

LOCAL TALK

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

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

ESSEX COUNTY • EAST ORANGE • ORANGE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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INTEGRATING A.I. INTO INTERNAL MEDICINE

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ORANGE COUNCILMAN COLEY ARRESTED

By Walter Elliott

ORANGE - When word of an elected city official who had been charged with firearms and terroristic threats counts after March 10-11 detainment at Newark's Essex County Correctional Facility, that news had traveled fast across state lines.

Orange East Ward Councilman Kerry Coley - said Essex County Prosecutor Theodore "Ted" Stephens II and Orange Police Director Todd Warren in a statement - was released after being charged on one count each of displaying a firearm and making a terroristic threat.

Warren said that Coley, 60, had surrendered himself to Orange's Freddie Polhill Law and Justice Complex the night of March 10. Stephens said Coley was then taken to the county

jail.

Coley, like all elected officials and law enforcement officers, are sworn to uphold the U.S. and state constitutions and their laws. He was first elected ward councilman in 2014 and is currently in his third four-year term. He had also been selected by his council peers as his president for a year.

The presiding State Superior Court judge that Tuesday told Coley that he was being released on Level 1 monitoring. That level includes calling the county's pretrial services monthly, surrendering any weapons in his possession and having no contact with the alleged victim.

It is not known as of press time how many and what types of weapons Coley possesses and, after March 11,

(Continued on page 8)



PERSON OF INTEREST SOUGHT IN DEATH OF NEWARK IMAM

Essex County Prosecutor Theodore N. Stephens II alongside Newark Public Safety Director Emanuel Miranda is asking for the public's help in identifying a person of interest in the fatal shooting of Imam Hassan Sharif in Newark in January 2024.

Imam Hassan Sharif was killed outside the Masjid Muhammad-Newark mosque at South Orange Avenue and Camden Street early on the morning of January 3, 2024.

Surveillance video shows a man in the area at the time of the shooting. The individual has a distinctive walk which investigators hope will aid with identification.

"This was a senseless act of violence that took the life of a beloved community leader. We have been working tirelessly to find those responsible, but we need the community's

help. We hope that releasing this video will encourage someone with any information to come forward," said Essex County Prosecutor Theodore N. Stephens II.

A Crime Stoppers Program reward of up to \$35,000 is also being offered for any information that leads to arrests in this case.

The Essex County Prosecutor's Office reminds the public that all homicide cases remain open unless and until they are solved. There is no statute of limitations for murder, meaning these cases are never time-barred.

In an effort to bring offenders to justice and offer some measure of relief to homicide survivors, the ECPO maintains a Cold Case Unit within the Homicide Task Force. Dedicated detectives continuously review open files, re-

(Continued on page 15)



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Editorial
Dhiren Shah
Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

Kerry Coley is a City of Orange Councilman who ran to be mayor once. He is a former council president and serves as councilman for the East Ward. He has been accused of drawing a gun on a tow truck driver to stop him from towing his family member or friend's car. On March 10, he was formally arrested and went to jail. Since then, more and more demands have grown for his resignation from the politicians as well as citizens of Orange.

As I've heard, he has been asked not to attend the council meeting on March 18, 2025. However, as we've heard, he is determined to attend the council meeting. Our laws say that anyone is innocent until proven guilty. The same applies to

Councilman Coley. In or about 2011, Coley was fired or suspended from his police job due to staying home while on night duty as a police officer. However, Coley won the Democratic County Committee Chair position against outgoing mayor Eldridge Hawkins, Jr. by a vote of 18 to 14.

Today (March 18) the editorial goes to print. The council meeting will be interesting if Coley attends. The protest against Coley and demands for his resignation will be a hot issue for the council meeting.

President Trump stated to Congress that millions of people are collecting social security checks over the age of 100, 4.7 million from age 100-109, 3.6 million from age 110 to 119, 3.47 million from age 120 to 129, 3.9 million from 130 to 139, 3.5 million from age 140 to 149, 1.3 million from 150 to 159 and 130,000 still receiving the checks over the age of 160. If it is true, then we must support Trump for finding out the problems with our governmental departments.

Reports suggest that social security funds will be exhausted by around 2036. They should find out who received and cashed the checks or use the social security money over the age of 100, illegally, and those responsible should be punished to the full extent of the law.

Russia and Ukraine war is not over yet. The peace talks are nowhere near a true settlement. Putin is demanding that no war equipment be given to Ukraine for at least 30 days of ceasefire. However, while Putin has not agreed with Trump to totally end the war, he did agree to have no attacks on energy sources. Meanwhile, Ukraine's President Zelensky has not agreed to halting the support of weapons from the U.S. The truce is far from over.

The war between Israel and Hamas continues, with Palestine caught in the middle. Israel continues to attack Gaza, killing about 100 people on March 16. This comes as Israel ended the ceasefire due to not getting back enough hostages. The Trump

Administration remain partial in supporting Israel over Palestine. We hope that Trump and Israel concentrate on stopping Hamas only, and not attacking the innocent.

Tariffs are still at the forefront. Some experts, including President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s, feel that tariffs are not the solution. Tariff wars can result on all sides, and that ultimately hits the consumers. I think tariffs are a temporary solution to stop a country from charging more tariffs and taking advantage of the global market, especially the largest consumer in the United States of America.

The NASA astronauts who were stuck in space for 286 days are now home thanks to SpaceX and Elon Musk. Whether you like Musk or not, he should be thanked for doing something that the prior administration and Boeing were unable to do, which is to get them back safely.

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>
Rain	Partly Cloudy / Windy	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Rain	Partly Cloudy, Rain	Partly Cloudy
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The Doctor Is In



OP-ED By Adil Manzoor

Integrating Artificial Intelligence in Internal Medicine: How AI is Changing the Game

There's a revolution happening in internal medicine, and it's important that I bring it to your notice. For years, we doctors have relied on research, experience, medical history, intuition, and whatnot to diagnose and treat diseases. But now, AI is stepping in as our powerful ally. It is reshaping the way we approach healthcare, and we may not even be ready for what's coming.

I want you to Imagine a world where we can catch diseases before they even show symptoms. A world where treatments are tailored specifically to you. That world where we have AI-powered tools that make our jobs easier and more effective as medical practitioners. Well, that world is happening right now. So, how exactly is AI changing internal medicine, and what does it mean for you and me?

Having the correct diagnosis at the correct time can be the difference between life and death. Even the best physicians, however, do get to miss some of the more subtle signs of disease. But AI? Never gets tired. Never gets distracted and misses a thing. It can examine vast amounts of data in just seconds with breathtaking precision.

Let's consider radiology, for example. There are AI-powered

systems like Google's DeepMind and IBM Watson Health. These systems can read medical images with the same precision as, and sometimes even higher precision than, human radiologists. They can detect subtle X-ray, MRI, and CT abnormalities that might otherwise be missed. Research has even revealed that AI software can identify various cancers and strokes with an accuracy rate of more than 90%. That cuts down on misdiagnosis and leads to improved patient outcomes.

It doesn't end with radiology or imaging. We're seeing the tremendous impact of AI in lab diagnostics too. I've worked with lab scientists who used smart algorithms to analyze blood samples and detect infections. In fact, these systems helped predict disease risks based on genetic markers. A good example was one that could identify sepsis hours before symptoms appear. It gave us a crucial head start in the treatment plan.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if physicians could foresee medical issues before they happen? Thanks to artificial intelligence, they can. Through the review of millions of patient histories, AI can detect individuals at high risk for ailments such as heart disease, diabetes, or kidney failure, sometimes even before symptoms occur.

