



**2023 Annual
Journalism Contest
Awards Presentation**

Forsgate Country Club, Monroe — April 25, 2024

**PRIZE
TIME!!!**

**WEEKLY
PHOTOGRAPHY
RESULTS**

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

NJPA
NEW JERSEY PRESS ASSOCIATION

Weekly Photography Awards

Ocean City Sentinel

Weekly Photography Awards

General News **THIRD PLACE**

David Nahan

Playing to the
Audience



Weekly Photography Awards

Sports Action **THIRD PLACE**

David Nahan

Double Slam



2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Photography Awards — Sports Feature

Sports Feature **THIRD PLACE**

David Nahan

Not Me



Weekly Photography Awards

Portrait **THIRD PLACE**

Craig D. Schenck

Crazy Susan
The Cookie
Queen



Weekly Photography Awards

Sports Action
SECOND
PLACE

David Nahan

Soft Landing



2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Photography Awards

Sports Feature
SECOND
PLACE

David Nahan

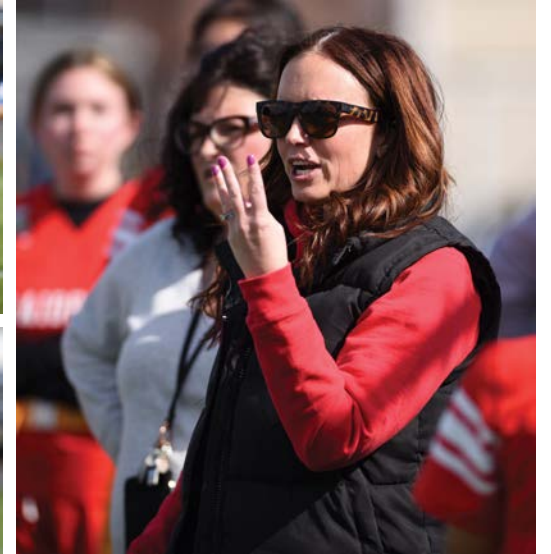
Focused



Weekly Photography Awards

**Sports Feature
Picture Story
SECOND
PLACE**
David Nahan

Flag Football



Weekly Photography Awards

Portrait
SECOND
PLACE

David Nahan

Pied Piper



2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Photography Awards

**General News
FIRST PLACE**

David Nahan

Business Plunge



Weekly Photography Awards

Sports Action **FIRST PLACE**

David Nahan

Wait For Me



Weekly Photography Awards

**Sports Feature
Picture Story
FIRST PLACE**

David Nahan

Women's Lifeguard
Championship



Weekly Photography Awards

**Feature
FIRST PLACE**

David Nahan

Not Staying Down



Weekly Photography Awards

**Feature Picture
Story
FIRST PLACE**

David Nahan

The Task at Hand



Weekly Photography Awards

Portrait **FIRST PLACE**

David Nahan

Unconventional
Beauty Queen



Weekly Photography Awards

The SandPaper

Weekly Photography Awards

**Sports Feature
Picture Story
THIRD PLACE**

David Biggy

First Female
State Champ



Weekly Photography Awards

**Feature
THIRD PLACE**

Jack Reynolds

Pelicans Soaring



2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Photography Awards

**Feature Picture
Story
THIRD PLACE**

Jack Reynolds

Frances Anne



Weekly Photography Awards

**Pictorial
THIRD PLACE**

Jack Reynolds

Teachable
Moment



2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Photography Awards

Spot News
SECOND
PLACE

Jack Reynolds

Wires Sparking



Weekly Photography Awards

