

LOCAL TALK

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

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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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ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE PAGE 9 MAIN CAMPUS OPEN HOUSE

NEWARK EXPEDITER ADMITS CONSPIRING TO GIVE BRIBES



NEWARK - A Newark-based expediter admitted March 24 to conspiring to give bribes to Newark public officials, including then-Newark Councilmember Joseph A. McCallum, Jr., in connection with real estate development and construction-related transactions and conspiring with others to create and sell falsified documents supposedly issued by the City of Newark in connection with development, construction, rental or sale of such properties in Newark.

Baxter also admitted to feigning the need to pay a bribe to a Newark official to fraudulently obtain money for himself and participating in a separate scheme to fraudulently obtain federal COVID-19 Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans, U.S. Attorney John Giordano announced.

Lamont Baxter, 49, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge William J. Martini to seven counts in an information charging him with conspiring to give bribes to Newark officials, giving bribes to McCallum in connection with a developer’s real estate transactions, committing wire fraud in connection with a purported cash bribe payment, conspiring to commit wire fraud in connection with falsifying documents purportedly issued by the City of Newark, and committing wire fraud to obtain PPP loans.

According to documents filed in these cases and statements made in court: As an expediter on real estate and construction matters in Newark, from 2017 through August

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SETON HALL PRESIDENT MIRED IN CONTROVERSY



State Political Leaders Demand President’s Resignation

By Lev D. Zilbermintz

SOUTH ORANGE - Monsignor Joseph Reilly, the 22nd and current president of Seton Hall University, is facing tough questions about not reporting sexual abuse allegations during his tenure as dean of the university’s Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology, back in 2012.

According to “Asbury Park Press” of February 20, 2025, “Reilly is a 1987 graduate of Seton Hall who in 1994 served as priest secretary to the since - disgraced Theodore McCarrick, who was archbishop of the Archdiocese of Newark at the time. McCarrick was defrocked by Pope Francis after allegations of sexual misconduct with seminari-

ans and minors over a period of decades were found credible.”

According to “Asbury Park Press,” Reilly returned to Seton Hall’s seminary in 2002 as a rector, and in 2012 became dean of the university’s Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology.

Questions surrounding Monsignor Reilly

There are a number of big questions here. When did Monsignor Reilly know about the sexual harassment? Why did Monsignor Reilly not report the complaint to his superiors?

According to Politico’s December 21, 2024 online issue, Reilly “investigated a student complaint of sexual harassment (at the seminary) ... and did not

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Editorial
Dhiren Shah
 Editor-In-Chief

Hello Readers,

Pete Hegseth, the U.S. Defense Secretary, is under fire after National Security Adviser Michael Waltz accidentally texted a journalist detailed plan for attacks on the Houthis in Yemen two hours before the attack. It's a security breach, with classified information and very important for national security. Despite the huge error, the Defense Secretary and his team will not be charged. He may not have done it himself, but one of his team members made a huge mistake. However, it seems that nothing will come of it, as President Trump, the head of the whole administration, called it a "mistake" and did not express any anger. Many people, includ-

ing Hegseth, said that the error did not even happen. However, The Atlantic editor Jeffrey Goldberg stands by his account that he was added to the conversation.

President Donald Trump has been deporting criminals to many countries. For some Venezuelans that were deported, they were led out in handcuffs. Many people did not like this, especially Federal Judge James Boasberg, who gave a temporary restraining order to block deportation. The Trump administration applied a 1798 law for the purpose of deportation. Although Judge Boasberg gave his judgment, Trump's people stated that they had not received a written judgment, and the planes with the deportees had already left the US. Boasberg then stated that the deported undocumented immigrants be brought back. This will likely end up before the Supreme Court. This is a practice of most of the governments and police departments to use little known

laws for the benefit of their accusations.

The New Jersey Gubernatorial election is close to just seven months away. Right now, a few candidates have already announced their candidacy. The "Local Talk" area is a highly Democratic populated area. New Jersey is mostly a Democratic area. However, New Jersey has a tendency to elect Republican governors every now and then. Since 1994, the trend in New Jersey to elect different party governors. From 1994-2001 a Republican, Christine Todd Whitman was the governor.

In 2001-2002 a Republican Donald T. DiFrancesco became interim governor. From 2002 - 2004 James E. McGreevey, a Democrat, became governor. After a scandal, he resigned and Richard J. Codey, a Democrat, became governor for 14 months from 2004-2006. From 2006-2010 Jon S. Corzine, a Democrat became governor. Then, from 2010-2018, Chris Christie, a Re-

publican, became governor for two terms. Now, 2018-2025 (current) Phil Murphy, a Democrat, is the governor. New Jersey law limits governors to only two terms. Six Gubernatorial Democratic candidates met in the first debate hosted by Rider University: Reps. Josh Gottheimer (D-Tenafly), Mikie Sherrill (D-Montclair), Newark Mayor Ras Baraka, Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop, former Senate President Steve Sweeney, and teachers' union leader Sean Spiller.

I received a message on Sunday March 22nd that "Pimp walks into Catholic Church and Punches Bishop for not paying his h--" It happened in 2017. Why are people circulating this and scaring people? If anyone receives this kind of message, please search for it before forwarding it to anyone, especially in WhatsApp. It happens too often, and there could be viruses.

*Have a wonderful week.
 I'll talk to you next week.*

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WEATHER FOR THE WEEK

<u>THURSDAY</u>	<u>FRIDAY</u>	<u>SATURDAY</u>	<u>SUNDAY</u>	<u>MONDAY</u>	<u>TUESDAY</u>	<u>WEDNESDAY</u>
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16, 17 YEAR OLD NEWARKERS TO VOTE IN APRIL 15 SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS

By Walter Elliott

NEWARK - Many eyes across the Garden State will be watching the potentially pioneering results of April 15's Newark Board of Education elections.

New Jersey's largest city - with the blessings of the State Legislature, Essex County Clerk and county Board of Elections - will be allowing 16- and 17- year olds to cast votes here for the first time. How many of the late sophomore and junior grade high schoolers' turn out to decide which three of 11 candidates get to join the Newark Public Schools Board of Education may determine whether this practice will spread among the state's other public school districts.

How many of the higher grade high schoolers had actually registered may be known after press time. Election workers have been verifying signatures and tabulating the voter pool count since the registration window's 4 p.m. March 24 closing.

April 15 may be an ideal test voting case since Newark and Irvington remain the only "Local Talk" area towns with springtime school board elections.

Eight other "LT" public school districts moved their elec-

tions onto the otherwise partisan November General Election ballot over the last decade in the hope of greater voter turnout. Montclair and Orange, whose districts switched to voter-elected school boards, were the last to choose November over April.

Advocates who favored giving 16- and 17-year olds the right to vote had cited that Newark's school board elections in the last recent years drew around three percent of the city's eligible pool of registered voters. Another reason is that the said high school students have more ground-level education interaction than their parents or other adults.

School board elections, by state definition, are nonpartisan. State Superior Court-Newark judge Robert Gardner saw to it on Feb. 19 that there would be no confusion on April 15's ballot by denying the Newark Democratic Committee's request to add a special Central Ward Council election.