For example, AI systems were trained to forecast heart attacks based on ECG results, cholesterol, and lifestyle. In a Nature study, it was discovered that AI also predicted cardiac events better than conventional risk profiling. That means more preventive care, earlier interventions, and fewer individuals struggling with preventable conditions.

AI is also used to track and predict disease outbreaks. During the pandemic of COVID-19, AI-based models were used to predict surges in infections by examining global health information and advising on public health responses. Such predictive power can prevent future pandemics and secure societies.

No two patients are the same,



and so why should treatments be? AI is helping us tailor treatments better because it is able to read between the lines of digital health data and genetic information. AI technology such as IBM Watson for Oncology helps doctors choose the best possible treatment options for a patient from the patient's own genes and medical history.

The same is happening in chronic disease management. There are wearable devices with AI that will monitor your vitals and give you real-time feedback. It will even help physicians modify treatment plans in real-time. Imagine having an AI personal assistant reminding you to take your meds and recommending dietary advice. They'll even notify your physician when the vitals are showing warning signs. That's our dream world.

Developing new medicines typically costs billions of dollars and years, but AI is accelerating the process. Machine learning algorithms can learn molecular structures and anticipate how various compounds will act against diseases. This allows for drug discovery more quickly and efficiently.

Firms such as Atomwise and BenevolentAI are already employing AI to create cures for Alzheimer's, and cancer. AI is also enhancing clinical trials by identifying the most suitable participants and tracking their reactions in real time. This way, new drugs can hit the market faster.

But I'm sure you have some ethical questions. As much as AI

in medicine sounds amazing, can we really trust it? Well, AI indeed has its challenges. One of its major concerns is data privacy. From what I've discussed earlier, you will notice that AI systems rely on massive amounts of patient data. Therefore, you can begin to ask some challenging questions regarding confidentiality and security. There are stringent laws such as HIPAA and GDPR that safeguard sensitive health information and assuage your fears.

Another problem is the "black box" issue of AI. Most AI models give answers without clearly describing how they arrived at their conclusions. So, it's quite challenging for us doctors to trust their recommendations completely. However, researchers are now working on explainable AI (XAI) to make these systems more transparent and accountable.

And doctors? Will AI take our place? No chance! AI is a tool, not a human being. It will never provide you with the empathy, moral judgment, intuition, and professionalism that we provide. AI is meant to augment us to make our job more efficient and enhance patient care, not replace doctors.

The AI revolution in medicine isn't coming. It's already here. And it's only going to get better from here.

This article was written by Dr. Adil Manzoor, DO, a Board-Certified Internist; Board certi-
(Continued on page 5)

NEWARK WOMAN CHARGED IN SIX-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER'S DEATH

ESSEX - County Prosecutor Theodore N. Stephens II alongside Newark Public Safety Director Emanuel Miranda announced the arrest of 26-year-old Zyhirah Hall in connection with the death of her six-year-old daughter.

On Monday March 10, 2025, at approximately 10:30 am Essex County Prosecutor's detectives responded to a call regard-

ing the death of a six-year-old girl at 19 Stratford Place in Newark. The cause and manner of death are still under investigation pending the results of an autopsy. Hall has been charged with endangering the welfare of a child. This investigation is active and ongoing.

These allegations are merely accusations. All defendants are presumed innocent unless and

until they enter a guilty plea or are found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Anyone with information regarding this case is asked to contact the Essex County Prosecutor's Office tips line at 1-877-TIPS-4EC or 1-877-847-7432. All calls will be kept confidential.



STATE GRAND JURY DECLINES TO CRIMINALLY CHARGE OFFICERS IN CONNECTION WITH SEABROOKS SHOOTING

TRENTON - A state grand jury has voted not to file criminal charges at the conclusion of its deliberations on the fatal police-involved shooting of Najee Seabrooks, 31, of Paterson, New Jersey. Mr. Seabrooks' death on March 3, 2023, and the resulting response were contributing factors to the transformation of the Paterson Police Department, statewide changes to crisis responses, and revisions to the law enforcement use-of-force policy.

Well-known and respected in his community, Mr. Seabrooks grew up in Paterson and as a young man played basketball for the Eastside High School Ghosts, helping the team win a state championship. A victim of a non-fatal drive-by shooting in 2021, Mr. Seabrooks would later dedicate himself to improving public safety in his hometown, becoming a violence interventionist with the Paterson Healing Collective, a hospital-based violence intervention organization. The father of a young daughter, Mr. Seabrooks was known for his kind nature, warm smile, and

his dedication to making the City of Paterson safer.

Mr. Seabrooks' Death, as per the Authorities

Mr. Seabrooks' death was investigated by the Office of Public Integrity and Accountability (OPIA) and presented to New Jersey residents on the grand jury, in accordance with the Independent Prosecutor Directive of 2019. In July 2021, OPIA issued standard operating procedures (SOPs) to ensure these grand jury presentations are conducted in a neutral, objective manner.

The investigation included witness interviews, photographs, the review of hours of video footage, ballistics reports, and autopsy results from the medical examiner. This evidence, including video of the incident, was presented to the state grand jury. After hearing the testimony and evaluating the evidence, the grand jury finished deliberating on March 17, 2025, and voted "no bill," concluding no criminal

charges should be filed against Paterson Police Officers Anzore Tsay and Jose Hernandez.

According to the investigation, on Friday, March 3, 2023, at approximately 7:43 a.m., the Paterson Police Department arrived at an apartment building on Mill Street in Paterson in response to a 911 call from an individual in distress, later identified as Mr. Seabrooks. When officers arrived, family members of Mr. Seabrooks conveyed that he was hallucinating and behaving erratically. At the family's request, the officers called for an ambulance.

Officers were escorted into an apartment where they spoke with Mr. Seabrooks through a door of the bathroom, inside of which he had locked himself. Mr. Seabrooks told the officers, "People are trying to kill me, I need an escort." The family said he may have been experiencing a bad reaction to something he had smoked and that his actions were out of character. They additionally told the police that he had arrived at the apartment around

2:00 a.m. and stayed the night. Then, in the morning, he grabbed three knives and locked himself inside the bathroom.

Additional officers and shift sergeants from the Paterson Police Department, as well as the Paterson Fire Department's emergency medical services (EMS), responded to the scene. Mr. Seabrooks' mother, along with the police, urged Mr. Seabrooks to unlock the door and come out of the bathroom. A sergeant explained to Mr. Seabrooks that he was not in any trouble and would be taken to the hospital to be evaluated. While speaking to police from behind the locked bathroom door, Mr. Seabrooks told them that he had knives and a gun he referred to as a "pocket rocket." Subsequently, patrol supervisors requested trained crisis negotiators and members of the Emergency Response Team (ERT).

Beginning at approximately 9:20 a.m., one of multiple trained negotiators from the PPD

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THE DOCTOR IS IN

(Continued from page 4)

ified Pediatrician who works as a Hospitalist and Emergency Room Physician. He is also the current President of Garden State Street Medicine, a non-profit organization whose sole purpose is to provide free preventive and acute urgent care services for the homeless.

