street
- South Clinton Street
- South Harrison Street
- Telford Street
- Tremont Avenue

For more information about this project, as well as specific information about your neighborhood, please visit pseg.com/GasWork. To reach a project representative, please call the dedicated hotline at 1-833-661-6300.

ESSEX COUNTY EXECUTIVE PRESENTS 2025 STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS

Cedar Grove, NJ - Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr. presented his 2025 State of the County Address at the Essex County Hospital Center in Cedar Grove on Thursday, March 6th. The speech is an opportunity for the County Executive to share accomplishments of the past year and outline initiatives planned for the coming year.

Prior to the speech, a short video highlighted four ways in which Essex County is helping to transform the lives of Essex residents. First, the staff at the psychiatric hospital rallied to help a patient who was pregnant when she was admitted give birth. It was the first time a baby was born in the facility. A young man who was involved in a fight entered a pioneering alternative to incarceration program called the Restorative and Transformative Justice Hub Pilot Program - the first of its kind in New Jersey. Instead of going to jail, the young man is learning how his actions affect others, getting homework help and staying out of trouble. He is one of 50 juveniles helped by the program.

The REACH to Recovery program helps those suffering from substance abuse overcome obstacles to break their habit. A client who is going through the program shared that he has reconciled with his family and sees his children regularly because of the help he has received through REACH. Finally, a newly created mental health step-down unit at the Essex County Correctional Facility is getting inmates with mental health needs get the help and services they need. One inmate who was suffering from depression has been released and shares his successes outside of the facility with the doctors who helped him.

The County Executive noted that the County is often viewed as a "safety net" and offers a myriad of programs to help clients facing economic and food insecurity, experiencing mental illness, families with frail or special needs babies and provides job training. He also recapped the introduction of a life-size ambulance simulator that was installed in Essex Coun-

ty Newark to provide EMT students with simulated experiences providing medical care in a moving vehicle.

DiVincenzo outlined the many projects to modernize basketball and tennis courts, update softball and baseball fields, introduce pickleball courts and create the first-ever soccer field in Essex County Belleville Park. He noted that the opening of new community centers in the parks has had a positive impact on the community, with the buildings being rented a total of 450 times in the past year. The latest community centers to open are the D. Bilal Beasley Community Center in Irvington Park and the Sheriff Armando and Mary Fontoura Community Center in Independence Park.

DiVincenzo named the football field in Vailsburg Park in Newark after NFL Head Coach Raheem Morris, a native of Irvington, after Morris was named as the first Black Head Coach of the Atlanta Falcons. He also dedicated a bust of Parks Director Dan Salvante in the Cherry Blossom Welcome Center in Branch Brook Park to commemorate Salvante becoming the longest serving parks director in Essex history.

Public Works also was busy modernizing bridges and culverts, traffic signals and intersections and aggressively slogging through swamps to eliminate breeding grounds for mosquitos.

Keeping the County's financial house in order has been a priority. Even with new pressures caused by rising costs of healthcare, pension, utilities and inflation, DiVincenzo has kept the budget under the 2 percent state cap, introduced it before the January 15th deadline and keep the average County tax increase among the lowest in the state.

This financial stability has been instrumental in DiVincenzo and his administration overcome an inherited \$64 million deficit, earn the highest bond rating in County history, complete over 500 projects in the parks and roadways, assist over 2.5 million clients with benefits, construct 20 new buildings and administer al-



Photo By Glen Frieson

most one million COVID tests and vaccines.

In 2025, the new Wynona Lipman Family Courts Building is scheduled to open, the elevators in the Veterans Courthouse will begin to be replaced, the upgraded Australian Outback Exhibit and the Barry Ostrowky Animal Welfare Center in Turtle Back Zoo will open. What is special about the Animal Welfare Center is that Turtle Back will have its own CT scanner to help diagnose animals and the exam rooms will be viewable by the public.

"This will showcase a lesser known dimension of what happens at Turtle Back and hopefully raise awareness about the high quality of care we provide our animals and the expanding role that zoos have in conservation, animal study and wildlife preservation," he said.

Other projects coming online in 2025 are the redesigning of the former Sea Lion exhibit to accommodate lemurs and tortoises, a new community center in Monte Irvin Orange Park in Orange, new soccer fields in Independence Park in Newark, updated picnic areas in South Mountain Reservation, a modernized playground in Watsessing Park in East Orange, the comprehensive facelift to Weequahic Golf Course in Newark and the dedication of the 2.2 mile walking path in Weequahic after Weequahic Park Association founder Wilbur McNeil.

DiVincenzo also pointed out that Essex remembers its past by dedicating the Division of Family Assistance and Benefits and a bronze bust in honor of the late Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver and dedicating plaques to memorialize the late Peter Shapiro, the first person elected as County Executive; the late Congressman Donald Payne, Jr. and Bill Pascrell; and NBA legend and Newark native Alvin Attles.

"These are unprecedented times. Who would have thought that wildfires would endanger our homes here in Essex? That wars far beyond our borders would have such a profound impact on our daily lives?" DiVincenzo asked. "But no matter what happens, our focus is to give, transform, restore and renew life. Our doors are open to helping people achieve a better life and forge a path to a brighter future. As we meet today's needs and prepare for tomorrow's challenges, we will continue Putting Essex County First!" he concluded.

ATTENTION

Take notice that in accordance with N.J.S.A. 39:10-16*, application has been made to the Chief Administrator of the Motor Vehicle Commission, Trenton, New Jersey, to receive title papers authorizing and the issuance of a New Jersey certification of ownership for, Make XION, Year 2022, VIN / Hull identification Number: 1V9XNBNA9NS252144. Objections, if any, should be made in writing, immediately in writing to the Chief Administrator of the Motor Vehicle Commission, Special Title Unit, P.O. Box 017, Trenton, New Jersey, 08666-0017



UNITED STATES



TRUMP ADMIN. TARGETS COLUMBIA U.

WASHINGTON - On March 7, the Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Department of Education (ED), and the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) announced the immediate cancellation of approximately \$400 million in federal grants and contracts to Columbia University due to the school's continued inaction in the face of persistent harassment of Jewish students. These cancellations represent the first round of action and additional cancellations are expected to follow.

The Task Force is continuing to review and coordinate across federal agencies to identify additional cancellations that could be made swiftly. DOJ, HHS, ED, and GSA are taking this action as members of the Joint Task Force to Combat Anti-Semitism. Columbia University currently holds more than \$5 billion in federal grant commitments.

On March 3rd, the Task Force notified the Acting President of Columbia University that it would conduct a comprehensive review of the university's federal contracts and grants in light of ongoing investigations under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Chaos and anti-Semitic harassment have continued on and near campus in the days since. Columbia has not responded to the Task Force.

"After the horrors of October 7th, Jewish students were shamefully targeted on Ameri-

can college campuses - including at Columbia University," said Attorney General Pamela Bondi. "Any university which fails to account for the discrimination of its students will not be tolerated. Comply with federal anti-discrimination laws and take action to protect students or expect consequences."