General News
SECOND
PLACE

Jack Reynolds

Shelter Dog



Weekly Photography Awards

**Feature
SECOND
PLACE**

Jack Reynolds

Dog on Board



2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Photography Awards

Feature Picture
Story
SECOND
PLACE
David Biggy

Southern Regional
Graduation 2023

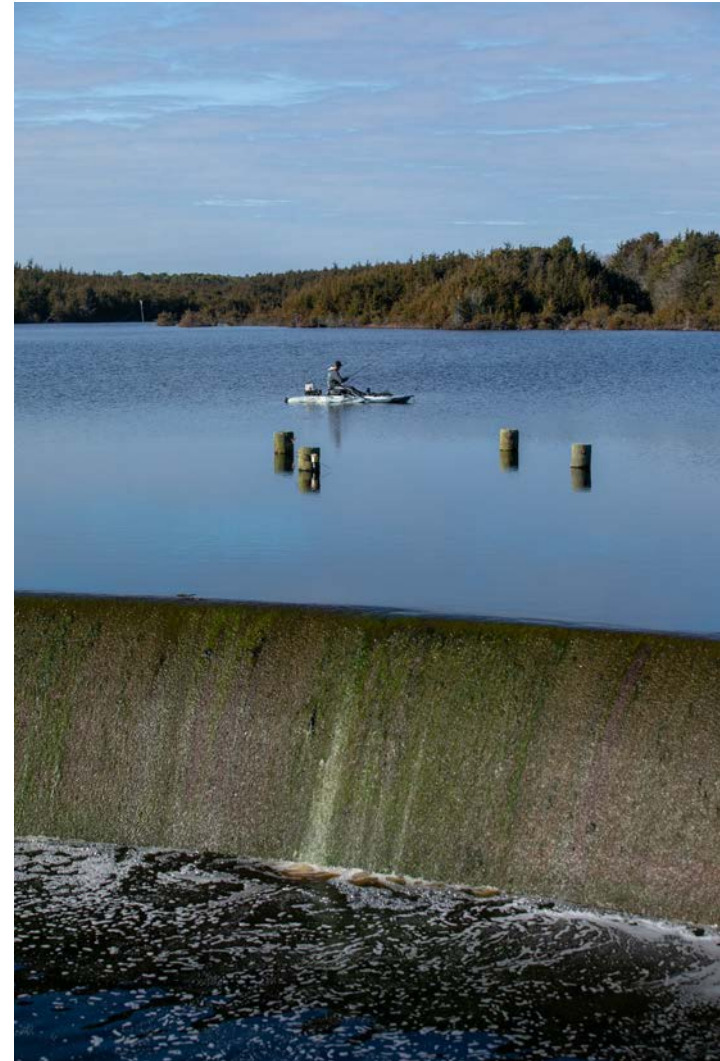


Weekly Photography Awards

**Pictorial
SECOND
PLACE**

Jack Reynolds

Kayak Fishing



Weekly Photography Awards

**Protest, Rally
Or Gathering**
**SECOND
PLACE**
Jack Reynolds

Wind and Whales



Weekly Photography Awards

Sports Feature **FIRST PLACE**

David Biggy

Going to the
Championship

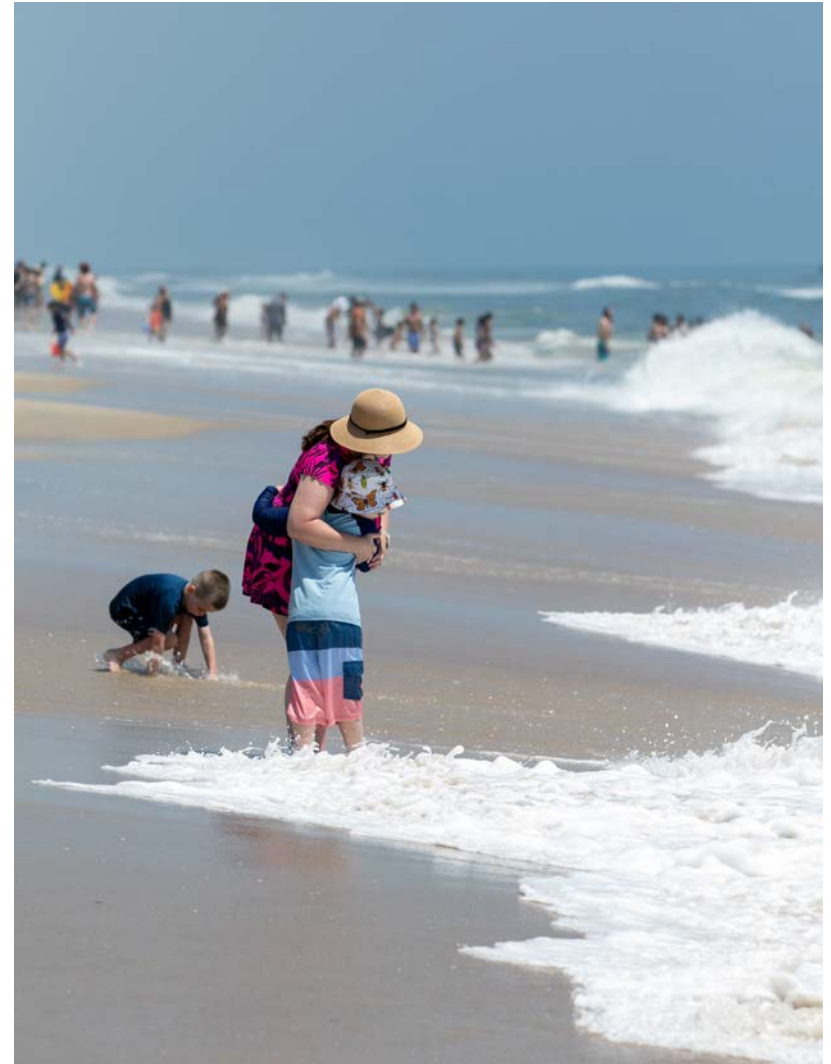


Weekly Photography Awards

Pictorial FIRST PLACE

Jack Reynolds

Ocean Love



Weekly Photography Awards

The Westfield Leader

Weekly Photography Awards

Protest, Rally Or Gathering **FIRST PLACE**

Paul Lachenauer

**Anger on
Both Sides**



Weekly Photography Awards

**Spot News
FIRST PLACE**

Lauren S. Barr

14-Hour Standoff



Weekly Photography Awards

BEST IN SHOW

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Photography – Best in Show

**Wait
For
Me**

**David
Nahan**

Ocean City Sentinel



**PRIZE
TIME!!!**

**DAILY – UNDER 15,000
PHOTOGRAPHY
RESULTS**

Daily Photography Awards

Courier-Post

Daily Photography Awards

Spot News
SECOND
PLACE
Chris LaChall

Officials
Respond to
Deadly House
Explosion



Daily Photography Awards

Courier News

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Daily Photography Awards

Sports Action
SECOND
PLACE
Alexander Lewis

Marisa Rose
Bowl All-Star
Game 1



Daily Photography Awards

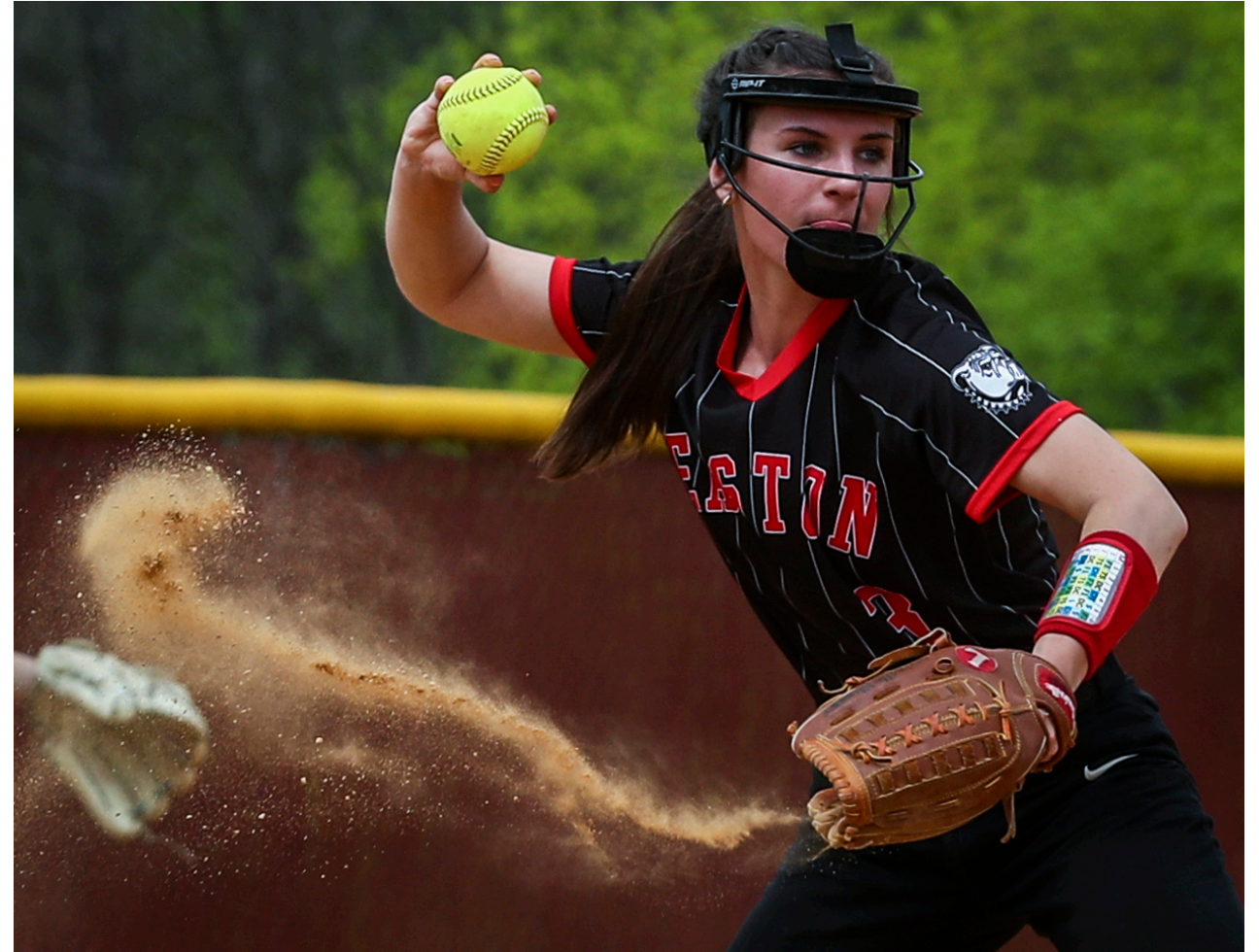
The Express-Times

Daily Photography Awards

**Sports Action
THIRD PLACE**

Saed Hindash

Dirty Play



Daily Photography Awards

Portrait
THIRD PLACE

Saed Hindash

Track-and-Field
Athlete



Daily Photography Awards

Feature
SECOND
PLACE
Saed Hindash

Flippin' Graduate



Daily Photography Awards

**General News
FIRST PLACE**

Saed Hindash

Water Break



Daily Photography Awards

**Sports Action
FIRST PLACE**

Saed Hindash

Off the Draw



Daily Photography Awards

**Sports Feature
FIRST PLACE**

Saed Hindash

Proud Coach



Daily Photography Awards

**Feature
FIRST PLACE**

Saed Hindash

Ride On



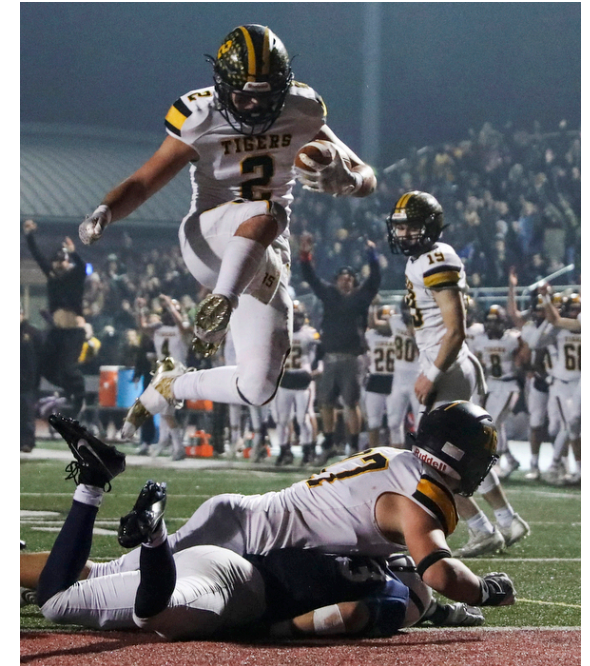
2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Daily Photography Awards