Judge Garner's ruling stood on his interpretation of state election law that prohibits "piggybacking" non-partisan municipal elections with non-partisan school board elections. (Newark - like Orange and some other "LT" Towns - usually holds

their nominally non-partisan municipal elections in May.)

Deputy State Attorney General Craig Kaiser, in his testimony, expressed concern that the 16 - and 17-year-old Central Ward voters would be "confused" about why they can vote for the school board and not for now-Cong. LaMonica McIver's successor. (Who will get that ward seat will now be left for the Nov. 10 election.)

The March 25-posted Newark and Irvington ballots - and perhaps the 20 others statewide for April 15 - have one other distinction: the ability to vote up or down the annual proposed school district budget.

Having the two towns voters say, "Yea" or "Nay" on the upcoming budgets were a persuasive point for keeping the elections in April. State legislation which allowed school board elections to be moved seven months later also permitted the school districts to forgo posting their budgets before the electorate except for a specific reason.

The eight LT districts who moved their elections to November may put their budgets up for a vote if the overall budget or a construction project would ex-

ceed the state's two percent increase cap. Those eight plus Orange and Newark never had.

So, after a moment of silence for the death of the annual school board budget question, the Irvington and Newark boards of education candidate lineups:

In IRVINGTON, two incumbents and a newcomer are running unopposed for the three Irvington Public Schools Board of Education seats due up on June 30.

Board Vice President Janelle Lowery, Board Member Joseph Sylvain are joined by first-time runner Joel Wanamaker on "The Children's Team." Wanamaker is to succeed Luis Antilus, who declined re-election.

"The Children's Team" had previously run under the "Irvington Schools Strong" banner. "Schools Strong," like "Team Irvington Strong" for Township Council seats, are supported and managed by Mayor Anthony "Tony" Vauss.

The three are running unopposed unless someone mounts a write-in campaign. "Local Talk," to date, does not know of such and effort this time.

In NEWARK, 11 candidates comprising two full slates and

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SETON HALL

(Continued from page 1)

report it or follow the school and federal Title IX policies and procedures."

According to Politico, which was the first media outlet to investigate the scandal, the seminarian was dismissed from the seminary, but the university was not alerted to the problem and he continued as a student at Seton Hall.

The unanswered question is, why was the university not informed? Why were Title IX regulations not followed?

Possible answers

It is plausible that those working at Seton Hall University are trying to protect the reputation of the university and its image as a prestigious Roman Catholic school. If dirty secrets exposed to the light of day, the school might see a drop in its enrollment. Perhaps for this reason Reilly might have been quiet about what he saw and heard.

Another important point is the history of the Roman Catholic Church. It has been publicly known for a long time that some priests molested boys. These shameful actions have

been concealed by the church. Those who were allegedly guilty were quietly moved around by the church from one place to another. Thus, the Roman Catholic Church has a vested interest in keeping things secret.

What former President Joseph Nyre warned about

Joseph Nyre was the 21st president of Seton Hall University from 2019 until abruptly resigning in July 2023. The former president and his wife, Kelly Nyre, sued Seton Hall University alleging harassment, intimidation, sexual harassment.

"Local Talk" ran a series of articles in 2024 about Joseph and Kelly Nyre's allegations of harassment, sexual harassment, intimidation, and more. According to a February 7, 2024 article in the *New York Times*, R. Armen McOmber, one of the lawyers for the Nyres, said that they did not sue Mr. Marino, the former chair of the Board of Regents, because their issue is with the university and how they acted, not with the core of the problem."

Mr. McOmber told the *New York Times*, "If the University had acted appropriately, there would not have been a problem. The university has a responsibility to protect employees, investigate and remediate wrongdo-

ing and make sure its policies are followed."

"At its core, this is about a very principled man and woman who really tried their absolute best to stand up to a university and to a system. My client(s) will do what he has to do to restore what was before he was involved with this university, a sterling reputation," Mr. McOmber told the *New York Times*.

Thus, the question is, if then - President Nyre's wife allegedly suffered sexual harassment, would it be any surprise that other people might suffer similar incidents?

Survivor group urges resignation of President Reilly

According to a Politico.com January 9, 2025 online article "Seton Hall president urged to resign" SNAP survivor group said in its December 23, 2024 press release, "The findings about Monsignor Reilly, as well as anyone else named by the investigators, must be made public.

Moreover, those who knew about those internal findings, and who still helped to make the Monsignor head of Seton Hall, must also be called to account."

Melanie Sakoda, the SNAP support di-

(Continued on page 13)

ESSEX COUNTY HOSTS ANNUAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

NEWARK - Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr., hosted the County's Annual Women's History Month Program in the Essex County Martin Luther King, Jr. Justice Building on Tuesday, March 25th. The theme of this year's ceremony is "Students of Today, Leaders of Tomorrow."

During the ceremony, 2025 Essex County Althea Gibson Leadership Awards were presented to Ayliana Hernandez from the Essex County Donald Payne, Sr. School of Technology, Chelsey Perry from Essex County West Caldwell School of Technology, Hilary Samo from Essex County Newark Tech, and Laela Lawal and Towela Mwale from Essex County College.

"Through their academic achievements and contributions to their local communities, these remarkable young women are on the road to success. Each is unique in their own way, having a profound impact on their schools. Striving for their goals and never letting anything stop them is part of what has driven them to reach the level of success that they have achieved thus far in their lives," DiVincenzo said. "These young women have made tremendous contributions and are establishing themselves as leaders of our future generations," he added.

Ayliana Hernandez, a senior at Donald M. Payne Sr. School of Technology with a 4.1 GPA, has excelled academically through dual enrollment courses

at Seton Hall University and Essex County College. She is passionate about law and aspires to pursue a B.S./J.D. in Diplomacy and International Relations & Law or Political Science. Outside of her academics, she is actively involved in a wide range of extracurriculars, including Yearbook, National Honor Society, Mock Trial, MentorU Connect, volleyball, cheerleading, softball, and STEAM workshops.

As a Payne Scholar and Borlaug Scholar, she has also coached and choreographed for her elementary school's cheerleading team. Ayliana credits much of her motivation and values to her aunt, who has taught her the importance of resilience, listening to others and always striving for more. Her aunt's unwavering support has shaped her determination to help others, a value she carried into her experience at the Global Youth Institute, where she presented research on food insecurity in Mexico. With aspirations to become a lawyer, she hopes to focus on wrongful convictions or immigration law, fighting to keep families together and advocating for justice.

"This award is not just about me. It is a reflection of the many women who paved the way and continue to inspire us," Hernandez said.

Chelsey Perry is a senior honor roll student at West Caldwell School of Technology. Chelsey's passion for basketball



From left: Ayliana Hernandez from the Essex County Donald Payne, Sr. School of Technology, Chelsey Perry from Essex County West Caldwell School of Technology, Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr., Hilary Samo from Essex County Newark Tech, and Towela Mwale and Laela Lawal from Essex County College. (Photo by Glen Frieson)

has driven her to hone her skills and make an impact on the court, which has certainly paid off as she is starting guard for the girls' Varsity team. This season, she was ranked second in the state as one of the top scoring leaders, averaging an impressive 26.7 points per game. Chelsey credits her family for her resilience and her determination, both in the classroom and on the basketball court. Her father was born in Jamaica before moving to America at the age of nine, while her mother was born in California before relocating with her family to New Jersey. Both of her parents pursued higher education, but financial challenges prevented them from completing their

studies. Their experiences have deeply inspired Chelsey to work hard and chase her dreams.