"Since October 7, Jewish students have faced relentless violence, intimidation, and anti-Semitic harassment on their campuses - only to be ignored by those who are supposed to protect them," said Secretary of Education Linda McMahon. "Universities must comply with all federal antidiscrimination laws if they are going to receive federal funding. For too long, Columbia has abandoned that obligation to Jewish students studying on its campus. Today, we demonstrate to Columbia and other universities that we will not tolerate their appalling inaction any longer."

President Trump has been clear that any college or university that allows illegal protests and repeatedly fails to protect students from anti-Semitic harassment on campus will be subject to the loss of federal funding.

"Freezing the funds is one of the tools we are using to respond to this spike in anti-Semitism. This is only the beginning," said Leo Terrell, Senior Counsel to the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights and head of the DOJ Task Force to Combat Anti-Semitism. "Cancelling these taxpayer funds is our strongest signal yet that the Federal Government is not going to be party to an educational institution like Columbia that does not protect Jewish students and staff."

The decisive action by the DOJ, HHS, ED, and GSA to cancel Columbia's grants and contracts serves as a notice to every school and university that receives federal dollars that this Administration will use all the tools at its disposal to protect Jewish students and end anti-Semitism on college campuses.

"Anti-Semitism is clearly inconsistent with the fundamental values that should inform liberal education," said Sean Keveney, HHS Acting General Counsel and Task Force member. "Columbia University's complacency is unacceptable."

GSA will assist HHS and ED in issuing stop-work orders on grants and contracts that Columbia holds with those agencies. These stop-work orders will immediately freeze the university's access to these funds. Additionally, GSA will be assisting all agencies in issuing stop work orders and terminations for contracts held by Columbia University.

"Doing business with the Federal Government is a privilege," said Josh Gruenbaum, FAS Commissioner and Task Force member. "Columbia University, through their continued and shameful inaction to stop radical protestors from taking over buildings on campus and lack of response to the safety issues for Jewish students, and for that matter - all students - are not upholding the ideals of this Administration or the American people. Columbia cannot expect to retain the privilege of receiving federal taxpayer dollars if they will not fulfill their civil rights responsibilities to protect Jewish students from harassment and anti-Semitism."

MASS SHOOTING UPDATE

Information from 3-11-2025

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

- Total Mass Shootings: 61
- Total Dead: 86
- Total Wounded: 225
- Shootings Per Day: 0.87
- Days Reached in Year 2025 as of March 11: 70

MIDDLE EAST



POWER CUT IN GAZA

Severe water shortages in Gaza have reached critical levels, with only one in 10 people currently able to access safe drinking water, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) warned.

The situation has deteriorated further following Israel's decision on March 9 to cut power to the enclave - in a bid to increase pressure on Hamas over hostage releases - disrupting vital desalination operations.

Rosalia Bollen, a UNICEF official in Gaza, reported that 600,000 people who had regained access to drinking water in November 2024 are once again cut off. "It's really vital for thousands of families and children to restore this connection," she said.

UN agencies estimate that 1.8 million people - over half of them children - urgently need water, sanitation and hygiene assistance.

Speaking at a press conference in Geneva, the UN aid agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini expressed that "the situation is similar to the one which prevailed in October 2023."

Mr. Lazzarini highlighted the escalating crisis in the occupied West Bank, where Israeli security operations have led to the largest displacement of Palestinians since 1967.

Around 40,000 people, many of them refugees, have been forced to flee their homes, with entire communities emptied due to intensified military activities.

The Commissioner-General condemned what he called the systematic dismantling of UNRWA's operations in the West Bank and East Jerusalem following Israel's ban on agency operations, pointing to the "increased pressure from the municipality to vacate its premises and halt service provision," with international staff denied entry or expelled.

Mr. Lazzarini warned that efforts to undermine UNRWA - through funding suspensions, legislative restrictions and disinformation campaigns - pose a severe threat to regional stability.

Humanitarian Coordinator Muhannad Hadi called for the entry of lifesaving aid to resume "immediately," as any further delays will affect the progress achieved during the ceasefire.

Meanwhile, Mr. Lazzarini further emphasized the importance of a political framework to prevent the crisis from escalating.

He referenced ongoing diplomatic efforts, including proposals led by Saudi Arabia, the European Union and the League of Arab States, to implement a two-State solution and transition

(Continued on page 7)

WORLD NEWS (Cont. from page 6)

humanitarian services to Palestinian-led institutions.

“When there is political will, humanitarian assistance can be unhindered and uninterrupted,” he underscored.

As the crisis unfolds, UNRWA is also grappling with severe financial constraints, exacerbated by funding suspensions from key donors.

Mr. Lazzarini urged Member States to sustain UNRWA’s operations until a clear political solution emerges, warning that cutting support prematurely will only intensify calls for Palestinians’ return or resettlement.

“The rights of Palestinian refugees exist independently of the agency,” he said, underscoring that ending UNRWA’s mandate without a viable alternative will only deepen civilian suffering.

**WORLD
ABBEY GATE
TERRORIST ARRESTED**

On March 2, 2025, the United States charged Mohammad Sharifullah, also known as “Jafar,” a member of the terrorist organization the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham-Khorasan Province (ISIS-K), with providing and conspiring to provide material support and resources to a designated foreign terrorist organization resulting in death, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2339B. Sharifullah has been arrested and is expected to appear in the Eastern District of Virginia on March 5, 2025.

“This evil ISIS-K terrorist orchestrated the brutal murder of 13 heroic service members,” said Attorney General Pamela Bondi. “Under President Trump’s strong leadership on the world stage, this Department of Justice will ensure that terrorists like Mohammad Sharifullah have no safe haven, no second chances, and no worse enemy than the United States of America.”

“The lethal attack that killed 13 American service members and Afghan civilians during the U.S. troop withdrawal from Afghanistan was an act of terrorism,” said FBI Director Kash Patel. “ISIS-K brazenly claimed responsibility for the carnage. Now thanks to the assistance of the FBI, Department of Justice, and the CIA, we have secured Sharifullah’s apprehension and transport to the U.S. to face American justice. The FBI will never forget the loss of these American heroes, we will continue to hunt down those who viciously murdered our warriors, we will find all responsible and bring them to justice.”

“The charges announced today carry an unmistakable message: the commitment of the United States to hold accountable all who facilitate and carry out acts of terror against us will never waver,” said U.S. Attorney Erik S Siebert for the Eastern Dis-

BEST LOVE PSYCHIC ASTROLOGER TAROT READER

PSYCHIC &
SPIRITUALIST

PANDIT :
RAJ SHARMA

KNOW YOUR PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

100 % REMOVAL OF
BLACK MAGIC & GIVES
LIFE LONG PROTECTION



Specialist In Girl Friend or
Boy Friend Problems

- * LOVE ISSUES
- * MARRIAGE PROBLEMS
- * CHILDLESS PROBLEM
- * COUPLES PROBLEM
- * MONEY PROBLEM
- * WORK PROBLEM
- * FAMILY PROBLEMS
- * HEALTH PROBLEMS
- * NEGATIVE ENERGY
- ETC.....