**Best Portfolio
FIRST PLACE**

Saed Hindash

**Hindash
Portfolio**



2023 Better Newspaper Contest

NJPA
NEW JERSEY PRESS ASSOCIATION

Daily Photography Awards

The Jersey Journal

Daily Photography Awards

**Spot News
THIRD PLACE**

Joe Shine

Barge Blaze



Daily Photography Awards

**General News
THIRD PLACE**

Reena Rose Sibayan

Wish Granted



Daily Photography Awards

**Feature
THIRD PLACE**

Reena Rose Sibayan

**Resilient City
Park**



2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Daily Photography Awards

General News
SECOND
PLACE

Reena Rose Sibayan

Chance at
Redemption



2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Daily Photography Awards

**General News
Picture Story
SECOND
PLACE**

Reena Rose Sibayan

Cop for a Day



Daily Photography Awards

Portrait
SECOND
PLACE

Michael T. Dempsey

The Reverend
Rufus Strother



2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Daily Photography Awards

Best Portfolio
SECOND
PLACE
Reena Rose Sibayan

Portfolio



Daily Photography Awards

**Spot News
FIRST PLACE**

Reena Rose Sibayan

Seven-Alarm Fire



Daily Photography Awards

**General News
Picture Story
FIRST PLACE**

Reena Rose Sibayan

**Vigil for Andrew
Washington**



Daily Photography Awards

Portrait **FIRST PLACE**

Reena Rose Sibayan

**Owner Closes
Bar After 30
Years**



Daily Photography Awards

**Protest, Rally
or Gathering
FIRST PLACE**

Reena Rose Sibayan

Vigil for Drew



Daily Photography Awards

BEST IN SHOW
Daily - Under 15,000

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

NJPA
NEW JERSEY PRESS ASSOCIATION

Daily (Under 15,000) Photography – Best in Show

**Owner Closes
Bar After 30 Years**

**Reena Rose
Sibayan**

The Jersey Journal



**PRIZE
TIME!!!**

**DAILY – OVER 15,000
PHOTOGRAPHY
RESULTS**

Daily Photography Awards

Asbury Park Press

Daily Photography Awards

**General News
THIRD PLACE**

Thomas Costello

Beached Boat



Daily Photography Awards

**Sports Feature
Picture Story
THIRD PLACE**

Peter Ackerman

Mat Dreams



Daily Photography Awards

**Feature Picture
Story
THIRD PLACE**

Peter Ackerman

Homeless Camp



Daily Photography Awards

**Pictorial
THIRD PLACE**

Peter Ackerman

Egret



Daily Photography Awards

Spot News
SECOND
PLACE
Thomas Costello

Overtaken
Truck



Daily Photography Awards

Portrait
SECOND
PLACE
Peter Ackerman

Preservationist



Daily Photography Awards

**Pictorial
SECOND
PLACE**

Thomas Costello

Fireworks Aerial

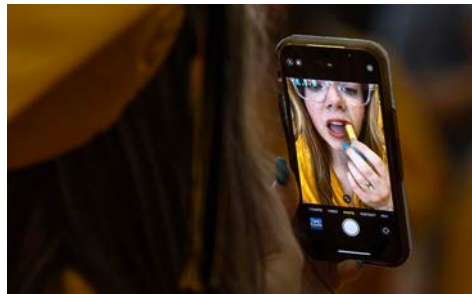
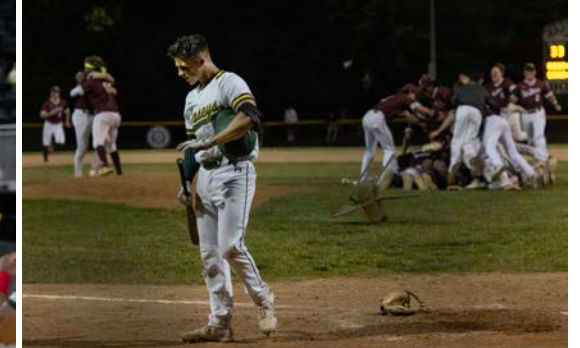


2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Daily Photography Awards

Best Portfolio
SECOND
PLACE
Peter Ackerman

Portfolio



Daily Photography Awards

**Spot News
FIRST PLACE**

Thomas Costello

**Asbury Park
Flooding**



Daily Photography Awards

**Portrait
FIRST PLACE**

Tanya Breen

Young and Old

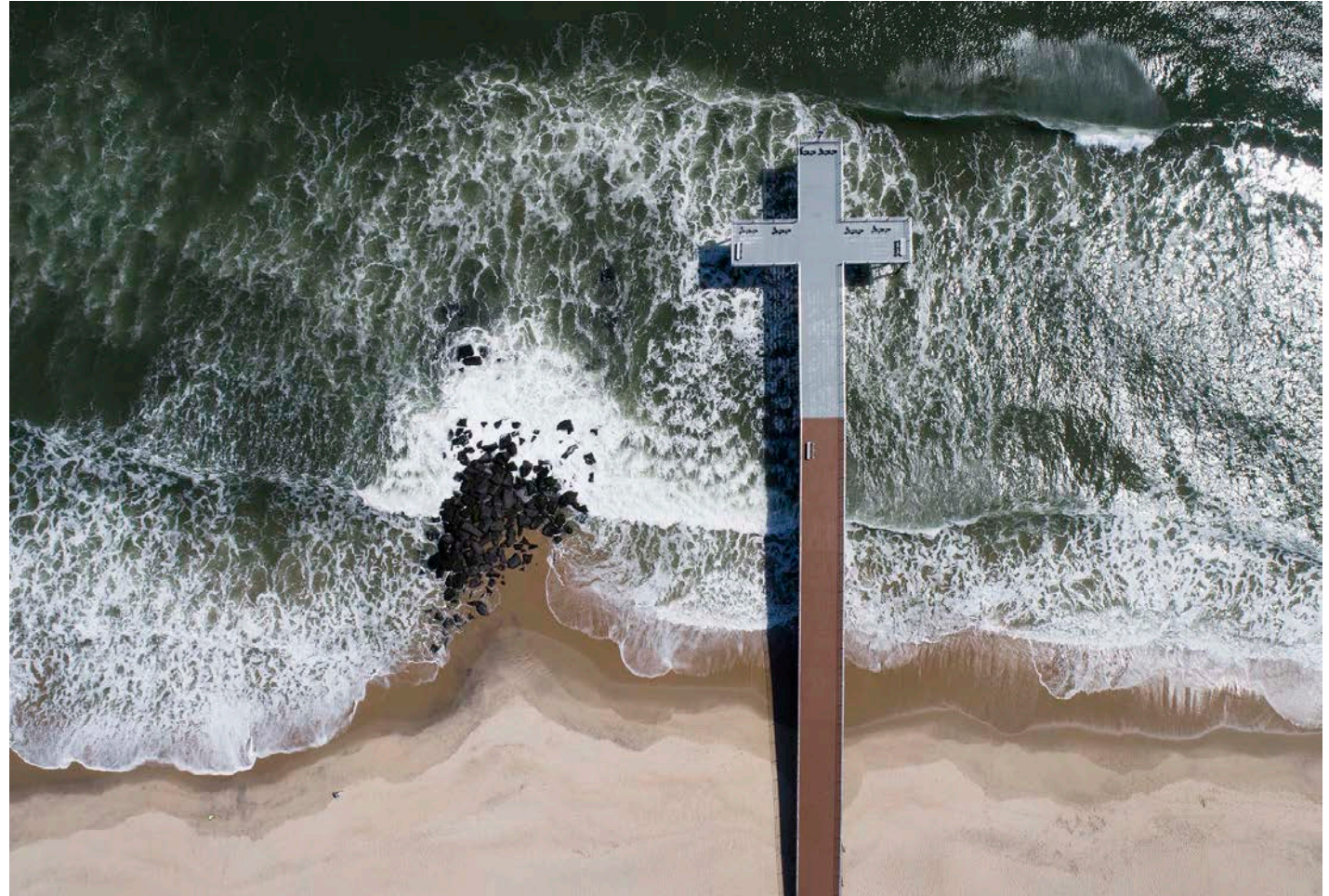


Daily Photography Awards

**Pictorial
FIRST PLACE**

Doug Hood

Cross Pier



Daily Photography Awards

The Record (Bergen)