He is also the co-founder of his own unique medical practice, Mobile Medicine NJ;

House Call Doctors. He is also currently pursuing an Executive MBA and a Master's of Science in Healthcare Leadership at Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management and the Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences.

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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



DOJ ANNOUNCES OCT. 7 TASK FORCE

On March 17, the U.S. Justice Department announced the leadership team and membership of Joint Task Force October 7 (JTF 10-7), an initiative that will seek justice for the victims of the Oct. 7, 2023, terrorist attack in Israel and address the ongoing threat posed by Hamas and its affiliates.

“The barbaric Hamas terrorists will not win - and there will be consequences,” said Attorney General Pamela Bondi. “As Attorney General, I have had the solemn honor of meeting with several families of U.S. citizens whose loved ones were kidnapped by Hamas on that dark day. This task force will strengthen the Department’s resolve to achieve justice for these families and their loved ones as we continue to fight antisemitism in all its forms.”

The Attorney General established JTF 10-7 on her first day in office, demonstrating the high priority the Justice Department is placing on honoring the memories of the approximately 1,200 people murdered by Hamas in the attack, including 47 U.S. citizens, and supporting the approximately 250 additional people that Hamas abducted, including 8 U.S. citizens.

JTF 10-7 will focus on targeting, charging, and securing for prosecution in the United States the direct perpetrators of the October 7 attack - the terror-

ists on the ground that day who murdered and kidnapped innocent civilians. JTF 10-7 will also assume responsibility for the pending charges against Hamas leadership relating to the October 7 attack and other acts of terrorism, and to bring those criminals to the United States to face justice for their reprehensible role in these atrocities. Finally, JTF 10-7 will investigate acts of terrorism and civil rights violations by individuals and entities providing support and financing to Hamas, related Iran proxies, and their affiliates, as well as acts of antisemitism by these groups.

“The victims of Hamas’s decades-long violent campaign of terrorism against Israel will always have the support of the U.S. government, and the Department will no longer permit illegal support of Hamas on our campuses and elsewhere in the homeland,” said Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche. “Antisemitic acts of terrorism – whether here or abroad – will never go unpunished. This task force represents our unyielding commitment to those who have suffered at the hands of these brutal terrorists.”

“The FBI is committed to establishing the Joint Task Force October 7 to continue the FBI’s investigative and victim assistance efforts related to the horrific acts of terror committed by Hamas,” said FBI Director Kash Patel. “Working with our federal and international partners, this task force is a collaborative initiative between agencies, and together we will work to accomplish our vital counterterrorism mission.”

JTF 10-7 will be led by a senior counterterrorism prosecutor from the Justice Department’s National Security Division (NSD), a senior FBI Special Agent as the Task Force Commander, and an FBI Intelligence Analyst as Deputy Task Force Commander, all under the supervision of the Office of the Deputy Attorney General. JTF 10-7 will also include trial attorneys from NSD, the Civil Rights Division, the Criminal Division’s Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section, Assistant U.S.

Attorneys from the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of Virginia, and other detailees, with additional dedicated support from the Department’s Office of International Affairs.

JTF 10-7 will be supported by dedicated FBI agents, analysts, forensic accountants, data scientists, and linguists who are mostly co-located in Virginia. These professionals will contribute to JTF 10-7’s expertise in investigating and prosecuting domestic and extraterritorial terrorism cases, including terrorism-financing matters, and serve as points of contact with the FBI’s Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell and Victim Services Division.

The FBI will coordinate with other law enforcement and intelligence agencies on JTF 10-7 activities, as well as foreign counterparts through the FBI’s Legal Attaché office in Israel. FBI agents will be embedded with Israel’s National Bureau of Counter Terror Finance, which has already been a tremendous partner in the ongoing investigations.

These efforts will build on the Justice Department’s ongoing investigations into the perpetrators of these heinous acts and demonstrate the Department’s commitment to degrading and dismantling Hamas, holding Hamas supporters accountable, achieving justice for victims, and fighting terrorist-led antisemitism.

MASS SHOOTING UPDATE

Information from 3-18-2025

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

- Total Mass Shootings: 66
- Total Dead: 91
- Total Wounded: 241
- Shootings Per Day: 0.86
- Days Reached in Year 2025 as of March 18: 77

MIDDLE EAST REGION CONCERNED ABOUT U.S. STRIKES

On March 17, the UN expressed concern over the contin-



ued threat posed to shipping in the Red Sea by Houthi attacks from their bases in Yemen as well as recent airstrikes by the United States which have left over 50 reportedly dead.

In a statement released to correspondents in New York, the UN denounced the Houthis’ targeting of merchant and commercial vessels in the key waterway which includes the Suez Canal and reported attacks against military vessels.

The UN is concerned about the continued threats by the Houthis to resume their attacks targeting merchant and commercial vessels in the Red Sea, as well as about their reported attacks against military vessels in the area, calling for “full freedom of navigation.”

“We reiterate our concern at the launching of multiple strikes on Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen by the United States in recent days,” the statement continued.

“According to the Houthis, the airstrikes over the weekend resulted in 53 deaths and 101 injuries, reported from Sana’a City, Sa’ada and Al Baydah governorates, including reports of civilian casualties, and led to disruptions in the power supply in nearby localities.”

The Houthis who control large swathes of Yemen including the capital, began targeting Israeli-linked shipping in the waterway out of solidarity with Hamas and the Palestinian people, following the start of the war in Gaza in October 2023. Last week they said attacks would resume due to the continuing aid blockade of the enclave.

“Any additional escalation could exacerbate regional tensions, fuel cycles of retaliation that may further destabilize Yemen and the region and pose grave risks to the already dire humanitarian situation in the country,” the statement contin-

(Continued on page 7)

WORLD NEWS (Cont. from page 6)

ued.

It emphasized that international law must be respected by all parties, including Security Council resolution 2768 (2025) related to Houthi attacks against merchant and commercial vessels.

UN Special Envoy, Hans Grundberg, has been in close contact with Yemeni, regional and international stakeholders in recent days.

“He has called for utmost restraint and adherence to international humanitarian law, and he has pushed for a refocus on diplomacy to avoid uncontrollable destabilization in Yemen and in the region. Further contacts are held by his office on numerous levels,” said UN deputy spokesperson Farhan Haq.

Mr. Grundberg called for support from the international community so that UN-led mediation efforts can “deliver results.”

WORLD AVIAN FLU WARNINGS

The rapid spread of the highly infectious avian flu virus H5N1 has reached an “unprecedented” scale, wiping out hundreds of millions of birds worldwide and increasingly spilling over into mammals, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warned on March 17.

Briefing Member States in Rome, FAO officials called for urgent action to strengthen biosecurity, surveillance and rapid-response mechanisms to curb the outbreak.

FAO Deputy Director-General Godfrey Magwenzi stressed that the crisis threatens to have “serious impacts on food security and food supply in countries, including loss of valuable nutrition, rural jobs and income, shocks to local economies, and of course increasing costs to consumers.”

With millions relying on poultry for meat and eggs, the challenge is not only to contain the virus but also to protect food production systems.

The economic impact is also being felt worldwide. For example, egg prices reached a record high in the United States during February according to the US Consumer Price Index, with farmers forced to slaughter over 166 million birds so far in total as avian flu has spread - mostly egg-laying chickens.

So far this year more than 30 million birds in the US have been killed, according to news reports.