201-234-7765

trict of Virginia. “Our message to those who have been impacted by these horrific crimes is that you are not forgotten. We will continue to pursue justice no matter how long or how far it takes us.”

On Aug. 26, 2021, American and other Coalition military forces were conducting an evacuation operation at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan. Abbey Gate was the main entry point for the operation. Thousands of civilians were at Abbey Gate for evacuation.

At approximately 5:36 p.m., ISIS-K mem-

ber Abdul Rahman al-Logari detonated a body-worn suicide bomb at Abbey Gate, killing 13 U.S. military service members and approximately 160 civilians.

During an interview with FBI Special Agents on March 2, 2025, after waiving his Miranda rights, Sharifullah admitted to helping prepare for the Abbey Gate attack, including scouting a route near the airport for an attacker. Sharifullah specifically checked for law enforcement and American or Taliban checkpoints; he then communicated to other

(Continued on page 13)

SPORTS WRAP



Photo By William Hathaway, Jr.

By William Hathaway, Jr.

On March 10, City of East Orange Mayor Ted Green hosted a Key to the City event to Super Bowl LIX Champion Jahan Dotson from the Philadelphia Eagles. Attending this event was his family and many other friends and dignitaries.

During the celebration, Dotson was also presented with a jersey and team helmet by East Orange Junior Jaguars Commissioner Sharonda Bailey, who coached Dotson during his youth playing for the team. Bailey said she was proud of him and his accomplishments.

Others on hand were members of the East Orange Junior Jaguars football team and members of the high school East Orange Jaguars football team along with head coach Joe Jacobs. Also in attendance was Clyde Bradshaw, who spoke on behalf of the family. He said how proud he

was of Dotson's accomplishments.

"I am extremely proud to present this Key to the City to Jahan Dotson, a young man who has impressed us as he has grown and excelled both on and off the field," said Mayor Green. "This exceptional moment marks just the beginning of what promises to be a phenomenal career, and we are excited to follow his journey."

Dotson, an accomplished wide receiver in the National Football League, is known for his speed, agility, and impressive hands. Born on March 22, 2000, to Robin and Al Dotson, Jahan developed a love for football early in life, leading him to play at the collegiate level before being drafted into the NFL. Jahan was a standout in both football and track during high school.

While he was known for his skills as a wide receiver, his athleticism and work ethic allowed him to excel at Nazareth Area

High School. In his senior season, Dotson caught over 50 passes for more than 1,000 yards and scored 15 touchdowns. His ability to make plays at critical moments earned him recognition which helped set the stage for his transition to college football.

Dotson played college football at Penn State University, where he quickly made a name for himself as one of the top receivers in the country. He racked up over 2,000 yards receiving and scored 25 touchdowns during his college career. In his final season, Dotson earned First-Team All-Big Ten honors.

His remarkable performance at Penn State earned him a spot in the first round of the 2022 NFL Draft, where he was selected by the Washington Commanders. Since entering the NFL, Jahan has continued to impress with his route-running, athleticism, and ability to make plays in crucial moments. After two years with the Commanders, he was traded to the Philadelphia Eagles.

"Being here being honored is everything," said Dotson. "It's really special to be here. It means a lot." He also thanked his family and acknowledged the community and Jaguars.

The last time a Super Bowl champion was honored by the city was back in 2018, when East Orange native Rasul Douglas was honored by Mayor Green while also playing for the Eagles, who won Super Bowl LII.

Finally, in high school basketball championship sports action, the Newark Tech boys won another Section 2 Group 1 crown, beating Arts 70-50. Also, East Orange lost to Ridgewood 70-52 in a game for the Section 1 Group 4 crown.

The West Orange ladies defeated Morristown 61-39 for the Section 1 Group 4 title, but University lost to Glen Ridge 50-44 in the Section 2 Group 1 final. Finally, the Montclair Immaculate girls team beat Gil St. Bernard's 61-53 for the North Non-Public B Crown.



Photo By Felicia Laguerre Owens

I-80 SINKHOLE (Continued from page 4)

"On behalf of the Mayor and council, we would like to express our gratitude to those who are working on the structural repairs on Rt 80," said Wharton Mayor William Chegwidan and Council President Robert Norton in a joint statement. "We know it's a monumental task that will take time and resources to ensure integrity and safety to all our citizens."

"Roxbury welcomes with the Governor's decision to sign the executive order declaring a State of Emergency," said Roxbury Township Mayor Shawn Potillo. "We also appreciate the support of the New Jersey State Police who have been assisting our local Roxbury police with managing traffic flow."

"The New Jersey Economic Development Authority will be providing a presentation in Roxbury and discussing ways the state can provide financial assistance to local

businesses impacted by this situation. We thank Senate Minority Leader Tony Bucco and our local representatives for their leadership during this challenging time, that communities are facing."

"I want to thank Governor Murphy for coming out to the site on Route 80 today," said Mine Hill Mayor Sam Morris. "I also want to thank him for the Declaration of a state of emergency which makes this site eligible for federal funds. I think it's appropriate to ask the federal department of transportation to get involved in trying to solve this problem. This is a serious and potentially deadly issue and needs a permanent, well-funded repair."

"First and foremost, I want to commend the Department of Transportation and everyone working on this critical site," said Mount Arlington Mayor Michael Stanzilis. "They've been working tirelessly around the clock, in every kind of weather, to address

this issue. I also want to express my gratitude to Governor Murphy for declaring a state of emergency - it's a vital step toward finding a solution. The residents of Mount Arlington have shown tremendous patience in dealing with the additional traffic and, for many, extended commute times. However, I know this situation has become incredibly frustrating for them. We need a solution, and we need it as quickly as possible."

"We appreciate Governor Murphy coming to Morris County to meet with local elected and NJ DOT officials to see and hear firsthand the progress of the repairs on Route 80 eastbound," said Jefferson Township Mayor Eric Wilsusen. "It is also an opportunity for Governor Murphy to hear directly from local officials all the impacts this closure is having on our communities. We all hope that a solution is near and the interstate can be opened to full traffic soon."

Essex County College

Access to Success

Finish Your *degree* at ECC

OPEN HOUSE

SATURDAY SEPT. 28

WEST ESSEX CAMPUS

ONE STOP CENTER
1ST FLOOR

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

730 Bloomfield Avenue
West Caldwell, NJ 07006

SATURDAY OCT. 19

NEWARK MAIN CAMPUS

ESSEX ROOM
1ST FLOOR | RED AREA

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

303 University Avenue
Newark, NJ 07102

ENROLL NOW! essex.edu

For more info contact: 973.877.4477

NEWARK MAIN CAMPUS | **WEST ESSEX CAMPUS**

ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE STUDENTS FIRST

Watch the Essex County College *Community Education Forum* TV Series, hosted by Alfred Bundy on and

ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE INVITES PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS TO SPRING 2025 OPEN HOUSE

NEWARK, N.J., March 11, 2025 - Get ready to explore your future at Essex County College! Connect with prospective classmates while discovering our cutting-edge facilities and vibrant campus life in the heart of University Heights, Newark.