Daily Photography Awards

Portrait **THIRD PLACE**

Danielle
Parhizkaran

Leeana Mercado
On the Mat



Daily Photography Awards

General News
SECOND
PLACE
Tariq Zehawi

Tears on a
Hero's Helmet



Daily Photography Awards

Feature
SECOND
PLACE
Kevin Wexler

Countdown
to Graduation



Daily Photography Awards

**Feature Picture
Story
SECOND
PLACE**
Danielle
Parhizkaran

**Day in the Life
Of Gov. Murphy**



Daily Photography Awards

General News FIRST PLACE

Chris Pedota

Grieving for
Slain NJ
Councilwoman



Daily Photography Awards

**General News
Picture Story
FIRST PLACE**

Michael Karas

**Supporters
Demand Justice
for Najee
Seabrooks**



Daily Photography Awards

Sports Feature **FIRST PLACE**

Chris Pedota

**Jets Coach
Outraged**



Daily Photography Awards

**Feature
FIRST PLACE**

Anne-Marie
Caruso

**Fun is the Point
At Drag Brunch**

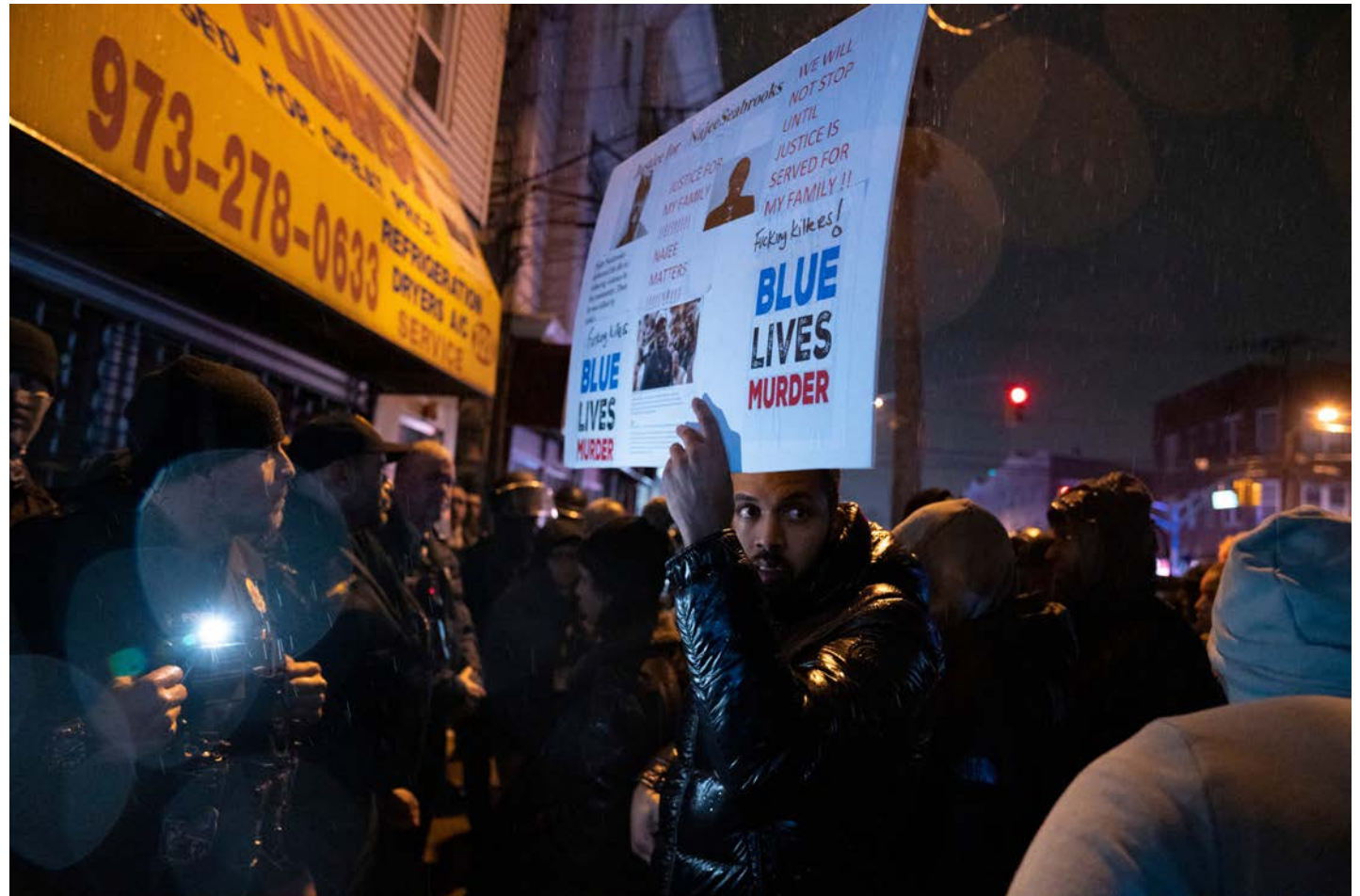


Daily Photography Awards

Protest, Rally Or Gathering **FIRST PLACE**

Michael Karas

**Justice for
Najee Rally**



**PRIZE
TIME!!!**

Daily Photography Awards

The Star-Ledger

Daily Photography Awards

Sports Action
THIRD PLACE

Andrew Mills

Finish Line



Daily Photography Awards

**Sports Feature
THIRD PLACE**

Andrew Mills

Rutgers Wins!



Daily Photography Awards

**Feature
THIRD PLACE**

Julian Leshay

**Morris County
9/11 Memorial**



Daily Photography Awards

Sports Action
SECOND
PLACE
Chris Faytok

High Jump
Champ



Daily Photography Awards

Sports Feature
SECOND
PLACE
Andrew Mills

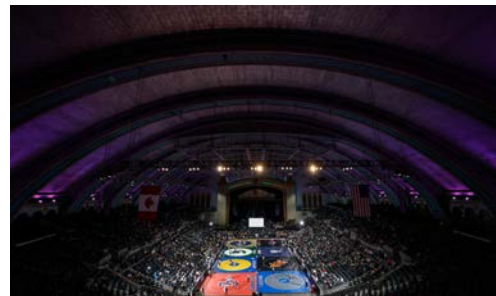
State
Championship
Celebration



Daily Photography Awards

**Sports Feature
Picture Story
SECOND
PLACE**
Chris Faytok

**2023 NJSIAA
Wrestling
Championships**



2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Daily Photography Awards

**Sports Action
FIRST PLACE**

Andrew Mills

End Zone



Daily Photography Awards

**Sports Feature
Picture Story
FIRST PLACE**

Scott Faytok

**High School
Hockey at
Fenway**

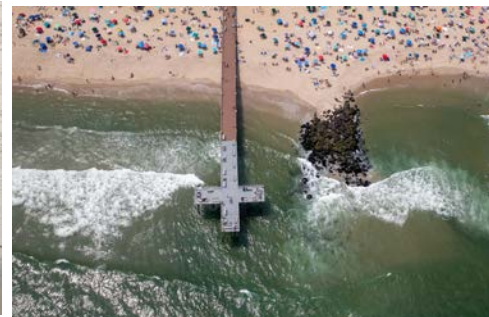


Daily Photography Awards

**Feature Picture
Story
FIRST PLACE**

Andrew Mills

**Fourth of July
From the Sky**



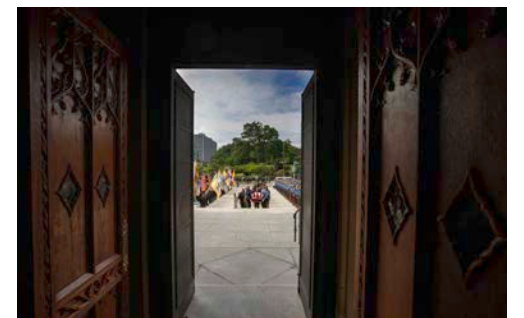
2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Daily Photography Awards