FAO Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol underlined the need for a global, coordinated response, calling H5N1 a “transboundary” threat that no country can tackle alone.

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To address the crisis, FAO and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) have launched a ten-year Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza.

“A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. By working together, we can reduce the impact of avian influenza and protect both animal and human health – locally and globally,” Ms. Bechdol said.

Over the past four years, H5N1 has expanded to new regions, causing massive loss-

es in domestic birds, disrupting food supplies and pushing poultry prices higher.

At least 300 new wild bird species have been affected since 2021, posing a serious threat to biodiversity.

FAO reaffirmed its commitment to global monitoring, data sharing and technical guidance to help countries contain the virus.

Ms. Bechdol also stressed the importance of private sector engagement, particularly in developing vaccines, diagnostics and high-

(Continued on page 13)

SPORTS WRAP

By William Hathaway, Jr.

This past week the Big East Tournament took place in New York at the world's most famous arena, Madison Square Garden. Before the games to determine the Conference Tourney champion and the automatic qualifier for the Big Dance, Opening Day, hosted by Big East Commissioner Val Ackerman, saw several deserving people receive Conference honors.

The Big East Freshman of the Year award went to Liam McNeeley of the University of Connecticut. McNeeley is the 2nd straight Husky to earn FOTY honors. He finished the season with a career high 38 points against Creighton before he got hurt to end his season in his last game. Scholar-Athlete of the year honors went to Marquette's Stevie Mitchell.

St. John's University star RJ Luis, Jr. a junior from Miami, was a critical piece in helping St. John's run to winning the Big East Conference Championship. He took the honor of Big East Player of the Year. Coach of the year honors went to St. John's head coaching legend Rick Pitino.

After that, the Big East Tournament kicked off. The four day spectacle at MSG started with #10 DePaul beat Georgetown 73-68. Layden Blocker led the Blue Demons to the win with 16 points while the Hoyas were led

by Micah Peavy's 26 points. Next, the Seton Hall men saw their disappointing season end with a loss to Villanova 67-55. Shockingly, the Seton Hall women missed the Women's NCAA Tourney, and had to settle for a #3 seed in the WBIT.

St. John's claimed the Big East Tournament #1 seed for the first time since 1986. They kicked off their run by defeating Butler 78-57. RJ Luis, Jr. had 20 points and 7 rebounds while teammate Kadary Richmond had 15 points and 8 rebounds. After that, SJU beat Marquette 79-63 in the semifinal round. Zuby Ejiofor led the Red Storm to victory with 33 points and 9 rebounds while Luis had 13 points and 7 rebounds. In the final game, St. John's took the automatic bid to the NCCA Torun manet after beating Creighton 82-66. Luis was named Big East Tournament MVP honors, scoring 29 points and 10 rebounds in the championship game, while Ejiofor had another good game with 29 points of his own.

St. John's was awarded a #2 seed in the NCAA Tournament, with #1 seeds going to Houston, Duke, Florida, and Auburn - the overall #1 seed. The SEC sent a record 14 teams to the Big Dance. For the women's bracket, UCLA was the overall #1, with other top seeds going to USC, Texas, and defending champion South Carolina.



COLEY ARRESTED (Continued from page 1)

has surrendered. It is not known whether any of the weapons is the one he had allegedly displayed.

Coley retired from the Orange Police Department as a Sergeant in June 2014. He was sworn to "Serve and Protect" in 1994 after being honorably discharged from four years' service with the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division.

It is to the understanding of "Local Talk" that Coley had surrendered himself after learning that a warrant for his arrest was issued earlier that Friday March 7.

How a person, who has otherwise honored his duties, got on the unaccustomed side of law and order for him stemmed from an Oct. 9 incident by his residence. The victim

told authorities that he was working as a tow truck driver that Wednesday when he was called to take away a car on that block.

The tow truck driver said that he was approached by Coley, who said the vehicle in question is owned by one of his relatives. The driver said that Coley, in the resulting confrontation, showed that he was carrying a handgun on him.

"Displaying a weapon," under state criminal statute, is a fourth-degree crime. It is punishable by up to 18 months in a state prison and up to a \$10,000 fine.

"Making a terroristic threat" is a third-degree crime which carries five years maximum prison time and a fine up to \$75,000.

Essex County Prosecutor's Office Spokeswoman Carmen Martin said that Coley's case may "likely" go to a superior court

grand jury. That to-be-empaneled jury could hand up a bill of indictment - which means that there is enough evidence to bring the matter to a petit jury.

Coley, who is a Bethel Baptist Church Trustees Vice President, has also been a 10-year Orange Housing Authority Commissioner. He made an unsuccessful mayoral run against incumbent Dwayne Warren in 2016.

The stunning affair has brought a few questions to the minds of many residents, in and around Orange. The people are asking: For an accusation such as this, why wasn't the matter brought forth in October 2024, when it was originally alleged to have happened? Did Coley upset someone politically? Finally, they want to know, does it involve Mayor Warren - the man Coley ran against?

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NJDOT ANNOUNCES ANNUAL STATEWIDE POTHOLE REPAIR CAMPAIGN

TRENTON - New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Commissioner Fran O'Connor announced that the annual statewide campaign to repair potholes across New Jersey is underway.

With a more active winter this year and temperatures continually fluctuating between above and below freezing, the Department expects to repair more potholes this season than last year. Potholes are created by water seeping into cracks in the asphalt and then expanding when it freezes, so this type of weather pattern takes a toll on state highways.

“The New Jersey Department of Transportation is beginning our annual pothole campaign on Monday, March 17. Over the next couple of months our priority will be repairing the most significant potholes from this winter,” Commissioner O'Connor said. “NJDOT crews work year-round to repair potholes and keep our highways in good condition, but at this time of year, it becomes our primary focus.”

To repair potholes in the most aggressive and efficient manner, the Department will be allowing crews throughout the state to close travel lanes where necessary during daytime hours. When possible, crews will limit their

daytime work hours to 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and will try to avoid working in travel lanes carrying traffic during peak times.

NJDOT will be using Variable Message Signs (VMS) to alert motorists of the campaign and, to the extent possible, of lane closures that could result in temporary travel delays. Detailed current repair locations will be posted on a continual basis on www.511nj.org.

As the weather warms up and asphalt plants reopen, our crews will start to perform permanent patch operations on particularly problematic sections of roadway. This is more extensive work that requires milling and paving a small area of the road, that generally will be done overnight.

In the past five fiscal years (FY20 - FY24), NJDOT has repaired an average of approximately 153,000 potholes per year. The average has steadily decreased over the past several years because of NJDOT's emphasis on repaving our State Highways, improving the percentage of roads in good and fair condition from 47 percent in 2008 to 81 percent today. So far in FY25 (July 1, 2024 - March 13, 2025), NJDOT has repaired about 89,100 potholes, with the busiest pothole repair season just starting.

It is important to slow down in work zones so NJDOT crews can safely make repairs. New Jersey's Move Over law requires motorists to move over, if it is safe to do so, when approaching an emergency or service vehicle stopped on the side of the road. If you cannot safely MOVE OVER, PLEASE SLOW DOWN.

In addition to our crews monitoring and reporting potholes that need repair on state highways, we encourage motorists to report potholes as well. Motorists may call 1-800-POTHOLE (1-800-768-4653) or go online to report potholes on state roads using a mapping feature to help identify the exact location of the pothole.