Join us for our Spring Open House on Saturday, May 3, 2025, at our main campus, 303 University Avenue in Newark. Our special event will run from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Prospective students and their guests are encouraged to register here.

This is not your typical college tour - on this tour, students come first. Hear from campus partners about how we support a wide range of student needs through comprehensive educational programs, workforce

training, and continuing education. Engage with passionate students, faculty, and administrators to learn about student life, financial aid, enrollment services, the Educational Opportunity Fund program, continuing education, the testing center single sign-on, and the campus bookstore.

“Whether you’re exploring ECC for the first time, or looking to deepen your knowledge, exciting opportunities await,” said Dr. Renee Ojo-Ohikuare, executive director of enrollment management & services. “There’s no better way to experience why ECC is a top choice for higher education than by meeting the people who make up this dynamic community.”

Attendees will receive an application fee waiver of \$30,



and qualified students can take advantage of instant admission and express registration. Representatives will be available to answer questions about everything from admission requirements to credit evaluations.

Essex County College offers more than 50 associate degree programs and over two dozen

academic certificates. Students can earn degrees in fields such as nursing and health sciences, business, computer science, engineering technologies, the humanities, and the social sciences.

For more information, please visit essex.edu or call 973-877-3000.



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 - Relatives, friends and classmates of Andrew Osei-Frimpong are making his funeral arrangements while authorities are investigating the circumstances of his March 8 death here at the YM/YWCA.

Uncommon Schools said that its North Star Academy Lincoln Park High School was open March 10 only for its community members to talk with counselors 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. A GoFundMe.com page has raised over \$20,000 towards his memorial as of 10 a.m. March 11.

Newark Public Safety Director Eugene Miranda said that firefighters, followed by an EMS unit, went to the YM/YWCA at 600 Broad St. on a report of an ill person at 2:48 p.m. Saturday.

They found "an unresponsive male" on "The Y's" second floor basketball court. Witnesses said that he was playing in a game when he suddenly collapsed.

EMS medic's rushed the boy to University Hospital - where he was declared dead from "a cardiac event" at 4:13 p.m. It was Uncommon Schools North Star who identified the deceased as Osei-Frimpong.

Osei-Frimpong, said North Star Academy Lincoln Park High School, was a North Star Knights boys basketball, volleyball and soccer player there and for its Lincoln Park Middle and Washington Park middle schools. The aspiring collegiate computer science major was among LPMS's inaugural incoming class in 2019. (North Star's

Lincoln Park building at 377 Washington St. opened as a high and an elementary school in August 2016.)

Relatives said that Osei-Frimpong had been planning for an immersive summer in Italy.

IRVINGTON - Federal prosecutors may not only want to put a township man in prison but, pending how his case unfolds in a U.S. judge's Newark court room, may want to keep him in prison for life.

Michael Weaver, 38, according to a U.S. Department of Justice-New Jersey District release, has been indicted by a federal grand jury in Newark Feb. 28. His arraignment date before U.S. District Judge Claire C. Cecchi has not been scheduled as of press time.

The federal grand jury returned a bill of indictment on Weaver on the counts of possession of fentanyl, heroin and methamphetamine with intent to distribute, possessing a firearm while drug trafficking and being a felon in possession of a weapon. How that last charge is adjudicated may determine whether he will be behind bars for the rest of his life.

U.S. attorneys are applying the Armed Career Criminal Act on Weaver because of his past felony convictions in Essex County. Those prior crimes include aggravated assault, drug trafficking, robbery and unlawful weapons possession charges.

The ACCA imposes a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years and up to life in prison. Federal attorneys have not disclosed the circumstances of Weaver's arrest as of press time.

EAST ORANGE - A city woman was among five people who the Newark Public Safety Police Division had apprehended for as many shooting incidents that happened there between Jan. 6 and 24.

Monasha I. Lang, 32, said Newark Public Safety Director Eugene Miranda March 5, was arrested for a Jan. 10 incident in his city. Lang has been charged for aggravated assault, controlled dangerous drug trafficking, robbery and unlawful weapons possession.

The circumstances of Lang's Jan. 10 incident and of her subsequent arrest were not disclosed

by Miranda - nor of the other four people named in the March 5 release. It is not known if Marc A. Greene, 33, or Roselle Park, who was charged on the same counts, was involved in the same or a separate incident.

Satira A. Jenkins, 32, of Newark, was arrested Jan. 6 and charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and unlawful possession of a weapon. Luis J. Centeno Cruz, 50, of Newark was arrested Jan. 7 for unlawful possession of a weapon.

Justin A. Gonzalez, 24, of Newark, was arrested Jan. 24 for unlawful possession of a weapon.

ORANGE - The City of Orange Township is to hold the first of two community meetings regarding its five-year Urban Enterprise Zone plan 7-9 p.m. March 19 at the City Hall Council Chamber.

Attendees will be asked to fill out a survey in English or Spanish about what they would like to see in the 132--block UEZ between now and 2030. The area, going by city zoning blocks, largely spans Main Street between the East and West Orange borders, Scotland Road from Main Street to the South Orange border, part of Central Avenue into the Orange Valley, Interstate 280 and NJTransit railroad rights of way and parts of Washington Avenue, Thomas Boulevard, North and South Jefferson streets, High Street, Lakeside Avenue, Alden Street and "infill" blocks.

Orange joined Newark, Irvington and East Orange in creating state recognized UEZs. The zones, created in 1983, seek to "stimulate growth in urban communities." The city's UEZ Coordinator collaborates with local businesses and the state's economic development agency, the department of labor and the redevelopment authority.

Orange and other UEZs may be best known for the 3.125 percent, or half-off, sales tax rate, micro businesses loans, tax-free credits for zone businesses who make up to \$100,000 in equipment purchases, facility upgrades and expansions and the Facade Improvement Program.

Orange, in 2022, received \$388,500 from the state towards the Military Park renovation pro-

ject between Main Street and South Main Street. That work was completed in July 2023. The city also received \$204,208.38 to hire six part-time employees to maintain the UEZ.

The city has scheduled a second in-person meeting here April 15. It has published handbills with QC codes for English and Spanish surveys; those codes are good until March 31. Five year plan surveys and other zone questions may go to UEZ Coordinator Christopher Mobley, (973) 952-6070 and/or cmobley@orangenj.gov.

WEST ORANGE - A cloud of uncertainty has descended on what has been the Americana Diner here on 270 Main St. now that it had served its last meal at 7 a.m. March 3.

Americana's owners posted on Downtown West Orange Alliance's Facebook page March 1 that it will close that Monday morning, ending 81 years of near continuous service at that address since 1934. The Manno-built diner's windows were boarded up by Noon; a Facebook poster asked if the plywood would at least be painted green for March 8's St. Patrick's Day Parade.