Chelsey has been accepted into several universities for their business programs and looks forward to choosing a school that will allow her to continue flourishing academically and athletically. Chelsey's grandmother was also a prominent influence in her life.

"Every time I step onto the court, I carry the spirit of my grandmother with me. She always told me, 'Never be a follower, always be a leader.' Those words have shaped my mindset, pushing me to be the best version of myself both as a

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SCHOOL BOARD

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five independents are up for city voters' choice.

Kanileah Anderson, David Daugherty and Louis Maisonave, Jr. are this year's Moving Newark Schools Forward team. Incumbent Anderson, who was appointed and then elected to fill an unexpired term last year is seeking re-election.

Daugherty and Maisonave are running in the outgoing Daniel Gonzalez and Crystal Williams' stead. Daugherty, Arts High School Class of 2020, wrote an NPS policy amendment that created the district's first Student Governance Committee. Maisonave is president of the Newark Hispanic Firefighters Association.

A majority of city voters have installed the entire "Schools Forward" slate for three

NBOE seats for the last seven years. They have the support of Mayor Ras Baraka and the endorsement of many local, county and state elected officials.

Nathanel Barteley, Ade Kamil Kelly and Shana Melius comprise the "Prioritizing Newark's Children" slate. "Prioritizing Children" is running on a five point platform, from "Address Infrastructure Needs" to "Support for Special Education."

Barteley is program manager at the United Vailsburg Service Organization. Kelly, who ran in 2023, is program director for the Boys and Girls Club of Newark. Melius was constituent services coordinator for the Cong. Donald Payne, Jr., ran for her late boss' job in last year's primary.

The remaining five candidates on the ballot are running independent solo campaigns as of March 25. Some of the five could create a team or platform before April 15.

They are, in alphabetical order:

- Elaine Asyah Aquil, "All Kids Matter," is a practicing chiropractor.
- DeWayne Bush, 45, is making his first campaign.
- Latoya Jackson, "I Got You," is focused on special education and parent empowerment while running for a third straight year.
- Yolanda Johnson, who ran three other times, founded the Eagles Parent Teacher Association at the George Washington Carver/Bruce Street School.
- Jordy Nivar is a West Ward civic leader.

Registered Newark and Irvington voters should receive sample ballots and Vote By Mail Ballots on or before April 8. Call the Essex Clerk's Election Division office if you have not received one.

Consult essexclerk.com for early voting locations, hours and other details.



UNITED STATES



POSTMASTER GENERAL SHIPS HIMSELF OUT

One of the nation's more controversial public officials, who has been criticized by the likes of fellow officials and everyday citizens, has left the building.

On March 24, U.S. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy stepped down from his post. DeJoy had faced criticism over his handling of staff, fleet vehicles, and a 10 year plan than apparent has only delivered on higher postage costs.

"After nearly five years as America's 75th Postmaster General, and after informing the Governors in February of my intention to retire, I have informed the Postal Service Board of Governors that today will be my last day in this role. I believe strongly that the organization is well positioned and capable of carrying forward and fully implementing the many strategies and initiatives that comprise our transformation and modernization, and I have been working closely with the Deputy Postmaster General to prepare for this transition," DeJoy said upon his exit.

"While our management team and the men and women of the Postal Service have established the path toward financial sustainability and high operating performance - and we have instituted enormous beneficial change to what had been an adrift and moribund organization - much work remains that is necessary to sustain our positive trajectory.

"I am confident that Doug will continue our positive momentum during the period when the Governors undertake the important work of identifying and selecting the next Postmaster General. I also have no doubt that the entirety of the Postal Service will aggressively shape its future and become more efficient, capable, and competitive as it continuously changes and improves to best serve the American public.

"It is with great pride that I pass the baton to Deputy Postmaster General, Doug Tulino, until the Governors name my permanent successor. The Governors have hired a search firm in support of those efforts, which are well underway. I shall cheer on America's 76th Postmaster General and the 640,000 men and women of the United States Postal Service who I have called my colleagues and friends for close to five years. It has been one of the pleasures of my life and a crowning achievement of my career to have been associated with this cherished institution, the United States Postal Service."

Meanwhile, the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors announced that it has retained global leadership advisory firm Egon Zehnder to lead the executive search for the 76th Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer. Egon Zehnder is one of the world's preeminent executive search firms. The firm will work closely with the Governors to identify, evaluate, and select a forward-looking and effective leader to guide the Postal Service into its next chapter.

As established by federal law, the selection of the Postmaster General rests with the Presidentially appointed and Senate confirmed members of the Board, who oversee the Postal Service as an independent establishment of the executive branch. In conducting this search, the Governors are mindful that the size and complexity of the Postal Service requires a careful, deliberative process that will enable us to select a leader who can drive innovation, enhance operational efficiency, and strengthen the Postal Service's role as a trusted part of American life and the nation's critical infrastructure.

"The Postal Service plays an

essential role in American life and, as we navigate a critical period of transformation and modernization, the Governors of the Postal Service are committed to ensuring strong and visionary leadership for the organization," said Amber McReynolds, Chairwoman of the USPS Board of Governors. "We are confident that Egon Zehnder's expertise will help us identify a leader who understands the Postal Service's unique mandate and is prepared to advance our progress in service, innovation, and long-term sustainability."

There is no established timeline for the announcement of the next Postmaster General. The Board will continue to provide updates as appropriate.

MASS SHOOTING UPDATE

Information from 3-25-2025

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

- Total Mass Shootings: 76
- Total Dead: 99
- Total Wounded: 295
- Shootings Per Day: 0.90
- Days Reached in Year 2025 as of March 25: 84

**ASIA
MIGRANTS FACING
DANGER**

The year 2024 marked the deadliest on record for migrants in Asia, with at least 2,514 lives lost along the region's perilous migration routes, according to new data from the UN International Organization for Migration (IOM).

This represents a staggering 59 percent increase from the 1,584 deaths recorded in 2023, highlighting the worsening dangers faced by people on the move.

"No one should lose their life in pursuit of safety or a better future," said Iori Kato, IOM Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific.

"Every life lost on migration routes in Asia, or anywhere else, is a stark reminder of the urgent need for safe and regular migration pathways - these are preventable tragedies."

The spike in migrant deaths was primarily linked to two of

the region's most vulnerable populations: the minority Muslim Rohingya fleeing Myanmar and Afghans escaping conflict and instability.

"The increase in deaths across Asia of people fleeing conflict and persecution in the region is of grave concern," Mr. Kato said.

In 2024, at least 1,517 Afghan migrants lost their lives while in transit - up 39 percent from 2023. Deaths among Rohingya migrants more than doubled, reaching 889 compared to 436 the previous year.