**Best Portfolio
FIRST PLACE**

Andrew Mills

New Jersey 2023



Daily Photography – Best in Show

**Grieving for Slain
NJ Councilwoman**

**Chris
Pedota**

**The Record
(Bergen)**



**PRIZE
TIME!!!**

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

NJPA
NEW JERSEY PRESS ASSOCIATION

JOURNALISM AWARDS

**WEEKLY
EDITORIAL/ONLINE
RESULTS**

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

**Cape May County
Herald Times**

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Special Subject Writing THIRD PLACE

Christopher South

Jewish Leaders Say Education
is Needed to Combat
Antisemitism

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Vol. 57 No. 52

CAPE MAY COUNTY
HERALD

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South Jersey beaches in greater numbers than in anyone's recollection from previous years. Dolphins followed and the sea mammal fatalities declared it would use whatever means were necessary in the new campaign against Orsted. Meanwhile Gov. Phil Murphy doubled down, mental study that showed no lasting harm from (Page A22 Please)

Jewish Leaders Say Education Is Needed to Combat Antisemitism

By Christopher South

WOODBINE - Jane Stark has been fighting antisemitism for more than 40 years. Stark, the executive director of the Sam Azeez Museum of Woodbine Heritage, believes that education is one of the keys in that battle. And that the battle begins at home. "Children are not born with hate or prejudice," she said. Stark and other Jewish leaders say education efforts are needed more than ever in light of the conflict between Israel and Hamas, and the antisemitism incidents around the nation and world that have resulted. She believes a lack of education, coupled with poverty, are the root cause of many problems in the world. Besides becoming educated on issues that lead to racism and antisemitism, she believes people have to be personally accountable for their own actions. "Stop condemning," she said. "Set an example. Show courage. And focus on what's happening with humanity." (Page A9 Please)

Jane Stark, the executive director of the Sam Azeez Museum of Woodbine Heritage, in her office at the museum, which also functions as the Woodbine Instructional Site for Stockton University. Photo Credit: Christopher South

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FIRST NIGHT IN OCEAN CITY
Family Friendly Entertainment at Venues Across Ocean City
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DO THE SHORE Plan your dining and entertainment fun with family and friends!
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REAL ESTATE & FINANCE
Local real estate, plus tips for buying, selling and investing.
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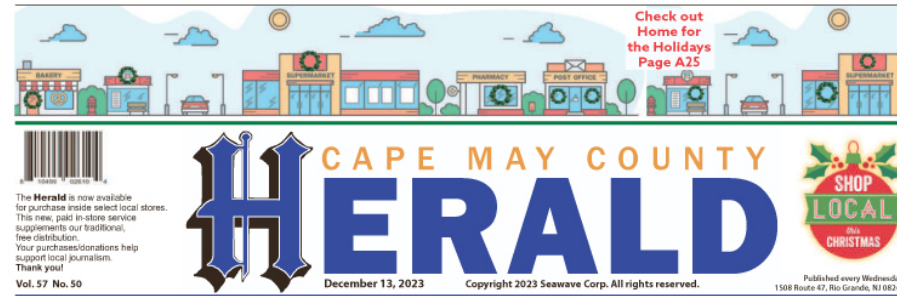
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Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Fresh Approach to Routine Reporting THIRD PLACE

Christopher South

Famous Dennis Township Chair Finally Falls



Famous Dennis Township Chair Finally Falls



The chair that was the subject of the 'Chair Watch' Facebook group was blown down off its house in North Dennis due to high winds, Dec. 11.



The chair that became a social media darling on Facebook met a disappointing end after being blown off its perch in North Dennis.

Litchko, confirmed the chair had fallen. The chair had been the subject of Philadelphia television news reports, and "The Rooftop Chair" even has a place on Google Maps. The Herald recently reported that Litchko had taken out a demolition permit on the damaged house, Nov. 2, after the township issued him a complaint, dated Sept. 21, declaring his property unfit for human habitation. Litchko told the Herald that he bought the house after the previous owner died, and that the items visible in the attic never belonged to him - they were simply left there. He said he plans to demolish the house himself and might have already started except that his excavator needed to be repaired and he was waiting for a part. Litchko is also looking for assurance that he could "build back," meaning rebuild on the site. The question of whether he could rebuild on the same footprint and to the same height was put to Jessica Ferrier in the Dennis Township Construction Office. "Yes, he can," Ferrier said in an email to the Herald.

Litchko has one year to use the demolition permit; however, the actual demolition will likely prove anticlimactic now that the center of attention, the hanging chair, came down. Ironically, the chair that was revealed to the public by one type of storm met its end as the result of another - notably the same storm system that spawned two dozen tornadoes in the south.

Matt Brady, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Mount Holly, confirmed that the storm effects in Cape May County were part of the same system that had deadly consequences in other states. "It was part of the same system but with different outcomes," Brady said.

Generally, the Cape May County area had 1.5 to 3 inches of rain (Woodbine, nearest the chair house, had 2 inches of rain) and 40 to 45 mph wind gusts, with gusts near 50 mph along the shore. Brady said the highest reported wind gust was 48 mph out of Cape May.

(Page A8 Please)

Eating Cheesesteaks With Elvis Came With the Territory



Lou Carbo

Rio Grande's Lou Carbo, a Retired Police-man and Body-guard, Tells of His Celebrity Encounters

By Karen Knight

RIO GRANDE - Not everyone gets to meet celebrities in their work, but for Lou Carbo, a retired Philadelphia police sergeant who now lives in Rio Grande, meeting people like Elvis Presley, the pope, Mario Thomas, Phil Donahue, Andrea McArdle and others was just part of his job.

As a police officer for 32 years, Carbo, now 85, spent some of his time working a side job with a citywide limousine service that provided security protection to celebrities. He subsequently became part of the Philadelphia Police Department's dignitary protection unit and served as a bodyguard for Andrea McArdle, a Philadelphia-born singer and actress best known for originating the role of Annie in the Broadway musical of that name.

Through these security roles, he found himself enjoying Philly cheesesteaks with Elvis, staying at Liberace's house outside Las Vegas, driving for guests of "The Mike Douglas Show" and having dinner with Roger Moore, the third actor to play James Bond, doing so

(Page A18 Please)

The Herald Supports

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Business/Economic Writing Portfolio THIRD PLACE

Shay Roddy

Clermont Lodge; Black Cactus;
Avalon Hodge Podge



\$65M+ Luxury Resort Proposed in Dennis



Shay Roddy/Rendering by DAS Architects

Developer John Cozzano Sr., left, is proposing a \$65 million to \$70 million high-end resort in Dennis Township. Cozzano, whose development portfolio includes some of Philadelphia's landmark buildings, will lead his firm's first foray into Cape May County with Clermont Lodge, right, on a 20-acre parcel at the intersection of Routes 9 and 83, in Clermont. The proposal includes two event venues, a live theater, and a 50-room lodge on a 2-acre, man-made lake. Elsewhere on the property would be a tavern, 60 bungalows, 24 individual cabins, and various other amenities.