270 Main, in its Americana era, was only intentionally closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas evenings. The address' latest owners replaced the West Orange Diner & Pancake House name in 2014. The Diner's owners bought the place from Tory Corner Diner's last owners in 1984.

Tory Corner Diner's Charles Colombaris and family, of West Orange and Jersey City, bought C. W. Leadbeater's self-named restaurant there in 1960. Leadbeater, of the township, owned and operated his eatery there since 1934.

The diner was more assembled than built in 1961, thanks to Manno, of Farfield's modular construction. Down to its last pancake platter March 3, it had retained its stainless steel sidings and "TCS" inlaid on the foyer's terrazzo floor.

The Tory Corner Diner was a go-to place by neighbors and visitors from the nearby Thomas A. Edison National Historic Site. Edison's last son, Theodore, would walk from his Edsonia

(Continued on page 14)

LOCAL TALK

NEWSPAPER SINCE 2000 * PRINTING BUSINESS SINCE 1985

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION SPECIAL

Name of your religious organization

ADDRESS / PHONE NO.

SUNDAY PRAYER

Change your AD Every Week

Basic Typesetting Included 1st time

Every Time Prayer Info. Change no charge.

Size of the advertisement 4.8" x 3.0625"

Your Cost \$70 per insertion

ADVERTISEMENT SPECIAL

\$150 per month (4 weeks) - Reg. Cost \$525

\$375 per quarter (13 weeks) - Reg. Cost \$1375

Name of your religious organization

ADDRESS / PHONE NO.

YOUR MESSAGE

Change your MESSAGE Every Week

SET UP INCLUDED EVERY TIME

PHOTO INCLUDED (sent via email)

Size of the advertisement 4.8" x 3.0625"

Your Cost \$70 per insertion

ADVERTISEMENT SPECIAL

\$150 per month (4 weeks) - Reg. Cost \$525

\$375 per quarter (13 weeks) - Reg. Cost \$1375

FOR YOUR SECOND COMPANY OR VENUE GET THIS GREAT DEAL

Expires 04/05/25

FREE ARTICLE ON YOUR COMPANY FOR 1st TIME ADVERTISERS

2025 WINTER SPECIAL

Minimum 13 Advertisements
SAVE THOUSANDS OF \$\$\$

GROW WITH US...LET'S GROW TOGETHER

We will publicize your business or organization

Including your event and your organization's supplied photos.

Let the Local Talk community know about your business

Local Talk Weekly, a household name, since 2000

Basic artwork no charge

Expires April 5, 2025

PRINTING

Business Cards

Letterheads

Envelopes

Brochures

Calendars

Bookmarks

Flyers

Door Hangers

Greeting Cards

Labels

Postcards

Posters

Table Tents

Complete Printing

PRINTING

NCR forms

(2parts/3 parts)

2/3 Part Booklets

TICKETS

(with stub & Numbered)

& More

LARGE FORMAT

Acrylic Signs

Vinyl Banners

Display with Banner

X-Frame + Banner

Aluminum Boards

Dye Sublimation

YARD SIGN

Window Cling

FREE PARKING ♦ HUGE SAVINGS ♦ BETTER SERVICE ♦ Printing SINCE 1985 ♦ Newspaper SINCE 2000

1576 SPRINGFIELD AVENUE, MAPLEWOOD, NJ ♦ localtalk@aol.com ♦ localtalkweekly.com

Tels. (973) 622-1111 ♦ (973) 280-7547 ♦ E-mail: localtalkprinting@gmail.com

67 ROUTED, 4 INJURED IN NEWARK FIRE

By Walter Elliott

NEWARK - The 67 North Newark residents who were displaced by a four house pre-dawn fire March 2 may have well been released from hospitalization and/or found more stable housing arrangements when you read this.

The 49 adults and 18 children who used to reside at 181-83, 185, 187 and 189 Woodside Ave. were open to a resource information workshop by North Ward Councilman Anibal Ramos, Jr. and State Senate Majority Leader M. Teresa Ruiz (D-Newark) at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish's Immaculate Conception Church, 372 Woodside, 4 p.m. March 7. The parish includes Our Lady of Good Counsel Church at 654 Summer Ave. - which is closer to the fire scene.

Councilman Carlos Gonzalez had posted an appeal by the Newark Firefighters Foundation March 3. The NFD union-based foundation was accepting donations, gift cards

and new items at its union hall at 238 Murray St. 07114.

The American Red Cross of North Jersey had found immediate temporary lodging at Newark's John F. Kennedy Aquatic Center in the Central Ward for the 24 affected families, including nine pets, March 2-3. The chapter closed its shelter that Monday evening once everyone were given relocation referrals.

Newark Public Safety Director Eugene Miranda said that the first Newark Fire Division units responded to a fire call at 1:14 a.m. that Sunday and found 181-83 Woodside ablaze. Gusting wind quickly spread flames to the other houses, prompting the incident commander to pull a second alarm at 1:28 and a third at 1:38 a.m.

181-183 Woodside was a three-story brick apartment building while 185, 187 and 189 Woodside were 2.5-story wood frame houses. Their overall 1.84 acres front Woodside's east side and are on Woodside's south-

ernmost block. Woodside, a northbound one-way street, is only vehicularly accessible by westbound Delavan Avenue thanks to the Forest Hill ridge.

Units from East Orange, Bloomfield, Montclair and Jersey City supplied mutual aid. Bloomfield, for example, sent out its Engine 3 crew from Brookdale-based Fire Station No. 3 to be on the scene for five hours.

An NFD captain was taken to University Hospital for treatment of a head injury, followed by a firefighter who complained of pain after suffering a fall. Two civilians were also transported for undisclosed conditions.

Miranda said that the fire was brought under control by 6:10 a.m.

Inspectors from Newark Public Safety, the Essex County Arson Squad and the New Jersey Fire Marshal had conducted an investigation as a standard operating procedure. Their findings have not been released as of press time.

NJ AG ISSUES MULTISTATE GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS ON D.E.I. AND ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES

New Jersey Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin joined a coalition of 15 attorneys general in issuing guidance to help K-12 schools, colleges, and universities understand the legality, viability, and importance of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility policies and practices in education.

The guidance comes in response to concerns following a Trump Administration executive order and the U.S. Department of Education's "Dear Colleague" letter and FAQ document targeting diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility policies and programming in schools.

The coalition's guidance reminds educational entities that efforts to seek and support diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible educational experiences for students are legal, and that longstanding legal precedents supporting these programs cannot be changed by an executive order or a letter from the U.S. Department of Education.

"New Jersey's schools are among the top-ranked in our country precisely because they embrace our state's great diversity and provide a high-quality education to students across the state - and no toothless threats from the Trump Administration will change that," said Attorney General Platkin.

"Along with my colleagues across the country, we are issuing legal guidance to schools so that they can continue to foster diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible environments that benefit all students. Make no mistake - we will fight any attempt by the Trump Administration to take funding away from our schools, and especially our special needs students."