On August 5, 2024 alone, over 150 people were reportedly killed by artillery fire while attempting to cross the Naf River from Myanmar to Bangladesh.

IOM also highlighted that the risks facing migrants extended beyond conflict-related violence. Many are vulnerable to perilous conditions en route, including overcrowded and unsafe boats, abuse by smugglers and extreme weather conditions.

Lack of identification of migrants was also a major concern, with over 1,000 of those who died in 2024 unidentified. Among the documented deaths, 1,086 were men, 205 were women, and 217 children.

"A lack of official reporting of data on missing migrants means we know our data do not fully capture the true number of lives lost during migration in Asia," Mr. Kato said.

"And even within the records we have, so few identifying details are known, meaning there are immeasurable effects on families searching for lost relatives," he added.

Migration in Asia is complex, driven by economic inequality, conflict and environmental factors, worsened by climate change. However, limited legal pathways have forced many to rely on irregular and highly dangerous routes.

One of the deadliest corridors remains the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea, where stateless Rohingya and Bangladeshi migrants embark on treacherous sea journeys in search of refuge. Many pay smugglers for passage, only to find themselves trapped on overcrowded boats with insufficient food and water, facing violence from crew members and the risk of being turned

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WORLD NEWS (Cont. from page 6)

away at their destination.

Meanwhile, overland migration routes across South and Southeast Asia - such as those from Nepal to India, or from Afghanistan and Pakistan through Iran and Turkey - also pose serious risks. Migrants frequently endure extreme environmental conditions, exploitation by traffickers, and border violence.

Sea crossings to Australia, once a significant migration route, have sharply declined in recent years due to strict border controls, according to IOM.

WORLD HEALTH EXPERTS WARY OF AIDS SURGE

Amid continuing uncertainty about the impact of deep U.S. funding cuts to humanitarian work worldwide, the head of the UN agency coordinating the fight against HIV-AIDS warned that an additional 6.3 million people will die in the next four years, unless support is reinstated.

“We will see a...real surge in this disease - (we) will see it come back, and we see people dying the way we saw them in the 90s and in 2000s,” said UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima who noted a “tenfold increase” from the 600,000 AIDS-related deaths recorded globally in 2023.

“We also expect an additional 8.7 million new infections. At the last count, there were 1.3 million new infections globally (in) 2023.”

Speaking in Geneva, Ms. Byanyima noted that the funding freeze announced by the White House on 20 January was due to end next month, after a 90-day review.

“We have not heard of other governments pledging to fill the gap,” she told journalists.

Already, drop-in centers where HIV patients can pick up the anti-retroviral medicines they need are not reopening, “for fear that this might not be consistent with the new guidelines”, she maintained.

“This sudden withdrawal of US funding has led (to the closure) of many clinics, laying off of thousands of health workers. These are nurses, doctors, lab technicians, pharmacy workers...it's a lot.”

Focusing on Africa - where the eastern and southern regions bear 53 percent of the global HIV burden - Ms. Byanyima warned that closing drop-in centers for girls and young women without notice would be disastrous. She emphasized that more than 60 percent of new infections on the continent are among girls and young women.

Speaking to UN News earlier this month, Susan Kasedde, head of the UN-AIDS office in the Democratic Republic of

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- * FAMILY PROBLEMS
- * HEALTH PROBLEMS
- * NEGATIVE ENERGY
- ETC.....



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the Congo (DRC), highlighted major uncertainties regarding the extent and scope of cuts to PEPFAR-led programs. This initiative, launched over two decades ago by former US President George W. Bush to prevent and contain HIV infections, is estimated to have saved around 26 million lives.

There are currently around 520,000 people living with HIV in the DRC, including 300,000 women and 50,000 children. The epidemic continues to grow, as the number of new infections is almost double the number of deaths linked to the disease.

PEPFAR's expected contribution for the 2025 fiscal year was due to be \$105 million, and it aims to provide treatment to half of the population living with HIV in the DRC - some 209,000 people.

“This means that we currently have 440,000 people living with HIV who are on treatment. Thanks to this treatment, they are alive,” said Ms. Kasedde.

Several other UN agencies that are heavily reliant on US funding have also warned that the cut in support - in addition to chronic

(Continued on page 13)

SPORTS WRAP



Photos By Felicia Laguerre Owens



By William Hathaway, Jr.

Now is the time in which college basketball marches to one shining moment, until the first week of April.

This past weekend, the Seton Hall women's basketball team had a great season, despite missing the NCAA Tournament. As a consolation, they were selected to play in the Women's Basketball Invitational Tournament, their version of the men's National Invitational Tournament, which the Seton Hall men won last year. In the first round, the SHU ladies hosted and defeated Quinnipiac at Walsh Gym 57-40. Sophomore Savannah Catalon led the Lady Pirates to the win with 18 points and 5 rebounds in the game, while Freshman Jada Eads collected her first double double with 10 points and 10 rebounds. The Hall outscored Quinnipiac 17-2 to start the game. Although Seton Hall shot just 26-66 for 39 percent from the field, they outrebounded the Bobcats 46-3.

Up next was the second round, but unfortunately Port-

land came into South Orange and defeated Seton Hall 61-55. The now 31-4 Pilots were led by Trista Hull with 14 points and 6 rebounds, while Alexis Mark had 12 points and 3 rebounds. Jada Eads had a strong 18 points and 10 rebounds and teammate Yaya Lops had 13 points and 5 rebounds. The Pirates only shot 36 percent for the game. With their last game in the books, Seton Hall ladies finished the season 23-10 overall and 13-5 in the Big East Conference.

In the men's NCAA tournament, St. John's suffered the first stunning upset of the tournament, losing in the second round to Arkansas 75-66. St. John's finished with a 31-5 record and winning the Big East Conference regular season and tournament crowns.

Meanwhile, defending National Champion Connecticut will not make it three in a row, losing a tough game to #1 Florida 77-75. Connecticut finished the season with 24-12 record overall.

(Continued on page 15)





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WOMEN (Cont. from pg. 5)

person and a player,” she said.

She recalls that one of her proudest moments in her athletics career was when she scored 45 points against Orange High School and her takeaway is that the game was not about numbers, but rather about proving to herself that hard work, discipline and passion can lead to greatness.

“I never expected to become the top scoring leader in Essex County, but I know this is only the beginning. Every practice, every game, every sacrifice is for something bigger than myself. It’s for my family, my grandmother’s legacy, and for the belief that resilience and dedication can take you further than you ever imagined. With my grandmother watching over me, there is nothing I can’t accomplish,” she continued.

“Attending West Caldwell Tech has been a different experience for me. They provided a nurturing environment and welcomed me like family,” Perry said.

Hilary Samo, a senior at Newark Tech, has soared academically over her four years at the school. She is currently ranked 5th out of 109 students in her class and has maintained a 4.34 GPA. Her academic excellence is further exemplified by her membership in the Health Occupations of America (HOSA),

National Honor Society, the Black Student Union and Student Council. Her involvement in these organizations demonstrates her intellectual curiosity, commitment to her peers, and desire to make a positive impact in her community.