By SHAY RODDY

CLERMONT — On a 20-acre offshore parcel full of thin and bristly woods, a little more than 6 miles from the beaches of Amble, John Cozzano Sr., a developer who has rehabilitated some of Philadelphia's most recognizable and historic buildings, sees an opportunity for a resort, the likes of which Cape May County has never seen.

Cozzano, who recently submitted a variance application to the Dennis Township Consolidated Land Use Board for the rustic, high-end retreat, has plans for the intersection of Routes 9 and 83, has built an equally impressive portfolio of large-scale, new development projects.

He is president of Brickstone, a small Philadelphia real estate development firm with an eye for big projects and a focus on placemaking.

For being the man behind the restoration of Philadelphia landmark Wanamaker's and all its grandeur and the equally recognizable 111 Brattle's department store, where he now keeps his office, Cozzano is surprisingly unassuming.

When he met a reporter at a coffee shop to discuss his company's first foray into Cape May County, a project he estimates will cost \$65 million to \$70 million, which he plans to call Clermont

Lodge, he hopped out of a Ford Ranger pickup truck, not wearing a suit, but rather simple blue jeans and a camouflage hat from a local belt-and- buckle store.

After the meeting, he drove the reporter off road and onto the proposed site, two benches scraping against the sides of his truck and free drink tokens

(Page A9 Please)

County Commissioners Have Hands Full: Rethinking Fare Free Buses

By AL CAMPBELL

CREST HAVEN — A senior citizen complained to the Board of County Commissioners Jan. 24 about Fare Free Transportation's policies.

At the same meeting, the board passed a resolution in support for a Motor-Vehicle Usability Study for the department with the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (STPO).

County House residents Janet Retno praised the service but said there were "too many restrictions." She cited a three-day advance policy to book a ride, which some riders, primarily seniors,

find inconvenient.

If they want to ride to Walmart, in Rio Grande, there is no possibility to change one's ride to go to ShopRite instead, Retno said.

She noted many seniors are afraid to "make waves," so they tolerate the rigors of the regulations.

Newly sworn Commissioner Andrew Bialowski oversees Fare Free Transportation, formerly overseen by Vice-Director E. Marie Hayes. He urged Retno to have fellow seniors direct complaints to him.

That is the only way a solution can be found,

Bialowski said, adding, "We need to hear them."

Retno said she sent three emails to the department and is still waiting to receive a reply. Hayes checked her emails while speaking to Retno and said she did not see any directed to her with the complaint.

"The computer program they use is made for three-day schedules," Hayes said.

She added that "so many different trips" must be entered into the computer as a reason for the requirement.

Hayes cited another problem.

"We had a terrible time getting CDL (Commer-

cial Driver's License) drivers, which is what we need to drive the buses," she said. "We are way down with drivers."

"I hear what you're saying," continued Hayes.

There was another factor.

"We tried to address it (the problem) with a new Uber-type program. Unfortunately, the company

(Page A4 Please)



2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Education Writing THIRD PLACE

Christopher South

Cape Tech Welding Students on
a Promising Career Arc

A4

www.CapeMayCountyHerald.com

November 22 2023

Indictments Filed Nov. 14

By VINCE CONTI

Readers are reminded that not only are all individuals listed below presumed innocent unless proven guilty, but there may also be multiple individuals who share the same name, even in the same town.

COURT HOUSE - A Cape May County grand jury handed up 10 indictments Nov. 14.

The abbreviation CDS below stands for controlled dangerous substance.

Tiffany L. Huntenberg was indicted for third-degree bail jumping because she allegedly failed to show for a hearing where she was facing charges of bail jumping. A check of inmates at the Cape May County Correctional Facility did not show Huntenberg among them. In September 2022 Middle Township police put out a release saying they were looking for Huntenberg, a 30-year-old resident of Court House.

Ronald Brinkley was indicted for third-degree bail jumping after he allegedly failed to show back in February 2022 for a hearing related to charges of unlawful possession of a weapon in the second degree.

Jeffrey M. Prentiss faces a fourth-degree count for operating a motor vehicle during second license suspension.

Louis Papa, Nestor Seda-Rivera and **Connor Mulroney** were each individually indicted for third-degree possession of a CDS. The drugs in question were methamphetamine, fentanyl and cocaine.

Dana M. Starrett was named in a single-count indictment for third-degree burglary related to an incident in Middle Township.

Danielle R. Peranteau faces a single count of fourth-degree shoplifting from a merchant in Middle Township.

Miguel Telley-Perez was indicted for second-degree aggravated assault under circumstances that met the definition of domestic violence.

Christopher R. Duffy was indicted for second-degree eluding police in a motor vehicle.

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Cape Tech Welding Students on a Promising Career Arc



Cape Tech welding student Evin Lawson grinds a weld he has out on a project in his third-year welding class. Students such as Lawson will earn certification and in many cases can get a job right out of high school. Photo Credit: Christopher South

By Christopher South

CREST HAVEN - For a lot of high school students, the future probably seems rather uncertain, but for those in Cape May County Technical High School's welding technology program, it could be out of this world.

According to welding teacher Thomas Jackson, his former students have worked on large-scale projects such as the James Webb Space Telescope. They've also welded steam condensers for nuclear submarines and done work on the Ben Franklin Bridge, he said.

Jackson said many of his students are going right into the workforce after gradu-

ation, having been recruited by unions and businesses, but he said most need to go on to post-secondary education in welding.

"Most have to go out of state for a good school, such as the Hobart Institute or Lincoln Welding School," he said.

Jackson was speaking in his third-year welding class, where the students are working on certification. He said there are commercial welding inspectors who come in and make sure the students are doing things right.

He said there are two types of inspections in the certification process. There is a visual inspection and a destructive weld test, in which stress is put on the weld. Once they pass, the students will be cer-

tified through the American Welding Service.

Seniors who graduate from the welding technology program are eligible to apply for the Charles Dank Memorial Scholarship, awarded for the further study of welding at a post-secondary trade school.

Jackson started teaching welding in 2007 in both night school and day classes at Cape Tech; he has since given up the night classes. He said he has students from all over the Cape May County community, a community he depends on for the welding program.

"If not for the Morey's Piers organization we would not have a certified welding program," he said. "A lot of local businesses support the program."

Jackson also mentioned as supporters of the program Lunds Fisheries, Atlantic Cape Fisheries, Mitchell Iron Works, TMU, South Jersey Welding Supply, Keen, Fazio's, Burkhardt Welding, Steel Pier, multiple businesses and refineries in the Philadelphia area and United Uniforms, which has made sure students have individual welding attire.

He said the support of the community and businesses allows the students to have protective leathers, gloves, goggles, regulators, welding rods and even jobs.

"If not for the community we would not be able to survive," he said.

Jackson said he had been trying for years to get uniforms for his students. Having them now helps inspire a sense of unity in the program. He said he tells the first-year students that they are a family, and family members help other family members. He said each level of students has group chats where they talk about their welding experiences.

When the program hosts exploratory visits by potential students, the older students guide them and keep everyone safe in the shop environment. Graduates, he said, look out for students in the program, often helping them find jobs.

Indicating a student with a stylized welding helmet, something akin to how goalies have customized helmets, Jackson said the older students tend to get state-of-the-art helmets as they progress.

"Sometimes they ask for them for Christmas," he said. "Some of them cost hundreds of dollars."

While they have to learn using the traditional, old-

(Page A5B Please)

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Best Headlines SECOND PLACE

Joe Dziublenski

His Connection to Bridges;
Eating Cheesesteaks with Elvis;
Grapes of Wrath



His Connection to Bridges Spans a Lifetime

Court House's Bill Campbell
Once Had a Peak Experience
on the Brooklyn Bridge

By Shay Roddy

Standing on a cable, nearing the top of one of the towers of the Brooklyn Bridge, Bill Campbell was in blissful ignorance of the commotion he had caused a couple hundred feet below.