To report potholes on county roads, contact the appropriate jurisdiction. The Department responds as quickly as possible, especially to reports of potholes that create safety concerns based on their size and location.

Motorists are encouraged to check NJDOT's traffic information website www.511nj.org for construction updates and real-time travel information. For NJDOT news follow us on X (Twitter) @NewJerseyDOT, on the NJDOT Facebook page, or Instagram @NewJersey.DOT.



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 - What started out with gunshots at the corner of Broadway and Carteret Street 6:30 p.m. March 7, killing Det. Joseph Anthony Azcona and wounding his patrol partner, has left its reverberations.

Officers from various law enforcement agencies, for example, gathered March 13 at the intersection's northwest corner, where Azcona's police car had sent it and a dislodged fire hydrant into Christ Assembly Lutheran Church's fence. They gathered before a makeshift shrine at 664 Broadway for a 6 p.m. balloon launch which detoured NJTransit's No. 13 buses for an hour.

Some of the thousands of officers from hundreds of agencies made sure that they accompanied the body of now-Sgt. Azcona, 26, of Newark from when he was first transferred from University Hospital to the adjacent State Regional Medical Examiner March 8 to Bloomfield-Belleville's Glendale Cemetery Saturday afternoon.

"Local Talk" noticed 15 police cars and motorcycles - from Paterson and Union City police and the Passaic County Sheriff's Office - parked alongside South Orange Avenue at 1:30 p.m., waiting to take him to the Buyus Funeral Home. That honor escort grew as his remains were taken to his Funeral Mass, officiated by Cardinal Joseph Tobin, at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart by 10:30 a.m. March 15.

Tobin and the thousands of

mourners inside and outside the basilica remembered Azcona, who was born here May 18, 1998, was remembered for his love of Newark's community and who always wanted to be a policeman. The five-year officer assigned to firearms investigations was taken away March 8 from parents Nereida and Jose, six brothers and a sister, a grandfather and two uncles who are respectively an NPD officer and a detective, among other mourners.

Azcona's final escort included 10 helicopters from Newark and State Police, flying west over I-280 and north on the Garden State Parkway 2 p.m. to Glendale. A GoFundMe.com page, established by FOP Lodge 12 for both officers' families, is approaching \$250,000 as of press time.

Back at 664 Broadway the morning of March 18, the fire hydrant was taken away and a "Walk/Don't Walk" corner signal has been replaced. An NPD school crossing guard took her usual place. Azcona's shrine, perhaps not as fast as the previous weekend, continues to grow.

IRVINGTON - A township man, who has been committed to Newark's Essex County Correctional Facility on burglary and sexual assault charges since Feb. 20, may have had his pretrial detention hearing by now.

Kedwens Auguste, 23, said a Essex County Prosecutor's Office, March 7 press release, is being held of three counts of first-degree aggravated sexual assault during a robbery and two counts each burglary and purposefully engaged in conduct. He also faces single counts of possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose and second-degree criminal restraint with threat of serious bodily injury.

Essex County Prosecutor Theodore N. "Ted" Stephens II and Irvington Public Safety Director Tracy Bowers said that Auguste was arrested Feb. 19 by detectives from the county's Special Victims Unit and the Irvington Police Department.

Auguste is accused of sexually assaulting two separate occupants after invading that victim's address on two occasions in Irvington Feb. 16 and 18.

Stephens and Bowers said that Auguste's arrest was based

on "surveillance footage and other evidence" leading to his identification. He is being held without bond. The joint investigation continues.

EAST ORANGE - City police taped off South Burnet Street between Central and Elmwood avenues the afternoon of March 1 to investigate an injurious shooting there.

East Orange Police Chief Phyllis Bindi said that her officers responded to Central and South Burnet Central and South Burnet avenues on a shooting report at 11:54 a.m. that Saturday.

Officers found a man who was shot in one of his shoulders Local EMS took him to University Hospital, where he was treated for his wound and discharged.

Field investigators have so far determined that a handgun was used in the shooting. That weapon, however, has not been found.

Witnesses or anyone who has information is to call EOPD at (973) 266-5060 and ask for Det. Felix Lantigua.

ORANGE - Proponents of a \$350 million project to mostly replace the vacant Orange Memorial Hospital / Ippolito Funeral Home complex with 1,005 apartment units and limited public amenities fielded questions from some residents here at the last City of Orange hosted town meeting here at St. Matthew AME Church March 6.

Some of those questions in the second of the two public meetings seemed to concentrate on whether the two OMH buildings that will be renovated and the structures to replace the other six buildings within the 8.25-acre lot bordered by Henry Street, Ivy Court, Matthew Street, Central Avenue and South Essex Street will be separate from or integral to the neighborhood.

Development partner spokesman Thomas Murray, when asked about whether or how much Coalition for Affordable Housing units will be for the projected 1,500 residents, replied with an "it depends" statement. One plan before Gateway Merchant banking, SYM Real Estate and three other partners has a 20 percent affordable unit set aside

and the other as totally market rate with zero set aside.

"The affordability will largely be driven by the incentive package that we can put together," said Murray of gateway, "and the type of financing we ultimately put together." Whatever that package they assemble is subject to a later Payment in Lieu of Taxes or tax abatement proposal put to the City Council at a later date.

Murray, both here and at the Feb. 19 meeting at Shiloh Baptist Church, said that the project would "preserve the legacy of the hospital and bring out more of Orange's identity and history." One way is by setting aside 1.5 acres for a public open space and a year-round ice and roller skating rink.

The area would fall under the Privately Operated Public Space real estate category, which explains in part why the park and rink would be open to the public only during the daytime.

That prospective City Council PILOT meeting, approval from the N.J. State Historic Preservation Office Historic Sites Commission and, supposedly, the Orange Historic Preservation Commission are what is left in the approval process. The Orange Planning Board had approved SYMREC Orange JV LLC's plan, 7-1, Nov. 22. Murray estimates that construction would start at the end of 2026.

WEST ORANGE - "Local Talk" has learned that there are more changes pending along Tory Corner's Main Street - and more than just the just-closed Tory Corner Diner. What had been the Llewellyn Hotel plus three adjacent mixed-use commercial-residential buildings along 253-59 Main St. were put back on the market last month by its owner, Daniel Garcia-Pedrosa.

The 3.5-story hotel on the southeast of Kling Street has been closed since he bought it in 2018. Xclusive Barber Shop has called the two-story 257 Main home. Willow & Olivia Dessert Cafe and a vacant storefront share the three-story 253-55 Main's storefront.

West Orange's Zoning Board of Adjustment had approved Garcia-Pedrosa's plan to convert the 30-room 1891 hotel into 11

(Continued on page 13)

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ESSEX COUNTY CIVIC CLUB HOSTS LUNCHEON

Statement from ECCC

The Crispus Attucks Luncheon began in 1953 and is held around the time of his martyrdom which was the 5th of March. At this event, monies are raised to support ECCC scholarships, and we also recognize men and women that are making a difference in their communities.

We have been blessed with wonderful women, all helping to continue the legacy of this important club in our community. This year we celebrated 115 years of service to the Greater Newark, New Jersey community and the purpose was to support the Florence Johnson Scholarship Fund which was started in 2020 after Florence M. Johnson, the longest serving president of the Essex County Civic Club, transitioned. The venue for the 115th anniversary was The Wilshire Caterers in West Orange, New Jersey. Approximately 200

people attended who enjoyed the program, meal and fellowship.