Beyond the classroom, Hilary has been an active participant in the school’s athletic program, excelling as a member of the Varsity Basketball team. Her athletic achievements, combined with her senior peer mentoring role and service on the Morning Announcement Committee, showcase her well-rounded talents and her ability to juggle multiple responsibilities. Her dedication to her community is equally impressive. She has dedicated her time to serve on student panels, distribute food at the Cherry Blossom Welcome Center, and support boys’ basketball games.

These experiences have shaped her development of empathy, problem-solving skills, and served to better understand the world around her. Hilary’s academic achievements have been recognized through numerous accolades, including the 2021-2022 Perfect Attendance Award, 2021-2024 High Honor Roll, 2024 Worker of the Month, and the 2023 OSHA-10 Certification. Hilary is an exceptional student who possesses academic prowess, leadership

qualities and community engagement. She is best known for her positive impacts both inside and outside of the classroom.

“Newark Tech has played a big role in helping me develop as a leader. I take pride in giving back to my school and community. This award is reminder of my responsibilities to keep growing and helping people,” Samo said.

Laela Lawal is a student at Essex County College majoring in Biology, Pre-Med program. She will be graduating this May with a GPA of 4.0 in a very demanding program. Her goal is to study neuroscience at a prestigious university. She is awaiting her acceptance responses from Johns Hopkins University and Washington University to continue her academic dreams. During her years at Essex County College, Laela has been an active member of the Student Government Association (SGA), first as Secretary and then as Parliamentarian.

This past year, Laela decided to focus her leadership growth in the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society where she currently holds the position of Vice President of Service. Laela has demonstrated full devotion to service to the Essex County College student body and the surrounding community. Even with a very demanding class schedule, she has con-

(Continued on page 12)



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

NEWARK - The Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission hopes to hear from the U.S. Environmental Agency on or before April 1 to see if their proposed natural gas-fueled backup generator plant will receive an air permit. The PVSC board decided to table final approval of the plant at their March 13 meeting here until they hear from the EPA.

The commission's controversial \$180 million project needs that federal air clearance to grant their final approval. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection had given the project their approval around Feb. 15.

The commission, which would build the backup power generator at their sewage treatment plant at 600 Wilson Ave. tabled their vote that Thursday after hearing from some 30 public speakers and pre-meeting demonstrators protested the plan.

Citing how 600 Wilson Ave. lost power for four days after Superstorm Sandy on Halloween 2012 and had to dump raw sewage into Newark Bay, the commission said this generator will be used for emergencies only.

Opponents objected to the plant on two main points. The plant, as designed, would use natural gas instead of renewable energy. Its Ironbound location would add a fourth power plant using fossil fuel.

IRVINGTON - A formal mentoring program, moving the Internal Affairs office out of a parking garage and increasing the Irvington Police Division's social media presence may be seen by residents and visitors here on or before 2029.

The above items are among a 19-point three-year strategic plan for IPD presented by the township's Public Safety Department last month. The 19 points are among five categories: training and development, recruitment and branding, public safety enhancement, operational excellence and facilities upgrading.

The facilities plan intends to move IA from 561-567 Nye Ave, where it shares an office with the Irvington Parking Authority. The Public Safety Building - the Police and Fire Headquarters and Municipal Court built in 1974 at Civic Square - is to have its cell block renovated and install a "high-tech security system to identify and prohibit contraband from entering police facilities."

Training and development includes a formal mentoring program and implementing officer cross training for investigative assignments. Other points include "publicizing crimes," buying tasers and expanding IPD's cadet and Explorer programs.

The report started out with a January-September 2024 crime report on seven personal and property crime categories. Murder, sexual assault, burglaries, thefts, auto thefts and overall arrests those nine months were down from comparable periods in 2023 and 2022.

EAST ORANGE - The deaths of two retired officers has meant that the East Orange Police Department has had a March month of mourning. Bunting and flag lowerings were first made March 3 for Lt. Hosia Reynolds. The salutation continued for Capt. Michael Palardy, Sr. (See West Orange for Palardy.)

Hosia Daniel Reynolds, 63, who was born Sept. 16, 1961 at Abbeville, Ala., died here March

3. As one of "East Orange's Finest," he was promoted to second shift desk sergeant by 2008 and as lieutenant in 2015. He retired that year to become South River Police and Board of Education's Fourth Class Special Law Enforcement Officer in 2018.

The EOPD Detective Bureau member came from Alabama by way of Kean now-University. He moved to Elizabeth in part to be a running back for the Kean Cougars 1980-84. Daniels was honorably mentioned for the NJSIAA 1983 All-NJAC Team.

While on the city beat, Daniels wrote the forward to DeLacy Davis' 2006 "Black Cops Against Police Brutality: A Crisis Action Plan." Wife Manisha Reynolds is among Daniel's survivors. His funeral was held March 12 at First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens, Somerset County's Franklin Township.

GSP Mishap Claims Cleric

A fatal March 21 accident here at Garden State Parkway Milepost 146.4 has been felt in upstate New York. New Jersey State Police Sgt. Jeffery Lebron said that state troopers, responding to an accident call there at 1 a.m. that Friday, found Rabbi Eliyahu "Eli" Fink, 43, lifeless on one of the northbound lanes - and his red Tesla Model Y in the southbound far left lane.

The NJSP's preliminary investigation found that Fink was driving his red Tesla Model Y south when it had a single car accident near Exit 145. Fink got out of the car when a video recording saw him get struck by a Jeep Cherokee and vaulted onto the northbound lanes. Fink was then hit by "multiple" cars. All lanes were closed during the on-site investigation.

Fink, of Money, N.Y., was known for writing his FinkorSwim blog and his earlier "The Soul of The Biz" "Jewish Journal" column. The second-generation Baltimore-born Orthodox rabbi, who was a married father of three, had his funeral in Suffern March 23. TheChesedFund.com has launched a

fundraiser for his family.

ORANGE - The city's police detective bureau and officers are looking for an armed robbery suspect who had victimized a North Ward resident here on March 17.

OPD patrol officers said they were responding to a robbery report at 3:45 p.m. that Monday from 32 Ridge St. - but they were flagged down by a man at 52 Ridge.

The man said that he was loading equipment on the driver's side of his van when he felt his wallet being lifted from his back pocket. He turned to see a "Black male, approximately 5-ft., 6-in. tall, between 25 and 30 years old and wearing a black hooded sweatshirt and blue jeans.

The victim said he attempted to chase the suspect to retrieve the wallet. That pursuit just as quickly ended when the suspect turned, "lifted up his shirt, revealing a green pistol," the suspect continued running south towards White Street.

Also, the victim was uninjured but notified his personal and business banks of the loss of his cards. The investigation continues.

WEST ORANGE - The East Orange Police Headquarters honored one of its own, Michael Palardy, Sr., even though he was a longtime West Orange resident throughout his 21-year career. Palardy, 79, who died in Toms River March 14, was a scholar-athlete before "joining the family business."

Born in Orange Oct. 28, 1945, Michael John Palardy was born in Orange to father and future West Orange Deputy Police Chief Elmer, mother Celia Palardy, brothers Donald and Edward and sister Barbara. The 1964 Mountain High School scholar-athlete started out as a West Orange High Cowboy until after MHS opened in 1960.