Even the helicopter circling above wasn't enough to alert Campbell to the fact that he was the reason four of the bridge's six lanes were closed, a Coast Guard boat was deployed and EMTs were rushed to the scene.

He was focused on the breathtaking sights of Lower Manhattan - which he photographed with a small, inexpensive camera while he hung off the side of the bridge's massive suspension cables - and the profound connection he felt with the world's first steel-wire suspension bridge, which he had studied and long admired as one of the wonders of 19th century engineering.

The year was 1997, and Campbell was not an iron worker. He was a civilian who had surprised himself by somewhat easily obtaining a permit to make an authorized bridge climb.

Police and other authorities who rushed to the scene for a call about a possible jumper were perhaps just as surprised that the person they were called about, Campbell, had the city's permission to be on the cables between the bridge's two iconic Gothic Revival stone towers that loom 275 feet above the East River.

In fact, he was having the time of his life. In an experience few other civilians have ever shared and that none will likely replicate in today's world,



In 1997, bridge enthusiast Bill Campbell, a Court House resident, convinced New York City to give him a permit to climb to the top of the Brooklyn Bridge.

Campbell, of Court House, said he felt "the realization of a dream." forever, Sept. 11, 2001.

It's a dream he was able to relive one other time, on the Manhattan Bridge a year later, in 1998, a few years before the world and security changed

A Bridge Man in a Bridge County
Campbell, who has lived in Cape May County for 21 years, said he has been drawn to bridges

SCAN FOR
A YouTube video of the old drawbridge going into North Wildwood in summer 1987 and more photos

SUBSCRIBER EXCLUSIVE

since he was very young. In a recent interview with the Herald, he said he moved to the county because of a connection he felt to the boardwalk, the amusements, the history and (of course) the many bridges.

He has the plate at home from the old Grassy Sound train bridge, which still stands in fragmented portions in the Intracoastal Waterway off West Wildwood, along with the rusted-out abandoned crane that had once been commissioned to remove it.

Some of Campbell's earliest and fondest memories are of smelling the salt air while crossing the old wooden bridge into North Wildwood as a kid, entering town by car for a family vacation.

"You could literally see the beams in front of you, from cars that just crossed over them, bouncing back into place," Campbell, 52, recalled. "We held our breath, but we knew we were there, and it was so exciting."

Others share Campbell's nostalgia for the quirky and dated - but memorable - bridges that carried shoregoers on the final leg of their road trip to paradise. A video posted to YouTube from inside a car crossing that North Wildwood drawbridge,

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Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Coverage of Election/Politics SECOND PLACE

Vince Conti
Christopher South

Middle Township;
Stone Harbor; County

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www.CapeMayCountyHerald.com

November 1 2023

Stone Harbor Council Candidates Tackle Borough Issues at Q&A

By Vince Conti

The Stone Harbor Property Owners Association hosted a virtual forum Wednesday, Oct. 25, so borough residents could hear from candidates for the town's governing body.

Two seats on the council are up for election; two incumbents and a challenger are running for the posts. The incumbents are Reese Moore and Robin Casper; the newcomer is Tim Carney, a member of the borough's Zoning Board, who is running for council for the first time.

Only Carney and Moore were present for the virtual Q&A. Property Owners Association President Richard Fuchs said, "Robin Casper was unable to join us," giving no specific reason for her absence. The three candidates ran against each other in the Republican primary, where Carney and Casper won the party endorsements. Moore is not on the ballot and is asking for write-in votes.

In Stone Harbor, the majority of property owners are not permanent residents. In the 2020 elections the number of registered voters in the borough stood at 676, with 80% of those voters casting a ballot.

The majority of property association membership is made up of homeowners who are not eligible to vote.

With several individuals sharing the role of moderator for the Q&A, the candidates were asked to respond to a series of questions proposed by property owners, who submitted their questions in advance.

The questions were grouped into categories that included budget, sustainability, the wisdom of a beach utility, zoning, with emphasis on lot grading and side-yard setbacks, asset sales, offshore wind, marina development and tensions in borough hall.

Tim Carney

Carney was the top vote-getter in the Republican primary, besting both incumbents. He was not familiar with the details involved in some of the questions, but the thrust of his comments had certain consistent themes.

His overall message was that the council as currently constituted is not managing the borough's business well. "We need to do better" was a phrase he used frequently. He called for better leadership, saying managing the borough's affairs is more "chess than checkers," presumably meaning a need exists to think through the implications of actions several moves into the future.

Carney cited the rollout of the new parking scheme as an example of a good idea gone awry because he said it was not managed properly.

He called attention to the loss of Community Rating System points caused by the expiration of Superstorm Sandy era points that could have been anticipated. He was incorrect in his use of the CRS numbers when he said the borough went from a level 2 to a level 7. It actually went from a 5 to a 7. In doing so, it lost 10% of the discount property owners had taken advantage of prior to the change. It was an example of the council reacting to a crisis rather than anticipating it, Carney said.

Another area he cited was the long involvement and expense involved in the 93rd Street pump station project, which grew out of control, moving from a \$3 million project to a \$20 million project before being terminated with never a shovel in the ground.

On budgets, Carney said the borough needs to work to eliminate debt and better manage spending. He cited the number of lawsuits that are "accumulating" in borough hall involving personal and zoning issues.

On the potential use of a beach utility, Carney said he lacked an understanding of how such a utility works.

It is not a tax on property owners, but rather a way to remove expenses from the backs of property taxpayers. Such utilities are used effectively in Cape May and Anson. They are user fees funded largely from the sale of beach tags. In Cape May a portion of the occupancy tax revenue is also diverted to the beach utility.

The occupancy tax, especially on the number of short-term rentals in the island resort communities, has become a major source of revenue in a town like Cape May. It has not been publicly debated by the Stone Harbor council as a potential alternative source of revenue.

The concept of a stormwater utility is totally different, and Carney said he was not familiar with that as well. It would be a fee levied on property owners largely based on the runoff potential of their property. It sets up a dedicated fund for flood mitigation and stormwater management projects and even allows separate capital financing. He said it sounded like a tax, and it was labeled the "rain tax" when it passed the Legislature in Trenton.

The lot grading and side-yard setback ordinances are hot topics in the borough. Carney touched on both. He expressed frustration with ordinances that are enacted in need of change almost immediately.

He criticized the council for too easily disregarding the work of the Planning Board only to have the council's rewrite of the setback ordinance produce public opposition. He said the root of the problem is the need to better manage growth.

Carney said he was against selling borough assets to help reduce debt. He said he was against giving second homeowners the vote. In his list of things he opposed, he also placed offshore wind projects.

He said the turmoil in borough hall, referencing the conspicuous tension between the mayor and some members of council, saddened him. As a new guy on council, he hopes he can help bridge the gap. He added that he believed in constant dialogue with the borough's residents and property owners.

Reese Moore

For Moore, the task was how to distinguish his own contributions while not tarnishing the reputation of the council he has been a part of.

He did not disagree that greater budget discipline would be welcome, but he does not have a voting record that shows him as an outlier on council votes. He and the

votes but had no suggestions for specific services that might benefit from such an arrangement.

On the CRS rating issue he chose not to discuss the task force the council established to win back its earlier rating of a level 5. He did take a position that the Flood Mitigation Plan was flawed, with the project for a large 93rd Street pump station "ill-conceived."

Moore said he had played a role in establishing a multifaceted group that is grappling with stormwater issues and a new design that may include some smaller pump stations.

He also took issue with comments that the recent Mott MacDonald beach study has not had any of its recommendations acted upon. He said the study is incomplete and argued for peer review of the study to identify intermediate and long-term objectives.