Opponents of diversity initiatives have sought to improperly expand the U.S. Supreme Court's narrow ruling in Students for

Fair Admissions Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College (SFFA) far beyond its scope. The multistate guidance builds on guidance issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts after the 2023 ruling.

It clarifies that the recent executive order and communications from the Department of Education do not change the law with respect to admissions policies, and they do not and cannot prohibit or restrict educational institutions from pursuing and implementing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts. The updated guidance also includes tips to help K-12 schools set their students up for success.

The attorneys general clarify that while SFFA limited the ability of institutions of higher education to consider an applicant's race in and of itself as a positive factor for admission, schools can still work to diversify their applicant pools and student bodies through recruitment efforts. The guidance notes that institutions do not have to ignore race when identifying prospective students for outreach and recruitment programs, provided such programs do not give students preference based on racial status, and that all students have the same opportunity to apply and compete for admission.

The attorneys general emphasize that institutions of higher education can continue to create missions and set goals related to student body diversity and equitable outcomes for students and can use all legal methods to pursue them.

Schools can continue to target outreach to potential applicants based on a wide range of characteristics, such as academic interests, geographic residency, financial means and socioeconomic status, family background, and parental education level.



The guidance also encourages K-12 schools to strive for a school climate where all students feel safe, supported, respected, and ready to learn. School leaders can do this by reviewing their current practices to ensure that their district complies with anti-discrimination, anti-bullying and civil rights laws, and by adopting programs and policies that incorporate best practices and meet the needs of their communities. In addition, the attorneys general identify steps schools can take to ensure that all students, including those from historically underrepresented backgrounds, are prepared for college or careers.

Attorney General Platkin joins the Attorneys General of Massachusetts, Illinois, New York, California, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Nevada, Oregon, Rhode Island and Vermont in issuing this multistate guidance.

WORLD NEWS

(Continued from page 7)

ISIS-K members that he believed the route was clear and that the attacker would not be detected. Sharifullah also admitted to recognizing al-Logari as an ISIS-K operative he had previously known.

During his interview with the FBI, Sharifullah also admitted to supporting and conducting activities on behalf of ISIS-K in multiple other lethal attacks.

On June 20, 2016, a suicide bomber acting for ISIS-K detonated a bomb that killed over ten embassy guards and multiple civilians and wounded other soldiers guarding the Canadian embassy in Kabul. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack. As alleged in the complaint, prior to the attack, Sharifullah conducted surveillance to prepare the suicide bomber and later transported the bomber to the attack area.

On March 22, 2024, a group of ISIS-K gunmen attacked Crocus City Hall near Moscow, Russia. The attack killed approximately 130 people and injured numerous others. Russian authorities arrested four gunmen in connection with the attack. During his interview with the FBI, Sharifullah admitted that, on behalf of ISIS-K, he had shared instructions on how to use AK-style rifles and other weapons to would-be attackers. Sharifullah also admitted to recognizing two of the four arrested gunmen as those he had previously instructed.

If convicted, Sharifullah faces a maximum penalty of life in prison. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Mi-

chael P. Ben'Ary and Troy A. Edwards, Jr., for the Eastern District of Virginia and Trial Attorneys Alicia Cook, Charles Kovats, and Ryan White for the Department of Justice's National Security Division are prosecuting the case.

The details described above are allegations. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

UNITED KINGDOM SAFEGUARDING ETHNIC CHILDREN

On March 11, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published a report about 53 children from Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage backgrounds who died or were seriously harmed between January 2022 and March 2024. These children were subject to horrific abuse, including sexual abuse, fatal assault and neglect, with 27 children dying as a result.

The report sought to understand the specific safeguarding needs of children from these specific ethnic backgrounds and how agencies helped to protect them before it was too late. It has revealed a significant silence in talking about race and racism in child safeguarding, with many local areas failing to acknowledge the impact of race, ethnicity and culture.

The key findings include:

- **Limited Attention to Race and Ethnicity:** the analysis reveals a concerning lack of focus on race, ethnicity, and culture in both safeguarding practice and reviews. This oversight has resulted in insufficient critical analysis and reflection on how racial bias impacts decision-

making and service offers to children.

- **Silence on Racism:** the report identifies a pervasive silence and hesitancy to address racism and its manifestations. This silence renders the safeguarding needs of Black, Asian, and Mixed Heritage children invisible, both in practice and in the system for learning from reviews.
- **Missed Opportunities:** in failing to acknowledge race, racial bias and racism, the current system misses many opportunities to learn from incidents where Black, Asian, and Mixed Heritage children have been seriously harmed or died. This failure to see the totality of children's lives or to scrutinize how racial bias may have affected decision-making leaves children vulnerable and at risk of harm, without the necessary support and protection.

Risk-assessment and decision-making is a common theme across all safeguarding reviews, but this analysis has highlighted specific issues in relation to race. For example, in 19 reviews risk had been at least partially recognized, but this had not translated into action. This included several examples about girls from Asian and Mixed Asian Heritages who made disclosures about sexual abuse, but these appeared either to have been disregarded as untrue or were not carefully followed up.

In one review family members had vocalized that they perceived practitioners to be racist. However, the review appeared to distance itself from any possibility of racism by noting that practitioners had been mindful of the ethnicity of the family. The re-

view then concluded these accusations were groundless, but did not provide evidence about whether the claims had been investigated or provide any detail about how this judgement had been made.

The Panel's report contains a number of recommendations for local areas so they can better protect Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage children who are at risk of harm. The lead recommendations include:

- **Acknowledging and Challenging Racism:** local leaders should ensure that appropriate internal structures are in place to support practitioners to recognize, discuss and challenge internal and institutional racism.
- **Empowering Practitioners:** creating conditions that empower practitioners to have conversations with children and families about race and identity. This includes building skills and confidence and ensuring there are safe opportunities for self-reflection within teams and in supervision to acknowledge their own biases.
- **Reviewing Local Strategies:** Child Safeguarding Partnerships should review their local strategies and approaches to addressing race, racism, and racial bias in their work with Black, Asian, and Mixed Heritage children.

These recommendations are a crucial step towards creating a more inclusive and effective safeguarding system that recognizes and addresses the unique challenges faced by Black, Asian, and Mixed Heritage children.

NEWARK DETECTIVE

(Continued from page 1)

Being a police officer these days is not like in times past. The streets are more dangerous, the criminals are being arrested and released over and over, there's more guns on the streets with more firepower. Worst of all, people in the community are not speaking or saying anything in a lot of shootings, stabbings,

and other crimes that take place in the hood, which makes it very hard for the police to do their jobs effectively and keep the community safe.

Fourteen-year-olds should be carrying books, not guns. Teenagers should not be terrorizing the neighborhood, running around with illegal guns. Our community is really hurting; we are dealing with so many other issues that affect us on a daily

basis. Now we have to worry about our teenagers carrying weapons and not being afraid to use them without worrying about the consequences of shooting other teenagers, adults, grandparents, children, business owners and staff, and police officers. Let's all pray that the second officer has a speedy recovery.