The 1996 West Orange Athletic Hall of Fame inductee was

(Continued on page 14)

LOCAL TALK

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NEWARK (Cont. from pg. 1)

2022, Baxter served as a liaison between Newark officials and agencies and individuals seeking permits, Certificates of Continued Occupancy (CCO), Certificates of Code Compliance (CCC), approvals and other actions on an expedited basis.

To provide these expediting services, for years, Baxter conspired with others, including developers, to pay cash bribes to various Newark officials so that these officials completed the official acts that Baxter requested on behalf of the developers and others. Baxter would often use the term “taking care of” a Newark official to indicate to a developer when additional cash or extra payment was needed to be added to official fees charged by Newark so that Baxter could use

the extra money to bribe a Newark official, such as an official handling the issuance of a CCC.

In addition to paying bribes to Newark officials on behalf of others, Baxter also once fraudulently obtained a \$10,000 cash payment for himself by falsely indicating to his developer client that the cash was needed to pay a bribe to a Newark official. In that instance, Baxter kept the entire payment for himself and simply pretended that he had given the payment to a Newark Official.

Part of Baxter’s participation in the bribery schemes included delivering cash bribes exceeding \$5,000 from 2019 to 2020 to then-Councilmember McCallum on behalf of a Newark developer who sought and obtained McCallum’s official assistance in obtaining approvals for real

estate projects in Newark. On March 15, 2022, before Judge William J. Martini, McCallum admitted receiving bribes while serving as a Councilmember and a director of the Newark Community Economic Development Corporation, as part of his guilty plea to wire fraud for devising a scheme to defraud Newark and of the right to McCallum’s honest services and subscribing to a false personal tax return for calendar year 2018.

Part of Baxter’s expediting services from 2017 to August 2022, included conspiring with others to create and deliver falsified and fraudulent CCOs, CCCs, and certificates of approval issued by the City of Newark notifying a utility that was to provide electricity for a property that the required inspection had been conducted at

the property (known as “cut-in cards”) to individuals who needed these official documents in relation to the development, construction, rental or sale of properties in Newark. Baxter and others used this scheme to fraudulently obtain payments from the individuals who required these official documents from the City of Newark.

Baxter also used the various entities he incorporated to obtain payments as an expeditor to facilitate a scheme to fraudulently obtain PPP loans during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020 and 2021, Baxter participated in preparing and submitting fraudulent PPP loan applications that included false tax forms and documents and contained false information on the application forms, concerning, among other

(Continued on page 13)

WOMEN (Cont. from page 9)

tinued to maintain membership and participate in the Biology Pre-Med Club and currently serves as the President of the Muslim Student Association (MSA). As a part of her responsibilities as a club leader, she has not only participated in multiple on and off campus events, but has also established numerous fundraisers and awareness events for the respective clubs.

Outside of her college commitments, Laela finds the time to volunteer at her Masjid. She assisted in organizing the annual NIA Masjid Day of Dignity, in partnership with the Islamic Relief USA Association which serves the community through an all-encompassing day of services to distribute items in need.

In recognition of Laela’s academic achievements, she was selected to represent Essex County College on the 2025 All USA-New Jersey Community College Academic Team and has recently been named as one of the 2025 Jack Kent Cooke Scholars semifinalists. The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation is a highly competitive Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship that provides up to \$55,000 per year for Community College graduates to complete their degree at an accredited U.S. college or university. Laela is among 467 semi-finalists from across the United States competing for one of these coveted scholarships.

“I am truly honored to stand before you today. To be selected is a reward for the strength we have within us. Previously, women were told that they had no place, but women always have been a catalyst for change and transformation,” Lawal said.

Towela Mwale is a Biology, Pre-Med student at Essex County College. She is an aspiring neurosurgeon with a solid foundation in biology and hands-on experience in

leadership, research and community service. She has maintained a 3.7 GPA and has been recognized for academic excellence and leadership. Among her recognition is an academic achievement award from the Biology, Chemistry & Physics Division in the fall of 2025 and she has also earned a spot on the dean’s list every semester.

Towela has been an active member of Phi Theta Kappa since the fall of 2023 and has served as the Secretary of Communications, handling communication between students, PTK officers, advisors and administration, while also facilitating and regulating the PTK inbox. She has also overseen fundraising events and Phi Theta Kappa’s project that promotes student engagement and inclusivity.

In addition, Towela worked with the Vice President of honors in action and helped organize and lead a mental health awareness event on campus that involved more than 50 mental health professionals, students, faculty and advisors. She is also a member of ECC’s Biology Pre-Med Club and the National Society of Black Engineers, helping promote diversity and inclusion in STEM through meetings, workshops and research opportunities. She also volunteers at a day care center in West Orange assisting children in developing scientific creativity. She was chosen to be one of the college’s student ambassadors for 2024-25, helping new and current students navigate student life.

As a result of her dedicated on-campus and community involvement, Towela received a PTK Appreciation Award for her dedication to the chapter and was selected to represent ECC on the 2025 All USA-New Jersey Community College Academic Team and in the running for the All-USA National Academic Team. Towela plans to transfer to Rutgers University-Newark for the fall 2025

semester, where she intends to continue her pre-med studies in neurosurgery at either Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons or UCLA Medical Center. Her hard work has left a lasting impact on the Essex County College campus, improving the college experience for current and future students.

“I am deeply honored to be recognized with this award. My journey through life has been determined and gratifying because of the challenges I have overcome. Because of this, I realize that no dream is too ambitious,” Mwale said.

The invocation was given by Rev. Madelyn Perez from Newark Community Church. Choral selections were performed by Isabella Cruz, a student who attends the Essex County Donald M. Payne, Sr. School of Technology.

The Annual Essex County Althea Gibson Leadership Awards are dedicated to the memory of the late professional tennis and golf legend, who was the first African American to win the Wimbledon Tennis and U.S. Golf Championships. In 1957, Ms. Gibson became the first African American to win the All-England Championship. That same year she became the first black woman to be voted by the Associated Press as its Female Athlete of the Year. The Althea Gibson Foundation exposes children in the inner city to the games of tennis and golf and provides recreational activities for students during the summer.

The Women’s History Month Celebration is part of a year-long cultural series created by County Executive DiVincenzo to highlight the diversity and various ethnic groups in Essex County. Other cultural celebrations are African American Heritage, Irish Heritage, Italian Heritage, Jewish Heritage, Latino Heritage and Portuguese Heritage.

WORLD NEWS (Cont. from pg. 7)

under-investment in humanitarian work globally - is already having a serious impact on the communities they serve.

On March 21, the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, said that thousands have been left without lifesaving aid in the war-torn eastern DRC.

The UN International Organization for Migration (IOM) also announced that funding cuts have severe repercussions for vulnerable migrant communities, exacerbating humanitarian crises and undermining essential support systems for displaced populations.

**UNITED KINGDOM
MORE AFFORDABLE
HOMES**

On March 25, the Chancellor and Deputy Prime Minister announced up to 18,000 new social and affordable homes will be built with a £2 billion injection of investment to deliver the Prime Minister's Plan for Change.