The 2025 Honorees were: The Late Lt. Gov. Sheila Y. Oliver, The Late Superior Court Judge Harold W. Fullilove, Congresswoman La Monica McIver, Senator Britnee N. Timberlake and ECCC member Winifred S. Eure; and a special tribute bestowed upon The Late Honorary Member Mildred C. Crump. Public Officials acknowledged and who extended greetings are Lawrence Crump, Council President/Councilman At-Large; Susan McCartney, Mayor of West Orange, Nancy Adams, Mayor of Maplewood; Tammy Williams, Councilwoman of West Orange; and Victor DeLuca, Councilman of Maplewood.

Remarks were spoken by Denise Williams the President of the National Association of Colored Women's Club who is also the 28th President of The New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc. The



Essex County Civic Club is One of six New Jersey Clubs that operate under the directorship of both the NACWC and the NJSFCWC.

Recent service projects initiated by the Essex County Civic Club were the unveiling of a Free library in honor of our 1910 founder and support of the Boy Scout Free Library through March 2025. ECCC also joined Bethany Baptist Church and The Urban League Guild of Essex County with a coat, hat, gloves and book drive for Chancellor Avenue School in Newark, NJ.

Other projects included Serving and fellowshiping with the



Veterans During their monthly meeting at the Senior Center in Maplewood, NJ; Voter Registration, Donation of Female Personal Products for Columbia High School in Maplewood, NJ and Central Avenue School in Newark, NJ; A bus rider to Hunterdon Hills Playhouse and Participation in the NJPAC Kwanza Celebration.

SEABROOKS (Cont. from page 5)

who had arrived spoke to Mr. Seabrooks for approximately an hour in an attempt to persuade him to come out of the bathroom and get help. The negotiator was assisted by a family member of Mr. Seabrooks, brought into the apartment, who was an active member of law enforcement with another agency.

They explained to Mr. Seabrooks that others (such as his work "mentor" and his mother) could not come into the apartment due to safety concerns in light of the fact that Mr. Seabrooks had knives and claimed to have a gun. However, officers told Mr. Seabrooks he could speak with the mentor on the phone and would be taken to that coworker as soon as he put the knives down and came out. Similarly, officers told Mr. Seabrooks that they would immediately bring him to his mother as soon as he came out.

At approximately 10:20 a.m., Mr. Seabrooks broke a water pipe in the bathroom which caused the apartment to flood. At 10:26 a.m., officers attempted to breach the bathroom door. As captured on body-worn camera (BWC) footage, and later elaborated upon by officers in interviews, they made the decision to do so because they had not heard from Mr. Seabrooks for a period of time and were concerned he had harmed himself.

The bathroom door was barricaded with items from the inside, but the officers were able to breach the door after several attempts. When officers broke a portion of the door, they immediately observed Mr. Seabrooks with knives in his hands. The officers did not attempt to enter the bathroom. The

officers told Mr. Seabrooks to put the knives down, but he did not comply. Mr. Seabrooks threatened to shoot the officers and that the officers would have to kill him.

At approximately 11:13 a.m., Mr. Seabrooks started a fire in the bathroom and intensified it by throwing a flammable liquid and other items on top. He also threw various items at the police, including one which contained a liquid that sprayed onto officers. One of the officers hit with the liquid was removed from the scene, taken to the hospital, and treated for injuries to his eye. A second officer suffered injuries to his ankle area from being hit with a portion of the toilet lid thrown by Mr. Seabrooks.

Negotiators and ERT members unsuccessfully attempted to persuade Mr. Seabrooks to drop the knives and exit the bathroom. At times, Mr. Seabrooks began to rapidly advance to the exit of the bathroom, but stopped short of exiting. From approximately 11:00 a.m. through 12:00 p.m., three ERT team members, identified as Hector Mendez, Qiao Lin, and Mario Vdovjak, deployed less than lethal sponge tipped projectiles. Although several struck Mr. Seabrooks, they were not effective in convincing him to drop the knives or end the encounter.

Officers additionally saw that Mr. Seabrooks was harming himself with the knives he was holding. Officers updated EMS on Mr. Seabrooks' actions so they could be prepared to treat excessive bleeding. Despite officers' attempts to encourage Mr. Seabrooks to put the knives down so that the police could help him by taking him the hospital, Mr. Seabrooks vacillated from expressing a willingness to cooperate with the police

and accept the help being offered, to saying that he was going to die in the bathroom and take one of the officers with him.

At approximately 12:35 p.m., Mr. Seabrooks exited the bathroom and approached the officers with, as confirmed by BWC footage, at least one knife in his hand. Two members of the ERT, Officer Anzore Tsay and Officer Jose Hernandez, discharged their weapons. Mr. Seabrooks immediately fell into a bedroom. Officers described, and BWC footage confirmed, the immediate recovery of two knives located next to Mr. Seabrooks. A third knife was later recovered from a utility closet; investigators learned that Mr. Seabrooks had broken a hole in the bathroom wall into which he had placed several items, including a lighter, several of the deployed less than lethal rounds, and a knife.

Emergency medical personnel rendered first aid at the scene. Mr. Seabrooks was transported to Saint Joseph's Regional Medical Center in Paterson, where he was pronounced deceased at 12:51 p.m.

In January 2024, Governor Murphy signed a bill into law named for Mr. Seabrooks and Andrew Washington, of Jersey City, who were killed during encounters with law enforcement. The law established the Community Crisis Response Pilot Program and appropriated \$12 million to support eligible grant recipients in Camden, Essex, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, and Passaic counties.

The CCRTs are intended to provide on-site community-based intervention such as outreach, de-escalation, stabilization, and resource connection for individuals who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis.

WORLD NEWS (Continued from page 7)

quality animal health services.

The briefing also included a third call for funding proposals under the Pandemic Fund, hosted by the World Bank.

Over the past two years, FAO has co-led dozens of Pandemic Fund projects aimed at strengthening disease surveillance, early warning systems and health infrastructure to prevent future outbreaks.



On March 18, the U.K. announced a record £1 billion in employment support measures announced to help disabled and long-term sick people back into work.

The new measures are designed to ensure a welfare system that is fit for purpose and available for future generations - opening up employment opportunities, boosting economic growth and tackling the spiraling benefits bill, while also ensuring those who cannot work get the support they need as part of the government's Plan for Change.

This will end years of inaction, which has led to one in eight young people not currently in work, education or training and 2.8 million people economically inactive due to long term sickness - one of the highest rates in the G7.

The number of people receiving one of the main types of health and disability benefit, Personal Independence Payments (PIP), has also risen rapidly and is becoming unsustainable.

Since the pandemic, the number of working-age people receiving PIP has more than doubled from 15,300 to 35,100 a month. The number of young people (16-24) receiving

PIP per month has also skyrocketed from 2,967 to 7,857 a month. Over the next five years, if no action is taken, the number of working age people claiming PIP is expected to increase from 2 million in 2021 to 4.3 million, costing £34.1 billion annually.

All this has driven the spiraling health and disability benefits bill, forecast to reach £70 billion a year by the end of the decade, or more than £1 billion a week. This is equivalent to more than a third of the NHS budget, and more than three times as much as is spent on policing and keeping communities safe.