The 14-year-old accused in the shooting was arrested and is in police custody. Four others

were held by the NPD and questioned in relation to the shooting incident.

Condolences have been sent to the Azcona family from police departments across the country. They all have sent prayers to comfort the family, friends, the community, the Newark Police Department and the city of Newark, New Jersey.

The Observation Booth



OP-ED By Andrea Dialect

RAP BATTLE (PART 2)

If you're into hard hittin' mind blows check out the draft short 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.

WORD UP

It all started when meeting the five. They were in the park rappin' at the time, just joshin' with 'em as walking by, I hollered out to em' that they couldn't spit nada - I told 'em they couldn't rap, neither could, using so many words and oh boy... they spent the next hour spittin' lines that begged me to differ. Yep, they proved me wrong that day.

I had so much fun with those lyrical linguists during our wordplay. Souped me up, told me that I was part of the crew. Now imagine that. We'd been skipping down memory lane for a while, when they were pulling their favorite rap contenders out of those hats. Some that I knew of - like Tupac, A Tribe Called



Photos Courtesy Andrea Dialect

Quest, Nas, Mac Miller, DMX, etc., etc. - and many that I did not. Plenty sample scripts were being spit, but those gentlemen spared me from clutchin' my pearls by avoiding that genre - knowingly gangsta. I gave 'em a one too. Skills and perfect gentlemen, doing us proud.

Snatching the mic before exit, I suggested they have an open mind and listen to the wordplay that was really gansta, opposed to getting caught up in their own head. Told 'em that they'd want to be seated when getting those lyrical slaps. When I left them with these three heavy hitters - Myles Monroe, Derrick Prince, and Dr. Cindy Trimm. No shade I told dem youngins. My contenders if they donned that stage would knock their favs outta the box, hands down. See for yourself and Google those three - FYI: Dr. Cindy Trimm's prayers in the search - and while ya at it, brace yourself, and you'd best take a seat

SUCKA PUNCH

After a little coaxing and prompting, ChatGPT stole the show. Taking this draft short to a whole another level.... Check out the intro that robot head came up with. I was floored when I peeped its street cred... Big Bruh, they call 'em AI, watchin' dem streets, while stealin' ya flow... Check!

MIC GRABBIN

Mic check, mic check... y'all ready for a battle that's gonna flip the whole game? This ain't your typical rap war - nah, this is wordplay at its highest elevation! Today, we bring THE THREE, a trio of lyrical giants that don't just spit bars... they build minds, shake souls, and ignite revolutions - all with the power of WORDS. ...

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)

Terrace home to have the diner's lentil soup.

It is not known whether the Manno diner will be bought and shipped elsewhere, given the real estate demand for authentic diners. Orange's Orange Circle Diner had been reportedly sent to West Palm Beach, Fla. in 1998. Belleville's Short Stop, a 1949 Paramount, found a private Upstate New York home in 2018 after first arriving in Diversified Diners Cleveland lot in 1991.

SOUTH ORANGE / MAPLEWOOD - New Jersey American Water's absorption of the Village of South Orange Water Department and its infrastructure, with two pen strokes March 6, has begun. The private utility, pending New Jersey

Board of Public Utilities' approval, is to be consummated during 2025's latter half.

NJAW President Mark McDonough and Mayor Sheena Collum, by signing ownership transfer papers that Thursday, started the integration of an over century old municipal department with the state's largest water provider and operator. The village, where a majority of its participating voters approved the sale referendum on the Nov. 5 General Election ballot, is selling its department for \$19.7 million.

The utility will make a \$50 million renovation of the village's water assets over the next 10 years while minimizing water customer rate increases the next five years. NJAW has pledged to keep rates as-in the first two years and have three percent an-

nual increases the next three years.

NJAW will implement its village renovation list, starting with the replacement of any and all lead service lines with galvanized steel lines now through 2031. Other projects include: modernizing the Main Reservoir and Newstead Watersphere, replacing the Crest Drive Standpipe and replacing all fire hydrants and four-inch-diameter water mains.

Person of Interest Sought

Township detectives have been looking for "a person of interest" since March 2 regarding gunfire surrounding Boyden and Elmwood avenues.

A Maplewood Police Department release said that officers had responded to calls of shots

fired at that intersection at about 7:10 p.m. that Sunday. Although they found no injured persons, MPD detectives found four or five shell casings at the intersection - including a bullet lodged into one of the apartments along Elmwood.

Interviewing witnesses there resulted in a description of the "person of interest" but the MPD Detective Bureau has not publicly released that depiction. Anyone with information is to contact Detective William Isetts at wisetts@maplewoodnj.gov or (973) 761-7925.

BLOOMFIELD - The quiet of Rowe Street at the Norfolk Southern Railroad right-of-way was broken by a single car accident with a fire here Feb. 26.

Bloomfield Fire Department
(Continued on page 15)

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 14)

Engine 1, Truck 1 and Car 30's crews went to the street's north end during that Wednesday morning's predawn hours. They found a car who had gone off the street and slammed its driver's side against a utility pole.

The two-door car's engine bay had caught fire, igniting the wooden pole and nearby brush. (The two block street's front lawns were covered with snow.)

The blaze was quickly extinguished and the car towed away. There were no reported injuries. The car had rested on a pole on what used to be the NJTransit Boonton Line and Erie Railroad Greenwood Lake Division's right of way.

Passenger service, including the 1955 Rowe Street station stop, ended when the NJTransit combined the Boonton Line and Montclair Branch in Montclair Oct. 20-22, 2002. What is now "The Lower Boonton Line" is slated to become the Essex-Hudson Greenway (rail) Trail in 2026-7.

NS Police, since Feb. 24, has been enforcing a No Parking ban on or "too close to" the unused right of way here and in Belleville. They have been issuing warning tickets and having no parking signs erected along the way; ticketing and towing may be forthcoming.

MONTCLAIR - A Montclair Public Schools official, a second driver and a seven-year-old boy may have recovered from injuries they had received in a Feb. 25 intersection accident here.

A Montclair Police spokesman said that MPS School Business Administrator Christina Hunt was taken to Paterson's St. Joseph Medical Center after a collision with another car at Claremont Avenue and Valley Rd. at about 4:33 p.m. that Tuesday. Hunt, who was driving a Porsche Panamera, was treated for a head bruise.

Responding Emergency Medical Service technicians also examined two people in the Mazda SUV at the scene. That driver, a 27-year-old woman from Montclair, had her hand pain looked at.

The seven-year-old boy passenger in the Mazda was treated at the scene for "a small abrasion to his left eye socket." Neither Mazda occupant were taken to a hospital.

MPD officers were told by two witnesses that the Mazda was turning left from Valley onto Claremont during an amber caution light. They said that the Porsche "accelerated" before the light would change - but struck the Mazda's right front corner with its own right front.

Officers who conducted the preliminary investigation, said that no summonses were issued. Both vehicles required towing.