The announcement hails a significant milestone on the government's promise to build 1.5 million new homes whilst driving economic growth by getting Britain building again. It follows the government's plan to inspire the next generation of British engineers, brickies and chippies, by training 60,000 construction workers to tackle skills shortages and get more young people into jobs.

The £2 billion investment boost comes as a down payment from the Treasury ahead of more long term investment in social and affordable housing planned later this year, which will provide additional funding for 2026-27 and well as for future years. This forms part of the government's plan for tackling the housing crisis that has held working families back from the stability and security that comes with a safe roof over your head.

Thousands of new affordable homes will start construction by March 2027 and will complete by the end of this Parliament. The government is encouraging providers to come forwards as

soon as possible with projects and bids to ramp up the delivery of new housing supply, in turn making the dream of home ownership a reality for more people across the country.

This investment will also unlock development and opportunity on sites that are ready and waiting for spades in the ground in places such as Manchester or Liverpool.

The Chancellor announced plans on a visit to an affordable housing site in Stoke-On-Trent with the Deputy Prime Minister, working hand in hand to deliver the biggest boost to affordable and social housing in a generation.

Deputy Prime Minister and Housing Secretary, Angela Rayner said, "Everyone deserves to have a safe and secure roof over their heads and a place to call their own, but the reality is that far too many people have been frozen out of homeownership or denied the chance to rent a home they can afford thanks to the housing crisis we've inherited.

"This investment will help us

to build thousands more affordable homes to buy and rent and get working people and families into secure homes and onto the housing ladder. This is just the latest in delivering our Plan for Change mission to build 1.5 million homes, and the biggest increase in social and affordable housing in a generation."

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves said, "We are fixing the housing crisis in this country with the biggest boost in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation. Today's announcement will help drive growth through our Plan for Change by delivering up to 18,000 new homes, as well as jobs and opportunities, getting more money into working people's pockets.

"At the conclusion of the current Spending Review process on June 11, 2025, the government will announce further long-term investment into the sector in England, delivering the biggest boost to social and affordable housing in a generation."

NEWARK

(Continued from page 12)

things, the companies' gross revenue. As part of this scheme, Baxter even attempted to obtain a PPP loan for a lounge that he did not actually own and control, pretending to be its owner. As a result of his fraudulent scheme, Baxter obtained over \$40,000 in PPP loan funds.

The conspiracy to commit bribery charge in Count 1 of the information to which Baxter pleaded guilty carries a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison and the bribery charge in Count 2 to which Baxter pleaded guilty carries

a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. The wire fraud and wire fraud conspiracy charges in Counts 3 through 7 to which Baxter pleaded guilty each carry a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. All of the charges carry a maximum fine of \$250,000, or twice the pecuniary gain to the defendant or loss to the victims, whichever is greater. Sentencing for Baxter is scheduled for August 12, 2025 at 11 a.m.

U.S. Attorney Giordano credited special agents of the FBI's Newark Field Office, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge in Newark Terence G. Reilly in Newark; special agents of IRS-Criminal Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in

Charge Jenifer L. Piovesan, and special agents of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Shawn Rice, with the investigation leading to the guilty plea by Baxter.

The government is represented by Deputy Chief Jihee G. Suh and Assistant U.S. Attorney Francesca Liquori of the U.S. Attorney's Office's Special Prosecutions Division and Chief Katherine Calle of the U.S. Attorney's Office's Opioid Unit.

All other co-conspirators identified in the Information are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

SETON HALL

(Continued from page 4)

rector, said that those not doing their job and turning a blind eye should be replaced.

"It behooves the university to get a handle on how that happened. Who allowed it? Who thought it was a good idea? ... They need to come clean about all that," Ms. Sakoda told Politico.com.

How did Monsignor Reilly become President of Seton Hall University?

On December 21, 2024 nj.com did an interview with Dustin Racioppi, editor of Politico. Racioppi told Brianna Vannozzi of NJ Spotlight that Seton Hall refused to explain how Monsignor Reilly became the school president.

"Well, Seton Hall does not offer much clarity on this. I have asked repeatedly what happened behind the scenes. Was he cleared in any way or did something happen, where the board felt comfortable elevating him to the highest position possible at the university? Didn't get a clear answer on that, except that the university and its Board of Re-

gents chair, they fully support him. But, it's still not clear. I mean, the recommendation and through a responsible action plan. Years ago, was there anyone who knew about the alleged sexual harassment or abuse could not hold leadership positions at Seton Hall," Racioppi said.

According to a Seton Hall University Relations News and Events sheet dated April 2, 2024, "Monsignor Reilly was selected after an eight-month search by a subcommittee of the Board of Regents with input from a diverse cross-section of the University community. Seton Hall

received additional guidance from Washington D.C. - based executive recruitment firm AGB search.

According to the SHU student newsletter *The Setonian* dated February 20, 2025, "...an active alum and donor with knowledge of the situation, who requested anonymity to discuss confidential matters, told *The Setonian* that the vote (to appoint Reilly President) was not unanimous (unanimity is not required by the university by-laws; an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership [of the Board of Regents] is sufficient).

The Observation Booth



OP-ED By Andrea Dialect

WARNING

HOOD FOOD MATTERS

when it comes to grub. What are some of those beloved foods or snacks that taste the same just like they did yesteryear? I had a problem conjuring any in my head, so I'm in hopes that perhaps your food experiences have been better than mine. If I had to choose something, it would be the original Twizzlers. And if I want to get down and finally have some meat and potatoes, my beloved turkey sausages made by Shady Brooks Farms still do what they did. Fingers crossed they too don't get really shady with any bright ideas to change the recipe.

My daily fast - when sticking to the plan, that is - oftentimes spills into the next of days, op-

posed to the usual 6:30 p.m. cut-offs, because I just don't want any chow due to the redundancy of what makes the cut. But ironically, like a ballerina do when spinning around in dem circles, those well-stocked supermarket aisles have enhanced my dance skills, during those dreaded food hunts, I must admit.

Sadly, so many things have become subject to that chopping block. Could it all be in my head? Pray God, I hope so. Still I'm depending on you to ease my mind ... So say it ain't so!

In my humble opinion, food is rapidly becoming bland and blah, blah, blah. Read the draft short below to discover how and why yours truly has become such a food critic. Visit Local-talkweekly.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, homegrown, and experimental mockups. Follow my Instagram@msdialect, and let's grow out loud together! Like, follow, and share.

YOUR DAILY SUPPLEMENT

FOOD CRITIQUE: Throughout my early years, I



Photo Courtesy Andrea Dialect

usta love the smell of dirt. Either I would take a spoon and burrow it deep into the ground until I found my precious black, or I'd take the easy route by lifting it from an array of assorted potted plants which my mom had all lined up in a row, pressed against the windowpane. A choice stock, I must say. But sadly, no matter how often I'd sprinkle that smell-good on my salivating tongue, it never tasted as good as it smelled or looked. Unlike my kin who has gained the tolerance to stomach clay, I, on the other hand, could never hold it down. I suppose it's a matter of taste!