Speaking in Parliament, Liz Kendall announced a sweeping package of reforms to overhaul the system, so it better supports those who need it while tearing down barriers to work including:

- Ending reassessments for disabled people who will never be able to work and people with lifelong conditions to ensure they can live with dignity and security
- Scrapping the controversial Work Capability Assessment to end the dysfunctional process that drives people into dependency - delivering on the government's manifesto commitment to reform or replace it
- Providing improved employment support backed by £1 billion - one of the biggest packages of employment support for sick and disabled people ever - including new tailored support conversations for people on health and disability benefits to break down barriers and unlock work
- Legislating to protect those on health and disability benefits from reassessment or losing their payments if they take a chance on work.

To ensure the welfare system is available for those with the greatest needs now and long into the future, the government has made bold decisions to improve its sustainability and protect those who need it most, including:

- Reintroducing reassessments for people on incapacity benefits who have the capability to work to ensure they have the right support and aren't indefinitely written off.
- Targeting Personal Independence Payments for those with higher needs by changing the eligibility requirement to a minimum score of four on at least one of the daily living activities to receive the daily living element of the benefit, in addition to the existing eligibility criteria.
- Rebalancing payment levels in Universal Credit to improve the Standard Allowance. Raising it above inflation by 2029/30, adding £775 annually in cash terms.
- Consulting on delaying access to the health element of Universal Credit until someone is aged 22 and reinvesting savings into work support and training opportunities through the Youth Guarantee.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said: "We inherited a fundamentally broken welfare system from the previous government. It does not work for the people it is supposed to support, businesses who need workers or taxpayers who foot the bill.

"This government will always protect the most severely disabled people to live with dignity. But we're not prepared to stand back and do nothing while millions of people - especially young people - who have potential to work and live independent lives, instead become trapped out of work and abandoned by the system. It would be morally bankrupt to let their life chances waste away.

"When I talk about opportunity for all, I mean it. That's why we are bringing forward the biggest changes to the welfare system in a generation and improving support for those who need it. Ensuring those who can work do work is not only right, but it will also improve living standards and drive growth, the number one priority in our Plan for Change."

TOWN WATCH

(Continued from page 10)

apartment units. The plan included extending the apartments to the back half of 257 Main.

The owner, however, said that "with costs and rates where they are, the project didn't seem feasible anymore. We looked at every possibility, including working with someone to renovate the rooming house." Garcia-Pedrosa and Kislak real estate have made the entire holding available for \$2.5 million.

The Llewellyn, in later years, offered long term leases on its

rooms. 257 Main had long been Steve's Jewelers until 2008; 253 Main had long been a hairdresser and a barber 1960-2022.

255 Main had previously been Gladys Restaurant in 1960, Chubby's Subs in 1974 and The Wagon Wheel luncheonette in 1995. Willow & Olivia's Gia Garcia told a reporter that her dessert bakery has gone online.

SOUTH ORANGE - The South Orange-Maplewood School District will start its "residency confirmation" process of its students with the first of two town hall webinars 1 p.m. March 26.

"This process will begin with an electronic records review for all students to verify their domicile within the district," said SOMSD Superintendent Jason Bing March 13. "If any questions arise during this review, we'll reach out to families and request documentation to confirm residency."

The two-town public district, said Bing, is to maintain class size, assess transportation needs and plan school resources.

The March 26 webinar is focused on confirming the residency of Eighth Graders. Some recall that the district last ran a confirmation process on 10th

Graders in 2011-12.

Bing assured that the information will be kept within SOMSD and "once confirmed, no further action will be taken." WebEx reminders will be emailed to families of Eighth Graders. Questions may be asked at somsdk.org/webinars or regristration@somsd.k12.nj.us.

MAPLEWOOD - Those who want to remember township native and restaurant entrepreneur Harold Jaffe can order a sub at the Sandwiches Unlimited store at Orange and/or East Orange. Jaffe's family is scheduling (Continued on page 14)

The Observation Booth



OP-ED By Andrea Dialect

THE CAT'S MEOW

During my research for this short, I learned that cats primarily meow to communicate with humans, expressing various needs and emotions, such as greetings, seeking attention, or indicating discomfort or illness. I was also curious about their ability to cry and found that, unlike humans, cats don't shed tears in response to emotional distress. Instead, they express their feelings through vocalizations, body language, and other behaviors.

Read the draft short below to discover how a "Cat's Meow" became so ominous and why those meows remain menacing, hollow, and haunting to this day. Check out my muse, Queen Jackie; I thought those images complemented the story nicely.

Visit Localtalkweekly.com to read the full story in the Entertainment section. While you're there, explore the archives to get familiar with all things Andrea Dialect. Join me on my Andrea Dialect Facebook Lab live sessions, where buried treasures turn up every morning. Come along as I develop my daily "PORTAL" sessions live between 5-6 a.m. Set those notifications! Remember, everything I do on social media is raw, home-grown, and experimental mockups. Follow my Instagram @msdialect, and let's grow out loud together! Like, follow, and share.

MICROSCOPIC

In life, seemingly small things can be monumental. I called each of my children, aka "The 5," and their feedback was limited. However, we all remember the aftermath. My youngest, the culprit, had to be redirected to the subject matter a few times, as reminiscing about her closet-turned-bedroom took precedence. I won't be taking her back there mentally again. She recalled that little feline-gender unknown to be grey and black striped.

According to Google, "A grey cat with black stripes, or a 'grey tabby' cat, can be a domestic shorthair or a breed like the American Shorthair, Bengal, or Maine Coon, as tabby patterns are common across many breeds." She mentioned it had pretty eyes and said, "I was old



Photo Courtesy Andrea Dialect

enough to walk home by myself, so I was probably about eleven or twelve when that happened." We couldn't remember exactly.

We lived on Argyle at the time. That day, while walking down the street, I heard a cat's meow. I looked around and saw it sitting by a bush on the sidewalk, partially hidden. It was a small kitten, likely old enough to be away from its mother. You remember we already had a cat at home, right? "Nope!" was my quick response. The kitten seemed scared; I talked to it, and it came to me, and I brought it home. Of course, you didn't want it, but we all begged and begged, and you let us keep it - that was it!

Delusional, she was, because that wasn't it. That cat's meow she'd heard so clearly - but I used to call each of them for dear life, but they couldn't hear me, lol. Stay on task, Andrea.

TOWN WATCH (Cont. from pg. 13)

a private memorial but held his cremation at Fords' Flynn and Son/Mitruska Funeral Home in Woodbridge's Fords section.

Jaffe, 82, who died at Edison's JFK Hospital March 5, was known for opening or revamping 25 restaurants in New Jersey and New York City. The Maplewood native opened his namesake pub and delicatessens, serving ample portions, in Randolph, Lawrenceville, Lyndhurst Rutherford and Parsippany and bought the Clairmont Diner, on the Verona-Montclair border. He was the Carnegie Deli's "Har-Mil" meat processing and cheesecake factory partner while managing the famed New York City eatery in 1985-90.

That life's work started with the first Sandwich Unlimited

store in Orange in 1970. He was an East Orange resident when he took over a "Little King Sub Shop" franchise in Orange's 244 Main St. - formerly Jacobson's Sporting Goods.