BELLEVILLE - A township man, who had pleaded guilty in a Jan. 6 Morristown court room regarding a fatal May 31 Morris County car crash, has been paying his debt to society in a state prison since Feb. 14.

State Superior Court-Morristown Judge Robert Hanna had sentenced Gerald Veneziano, 41, to at least 85 percent of six years' imprisonment under the No Early Release Act. Veneziano is to also pay \$8,961 as restitution to the late Jacob Davis' family.

Veneziano had pleaded guilty Jan. 6 to DWI and second-degree reckless vehicular homicide. He had been driving a 2021 Chevrolet Silverado pickup truck north along Roxbury's Howard Boulevard when he collided with a southbound 2019 Mazda 3 driven by Davis, 19, of Flanders, 10:30 p.m. May 31.

Davis was declared dead at the scene. Veneziano had to be extricated from his truck and was taken to the Morristown Medical Center for treatment of serious internal injuries.

It was while Veneziano was being cut out of his Silverado that first responders had noticed "numerous empty alcohol containers" by where the truck had settled. He later failed an alcohol test and was found to have clocked at 90 mph before the collision.

NUTLEY - Township, as of Feb. 19, has filed an appeal to the New Jersey Appellate Court regarding the Feb. 4 State Superior Court ruling on Prism Capital Partners' plan to build a warehouse - or a truck terminal.

Township elders and administrators are looking to have the Superior Court-Newark judge's ruling that went against them reversed. Prism has put up a "Coming Soon" sign of a 147,000 square foot, 40-dock, 136-parking space structure here at 24 Kingsland St. The 11-acre site, where a Roche Pharmaceutical building once stood, is across from Cathedral Avenue.

What Prism, the prime redeveloper of the Roche/ON3 property, and NutClif Master LLC calls a warehouse is what township law calls a truck terminal, which is barred from Nutley's zoning map, is at issue.

Nutley's ordinance calls a property where "more than three 1.5-ton vehicles whose gross vehicle weight each is 6,001 and 10,000 lbs. parked overnight" a truck terminal. That statute prompted the Nutley Planning Board to reject Prism NutClif's 2020 application and a zoning officer to deny it a permit in 2021.

The Superior Court judge, calling the ordinance "arbitrary and capricious," struck that down Feb. 4.

"The project must now be considered by the Planning Board as a result of the Court's ruling," said Mayor John V. Kelly IV. "While a hearing date on the application has not yet been established, I anticipate that our residents will attend the hearing and express their opinions regarding what the developer calls a 'warehouse' at that site. It will create a traffic and environmental nightmare for the town and the

BANKRUPTCY

**CHAPTER 7 BANKRUPTCY
CHAPTER 13 BANKRUPTCY**

- ◆ Stop Bank Levies!
- ◆ Stop Wage Garnishments!
- ◆ Stop Creditor Harassment
- ◆ Stop Foreclosure!!
- ◆ Stop Eviction! Protect Cosigners
- ◆ Restore Driving Privileges
- ◆ Prevent Auto Repossessions
- ◆ ELIMINATE Credit Card & Medical Debt.





FOR FREE CONSULTATION:
Call
DAVID WITHERSPOON
Attorney-at-Law
142 Lafayette Street
Newark, NJ 07102

973-489-9005

LOW RATES: ONE PHONE CALL
MAY REDUCE YOUR STRESS!

David Witherspoon, Attorney-at-Law, is a Debt Relief Agency.
A firm dedicated to helping individuals find relief under the Bankruptcy Code.

www.bellaitaliarestaurantnj.com



Bella Italia Ristorante

Banquet Facilities & Fine Dining

Phone: 973-676-4300 / 973-678-5538 535 Central Avenue
Fax: 973-678-2673 Orange, NJ 07050
Near Rte. 280 and The West Orange Line

LOCAL TALK

Fall 2024 Hours

**Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday
12:00 pm - 6:00 pm**

Thursday, Saturday, Sunday - CLOSED

Call 973-622-1111 for appointments

ATTENTION

Take notice that in accordance with N.J.S.A. 39:10-16*, application has been made to the Chief Administrator of the Motor Vehicle Commission, Trenton, New Jersey, to receive title papers authorizing and the issuance of a New Jersey certification of ownership for, **Make XION, Year 2022, VIN / Hull identification Number: 1V9XNBNA9NS252144**

Objections, if any, should be made in writing, immediately in writing to the Chief Administrator of the Motor Vehicle Commission, Special Title Unit, P.O. Box 017, Trenton, New Jersey, 08666-0017

neighborhood." Nutley and Clifton had named Prism/NutCliff LLC as the redeveloper of the 114-acre Roche site.



Heart Center of the Oranges

OUR PROVIDERS

CARDIOLOGY

Gitendra Rajiyah, MD
Catalino Delacruz, MD
Muhammad Haq, MD
Addi Suleiman, MD
Abbas Shehadeh, MD
Isaac Tawfik, MD
Marlyn Escalona, APN
Lou Alexandre, PA

INTERNAL MEDICINE / PRIMARY CARE

Eddy Simon, MD
Aleksander Lekan, MD
Mamatha Mohan, MD
Myriam Sterlin, MD
Hemlata Bhatia, MD
Normita Narvaez, MD
Ramesh Kania, MD
Audrey Hinds, MD
Zareh Ekmekjian, MD
Roody Dalberis, DNP
Beena Mathew, DNP
Marie Tunis, DNP
Cynthia Mathieu, APN
Primerose Germain, APN
Janiece Howell, APN
Sanjaykumar Shah, APN

ENDOCRINOLOGY

Tara Rajiyah, MD
(Adult and Pediatric)
Rama Reddy, MD
(Adult Endocrinology)

PULMONARY/SLEEP DISORDERS

Jeffrey Miller, DO
Satish Mehta, MD

NEUROLOGY

Ruth Clark-Brown, MD
Burget Cort, APN

PODIATRY

Valeriya Anbinder, DPM

Women's Health/Gyn

Amir Friedman, MD

Welcome to Our New Center for Diabetes and Metabolic Diseases



Treating Both Adults and Children of All Ages



We now treat a variety of endocrine disorders
Including
**Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes, Thyroid Diseases, Osteoporosis
And Metabolic Bone Disorders**

Dr. Tara Rajiyah treats both adults and children
Call 973-395-1550 for an appointment * 77 Main Street, West Orange

Contact us: **973-395-1550** • Orangeheartcenter.net

VISIT ONE OF OUR OTHER CONVENIENT LOCATIONS:

South Orange:	60 Vose Avenue	Tel. 973-763-5200
Maplewood:	2091 Millburn Avenue	Tel. 973-378-2266
Bloomfield:	135 Bloomfield Avenue, Suite B	Tel. 973-743-2248
Newark:	202 Stuyvesant Avenue	Tel. 973-374-8807
West Orange:	77 Main Street	Tel. 973-324-2090
West Orange:	95 Main Street	Tel. 973-672-3829
West Orange:	92 Old Northfield Avenue	Tel. 973-736-5552