Now don't be too hasty to turn your nose up about my diverse taste buds or when that toddler nibbles on yesterday's circular, which they find to be a tasty delight. Did you scoff at me or would ya at them while you're prying open their mouths? If so, think again, because logically, we all got the same weird craves... Been to market lately?

BON APPÉTIT

Warning: The food content in those food packages is beginning to taste just like that pretty package - because seemingly, packaging is what we crave. Because we can no longer identify the taste or the content of most of those beloved products gracing those shelves. We must ingest the unidentifiable sparingly. I've been redeemed, finally - but sadly, I only embraced change when my Coca-Cola bottle started resembling a child's sippy cup. Logically, when I ate what was questionable, my physique became just as questionable. ...

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 have any questions, comments or concerns, send them to localtalkandrea@gmail.com.

TOWN WATCH (Cont. from pg. 10)

hailed for his track and field - and particularly football. The nimble running back, for example, ran a 48-year return against East Hanover for a touchdown Nov. 24, 1963. The William Paterson then-College graduate took up Golden Gloves boxing, becoming 1968 middleweight champion and amassing a 24-about winning streak before losing in the National Championship final.

Palardy dropped his gloves and picked up a badge in 1969. There may have been a lot of shop talking given that Donald and Edward were WOPD officers. Son Matthew also joined "West Orange's Finest," but Mi-

chael, Jr. joined Millburn's force. Michael Sr., drew numerous awards for bravery and dedication before retiring as Captain and becoming The Mall at Short Hills' 14-year security director.

Michael and high school sweetheart Donna Dusche moved to The Villages, Fla but moved to Toms River after her 2013 death. Brothers Donald and Edward, as West Orange Police Chief, and sons Michael and Matthew had all retired by then.

Edward, Matthew, Michael, Jr. and three grandchildren are among his survivors. Donald and sister Barbara Stizza had predeceased him. A Funeral Mass at E. Hanover's St. Rose of Lima Church was held March 20.

SOUTH ORANGE - The village's police detective bureau is looking at neighborhood video surveillance camera footage from March 17, when an attempted break in of a Montrose section residence was made.

Village police officers said they had responded to a Montrose Avenue resident's call that Monday and arrived to find the caller - and some damage to the house's front door.

The resident said he saw two people approaching the front door dresses in masks, hooded sweatshirts and gloves. One of the pair was carrying a crowbar.

The duo, said the victim, then began trying to kick down the front door until he yelled at them from inside the house. The

pair then fled to their getaway vehicle parked on Woodland Place.

Anyone with information is asked to call the SOPD Detective Bureau.

MAPLEWOOD / MONTCLAIR - Montclair elders spent parts of March considering creating something that Maplewood already has - a stormwater utility.

The Montclair Township Committee took a step forward March 11 by introducing an ordinance requiring planning or zoning site applicants to submit a stormwater management plan. The plan, paid for by a \$1,500 escrow fee, would be evaluated

(Continued on page 15)

TOWN WATCH (Continued from page 14)

by the Township Engineer.

As far as spinning off a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) from Montclair's Department of Community Services, stormwater expert David Bulova, of Fairfax, Va., said that such a utility would be managed by the municipal planning board but its site plan surveys by the engineering department. Bulova, who is also a Virginia State Delegate, suggested that Montclair may reach out to West Orange, Glen Ridge and/or Bloomfield for a joint MS4 since they share Montclair's streams and brooks east of the Orange (or First Watchung) Mountain.

Maplewood's elders have meanwhile created an MS4 utility Dec. 17 and passed an amendment to extend the property owner challenge to the land assessment from 30 days to 90 on Jan. 21.

What Maplewood has and what Montclair is mulling would create the utility as allowed by the state's Clean Water Act of 2004's recent Climate Change Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment. The assessment maps out a municipality's catch basins, drains, culverts, brooks, streams that are on or adjacent to a property.

Part of the assessment is to identify any restrictions and/or blockages that affect storm water flow. The municipality would then identify which areas would be more prone to flooding.

Additionally, part of the assessment would create a basis for charging a property owner. (A large property that has a parking lot, for example, would be charged more than for a smaller property that only has street parking.)

BLOOMFIELD - Mayor Jenny Mundell and the Township Council lent their support of New Jersey Immigrant Trust Act (NJITA) by unanimously passing a resolution here March 13 for State House passage and Gov. Phil Murphy's signing.

Circulating in the State House as Assembly Bill No. 4987/ Senate Bill No. S3672, the NJITA would reinforce the state's 2019 Immigration Trust Directive, which allows residents to access public services without fear of deportation. NJITA would further commit New Jersey to provide a safe and inclusive environment to all its residents regardless of immigration status.

Eight of A4987's 28 co-sponsors are "Local Talk" representatives: Rosaline Beguile, Alixon Collazos-Gill, Garnet

Hall, Carmen Morales, Eliana Marin, Shannique Speight, Cleopatra Tucker and Michael Venezia. State Senators Renee Burgess, John McKeon, Tresa Ruiz and Britnee Timberlake are among S3672 15. co-sponsors.

Illegal Weapons Possession

What started out as a Newark man's trip to the Home Depot here March 21, said Bloomfield police, ended up with being detained as of press time at Newark's Essex County Correctional Facility and awaiting an arrangement hearing.

BPD officers, responding to the store security officer's call of "several individuals arguing," arrived at 60 Orange St., Friday. The calling guards said that he had witnessed one of the men, "taking what appears to be a firearm out of his vehicle."

The officers found a man within the store - later identified as Jason Aygemang - matching the guard's description. Aygemang said that he had a .357 Smith & Wesson revolver and that he does not have a permit for it - as also a pair of brass knuckles in his car which is a banned state weapon. Charges against Aygemang also included making a terroristic threat.

BELLEVILLE - Those who want to submit their input towards the Belleville Public Schools' next superintendent, whose in-person presentations began March 20, still have until 7 p.m. March 28 to fill out an online survey form.

The Belleville Board of Education Trustees and consultant Strategic Exemplary Alliance unrolled the public part of the search at their March 20 meeting. Breakout public circles were scheduled to be held at the Belleville High School Auditorium March 26 and a virtual forum 7 p.m. March 27.

The BOE Trustees hired SEA, of Oradell, Feb. 24, based on their 50 superintendent searches it had conducted over 11 years. They presented a timeline where they hope to have a new superintendent hired and working on or before July 1.

That timeline includes: * April 3-27 "Help Wanted" ad posted. * April 26-27 all day finalist interviews. * May 5-12 contract negotiations. * May 19 public finalist announcement.

It is not clear as of press time whether Interim Superintendent Nick Perrapato, formerly of Garfield Public Schools, is a candidate. Perrapato succeeds nine-year superintendent Dr. Richard Tomko who resigned June 30 to become Garfield's super.

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SPORTS WRAP (Continued from page 8)

This week, the city of Newark will be the host for the 2025 East Regional games. Among those taking the court will be the Duke Blue Devils and likely #1 NBA draft pick Copper Flagg Also, look out for Mark Seals (no known relation to our Content Editor) and Alabama.

The last time the Prudential Center hosted the East Regional was back in 2011.



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