Jaffe sold 244 Main to current owner Randy West in 1974. West went on to open East Orange Sandwiches Unlimited at 372 Main in 1982 and 405 Central Ave. in 1984. West replaced 372 Main with 405 Central in 2001 and moved the Orange store to its present 23 North Center St. in 2006. Jaffe meanwhile opened a "Sandwiches" in Livingston in 1974 and on the Route 10 traffic circle in Ledge-wood.

Harold Stephen Jaffe was born into a family of four here Feb, 20, 1943. The Columbia High School Class of 1960 was a Cougars scholar-wrestler and

junior varsity football player before joining the U.S. Marine Corps 1961-65. He credits the Marines' "One foot in front of the other" training for his work ethic.

Jaffe, a longtime Edison PBA Local 75 supporter, last lived in Marlboro.

Second wife and "life-long friend" Kathleen, friend and store manager Yvette Cuevas, partner Esther Serrano, daughter Jessica Griscom, a grandson and a granddaughter are among Jaffe's survivors. First wife Lainie, parents Lou and Rose Jaffe, brother Joel and sister Janet predeceased him. Memorial donations may be made to supportwoundedwarriorsproject.org

BLOOMFIELD - A 50-year championship football coach who spent his last two seasons

Hey, perhaps I could be the reason she got stuck in that closet?

Let's just say those meows that initially tugged at everyone's heartstrings at home front, except mine of course became the sounds of our worst nightmare. The house turned topsy-turvy before we could blink. Sadly, my little pumpkin didn't just bring that kitten into our house; those tagalongs that had made that cute little kitten their home had infiltrated the house.

We may not have been purring or meowing as melodically as that kitten, at the time. But we created our own gruesome tunes with every itch and scratch. Getting rid of those jumping bandits was a huge undertaking. I can't remember, nor can my offsprings, what I did to get them out, but eventually, they were gone. Supposedly, they found a new home, just like that kitten had.

Thank God for neighbors who like kittens and fleas, I suppose. I never allowed another kitten or cat in the house, as I remember. But the 5 said I did. Who knows! ...

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

with the Bloomfield High School Bengals and legendary coach Michael Carter, Sr., received part of a \$900,000 settlement from one of his former employers.

It became public March 12 that former 25-year Cedar Grove High School head football coach Ed Sadloch and three assistant coaches received shares of a \$900,000 settlement from that township's board of education over claims that they were unlawfully fired in 2016.

Sadolch, as head coach, helped amass a 203-65 win-loss record and five NJSIAA North 1, Group 1 sectional championships in his 25 years with the CGHS Panthers. He was told, however, to clean out his desk and vacate the high school by Feb. 17, 2016.

(Continued on page 15)

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 14)

He and five of his then assistants, in March 2015, saw an Administrative Law Judge dismiss mishandling a Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying charge that a parent and the CG BOE had lodged against them. The board said that the student was to wear a question mark on his jersey and be called "The Riddler," after a Batman cartoon villain, for asking many questions.

The ALJ ruled that the school board had failed to notify Sadloch and the assistants in a timely manner and "failed to comply with the investigatory process." All four had meanwhile filed suit against the BOE for violating their First Amendment and civil rights, retaliation and, in Sadloch's case, age discrimination. It was the latter suit that led to the \$900,000 settlement made Oct. 29.

"Coach Sadloch has dedicated 50 years as a coach to football," said Carter in 2023. "Eddie's one of the most prepared and intense coaches you can find. He demanded much of himself and his players - and (they) have a ton of respect for him."

MONTCLAIR - "Mission Accomplished" summed up what the Immaculate Conception High School girls basketball team likely felt when they left Rutgers Jersey Mike's Arena in Piscataway Friday afternoon.

The ICHS Lady Lions won their first - and only - NJSIAA Non Public B State Championship by staying ahead of the Gloucester Catholic Rams, 41-30. They left the hardwood having played their last ever game since the Archdiocese of Newark and Immaculate Conception High School Board of Trustees announced Feb. 12 that the co-ed institution will close June 30.

The 21-9 Lions, for the first time in three years, had won the sectional championship over the Peapack-Gladstone Gill St. Bernard Knights, 61-53, at Paterson's JFK High March 8. They had lost the sectional round to Denville's Morris Catholic Crusaders in 2024 and 23. The West Orange Mountaineers, however, spoiled ICHS's bid for a fourth straight Essex County Tournament title, 43-41 Feb. 22.

The Lions Friday pulled ahead, 9-1 in the opening quarter but the Rams outscored them, 16-9 in the second. ICHS held an 18-17 lead at halftime. Immaculate kept scoring double digits in the latter half, 12-9 in the third and 11-4 in the closer.

Junior Nilah Rivera was the game's top scorer, 11 points to GCHS's Janzarah Green 9 and drew even with Jalyn Moore in steals at four each. Senior Nila Giraud ended her high school career by making 10 rebounds to Green's 8.

Head Coach Jimmy Kreie and the La-

dy Lions have apparently performed ICHS's last athletic feat. The school's website that would normally set boys and girls outdoor track and softball spring schedules have been left blank.

CORRECTION: The Montclair town historian sent a contemporary news clipping past the deadline where Immaculate Conception Elementary School was set to close June 30, 1997. "Local Talk" had based ICHS's shuttering on "IC Grammar School's" telephone listing disappearing from the 2002 Verizon phone book.

BELLEVILLE - The Township Council voted to make sure The Great Lawn at 520 Belleville Ave. will remain so by approving its purchase at their Feb. 25 meeting.

The council unanimously voted that Tuesday night to bury the 9.2-acre property surrounding "The SoHo Hospital" from Alma Realty, of Long Island City, N.Y. The grassy knoll itself was last assessed at \$80,000.

The council had approved a "no build" open space provision on the property in 2023, when Alma was seeking permission to convert the 11-story, 275-bed former county hospital into a luxury apartment building. That conversion has apparently stalled, leaving the township and DPW to maintain the lawn on a "clean and lien" basis.

An attorney for Alma protested the Feb. 25 purchase, saying that the company had been maintaining The Great Lawn since its 2017 purchase at a county auction. Alma had to buy the building and the lawn separately since a 1993 county auction had divided the parcels. The county received \$3.7 million for both properties back then.

The county sought to break up the overall 35 acres it owned after the Essex County Geriatric Center was moved away to Cedar Grove in 1990. Another parcel off the northwest corner of Belleville and Franklin avenues, where an orphanage and powerhouse stood, became condominiums.

The SoHo neighborhood landmark was built as the Essex County Isolation Hospital for tuberculosis patients in 1905 and 1931. It returned to the auction block after the Garden State Cancer Center became bankrupt in 2017. The township planning board denied a plan to build single-story commercial retail space on the lawn's Belleville Avenue side in 2002.

UPDATE: Contractors for NJDOT has started their latest phase of their Washington Avenue/Route 7 modernization project between Belleville Avenue and Mill Street north of the Newark Border 8 a.m. March 17. Through traffic will be limited to one lane in each direction while the center lanes are closed. Curbside parking along those five blocks have been suspended for the duration.

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NEWARK IMAM

(Continued from page 1)

examine evidence, and pursue new leads to solve these cases.

Anyone with information regarding the fatal shooting of Imam Sharif is urged to contact the Essex County Prosecutor's Office tips line at 1-877 TIPS-4EC or 1-877-847-7432. All calls will be kept confidential.



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