Moore said any alterations to the 127th Street groin represent a project too expensive for the borough to contemplate. He put the expense at \$80 million.

On the question of the borough's use of utilities, Moore said Stone Harbor was moving ahead with a stormwater utility and would seek proposals soon.

He said less about a beach utility and argued that beach tag prices in most neighboring communities are rising to meet the level established by Stone Harbor last year.

On the issues of the zoning ordinances, Moore said he favors engaging a planning professional to look at the array of ordinances for consistency and their ability to achieve stated goals.

Moore was not supportive of the potential for selling borough assets and said emphatically that the plan to move the public works operation off the island was dead.

He joined Carney in criticizing the state's offshore wind initiative. Like Carney, Moore did not offer any insights into the dangers of climate change for the borough or discuss what alternative energy proposals he would support.

He said he would strongly favor giving second homeowners the vote. "Yes, yes, yes" was his response to the question. He was careful to acknowledge that this would have to be a task tackled in Trenton, since it was beyond the power of the municipal council.

Asked about the turmoil in borough hall, Moore said he was dismayed at the tensions between the council and the mayor. The lack of Robin Casper's attendance at the event showed here since Casper was the sole vote against the censure of the mayor and a supporter of Mayor Judith Davies-Dunhour's suggestions for more closed session discussions prior to major decisions.

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Public Service FIRST PLACE

Shay Roddy

Upper Township School Board Controversy



Coyotes Are Everywhere in NJ, Even on Your Street

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH

TOWN BANK – A Lower Township resident reached out to the Herald recently, expressing concern over the presence of coyotes in his neighborhood.

Edward Myers, of Town Bank, said he saw a large coyote walking down Cliffside Road in the middle of the afternoon and became concerned. Myers, 80, said he is particularly concerned for his wife and their Yorkshire terrier when they are out for walks in the neighborhood. He said he is worried about any small pets and small children in the neighborhood, who might fall prey to "packs of coyotes."

A July 8, 2021, New Jersey Conservation Foundation article titled, "Co-existing with wily coyotes," quoted Christian Crosby, a Ph.D candidate in the Rutgers University Department of Ecology. In the article, it says coyotes are not pack animals, and their social unit consists of a mated pair, their pups, and perhaps a teenager offspring from the previous year's litter.

This contradicts a claim made by a Lower Township resident in November 2021, who told Lower Township Council that a "den of over 70 coyotes right behind Channel Apartments" has been found. A den normally refers to the place where wild animals live, whereas a pack refers to a social group.

The Herald reached Crosby Jan. 17 and asked him about the claim that there was such a large pack of coyotes in one place in Lower Township.

"Generally, coyotes don't pack up. They are like wolves in some relationships, but a pack of 70 would be unheard of," Crosby said.

Crosby, who is still working on a Ph.D in ecology and evolution, was out collecting cameras along the coast when he spoke to the Herald. He said nothing he had read or seen would indicate a pack of 70 coyotes was possible.

"Even wolves top out at about 20. For 70, the [food] resources would be immense," Crosby said.

Coyotes, he said, move around in solitude and generally hunt in solitude. He said a coyote social unit would be as mated, but perhaps with a couple of young males. He said that if a mated pair had daughters, they would be the mated couple.

Myers said he was told the State of New Jersey trans-

ported coyotes into Cape May County; however, the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife website addresses this, saying, "Contrary to public opinion, Fish and Wildlife has never imported coyotes at any time in the past, although there is evidence that private citizens throughout the state have done so prior to 1950."

Crosby said there are a lot of rumors that circulate about coyotes, and they tend not to be logical. He said he heard they were introduced to take care of a rodent problem, but he has talked to biologists at the Fish and Wildlife office, and they have no record it ever happened.

The rumor that the state introduced larger coyotes to chase off smaller coyotes is also not logical. Crosby said, in general, coyotes are

wide-ranging. The history of the eastern coyote indicates they traveled from the west to the east, where they interbred with both grey wolves and domestic dogs.

Crosby said coyotes generally spread out and that as males grow, they tend to be kicked out of the range area of the parents. He said that helps to prevent inbreeding, but as a result, males can wander dozens or even hundreds of miles from where they were born.

A Rutgers Cooperative Extension bulletin, co-authored by Crosby, says that the first documented sighting of a coyote in New Jersey was in 1939 in Hunterdon County, and the first verified report occurred in 1948 in Cape May County. The bulletin says coyotes have been reported in 453 of New Jersey's 566 municipalities, and have been reported in all 21 counties, covering 96% of New Jersey's land area.

"That report is from 2012, so it's undoubtedly 100% by now," Crosby said.

Crosby said in a place such as Cape May County, coyotes tend to sequester until there is less activity, such as in the winter months, but they will go out when they need to.

He said he believes the number of coyotes is rather consistent in Cape May County, including on the barrier islands. He said as the coyote population increases, they are more comfortable in expanding their territory, so coyotes are likely to



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Upper Board Responds to Media Coverage About Former Superintendent's Severance Package



Public comment during the Upper Township Board of Education meeting Jan. 23 was, at times, heated, with some speakers critical of a separation agreement the board recently entered with former Superintendent Vincent Palmieri Jr.

Attorney for School Board Said Palmieri Was Entitled to Large Payout Under Contract

By SHAY RODDY

PETERSBURG – In a school board meeting, in front of a standing room-only crowd, an attorney representing the Upper Township Board of Education responded to recent media coverage of a \$300,000 severance agreement the board entered when arranging to remove the superintendent mid-school year.

The attorney, Frank P. Cavallo Jr., read a statement prior to the public comment portion of the Jan. 23 meeting, offering the board's first explanation of the agreement, which has had the community stirring.

"The Board of Education is aware of a recent headline regarding the district's superintendent of schools, Mr. (Vincent) Palmieri, and a separation agreement with the Board of Education. The provisions of the separation agreement, including the payment amount, reflect a negotiated settlement for a 20-year employee who accrued tenure in the principal position and was, separately, entitled to receive significant monetary compensation under New Jersey law," said Cavallo.

On page 11 of the five-year contract Palmieri entered with the board of education in 2018, which was to expire at the end of June, a preexisting tenure rights clause entitles him to become principal again if the board does not choose to renew him as superintendent.

Had Palmieri chosen to exercise his tenure right, he could have kicked off a domino effect that would send school

administrators one rung down the ladder, starting with the current principal and continuing until the school administrator with the least seniority was out of a job, a source with knowledge of union education contracts in New Jersey explained to the Herald.

"Palmieri was arguably entitled to a greater amount of money than the amount he received through the separation agreement. As a tenured employee (principal), Mr. Palmieri had legal claims to a position in the district, in the event his contract as superintendent was not renewed," Mr. Palmieri, as part of the separation agreement, gave up those rights," Cavallo added.

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Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

**Special Subject
Writing
FIRST PLACE**

Shay Roddy

**Ocean City Winery Faces
Resistance from Neighbors,
Township**



Grapes of Wrath: Couple Get Outlet for Their Wine but Battle Neighbors Over Their Vineyard

By Shay Roddy



Robin and Mike Halpern in the backyard of a property they recently purchased in Somers Point. The detached garage behind them is where they plan to open an outlet to sell the wine they soon hope to be producing at their Marmora property. Photo Credit: Shay Roddy

SOMERS POINT - A husband and wife team who hoped to open a winery at a former Christmas tree farm, a site tucked into a residential neighborhood in Marmora, now plans to market their products in Somers Point.

While Mike and Robin Halpern will continue to grow and harvest grapes and plan to make wine on the 5-acre protected farmland they live on in Marmora, they agreed as part of a site plan approved by the county's agriculture board not to have any tastings, sales or other events involving consumption on the property.

Despite that agreement, neighbors of the Halperns are continuing to oppose the designation of the couple's property as protected farmland, among other issues cited, and have filed an appeal with the state.

To sell their wine, the Halperns purchased a home on the corner of Bay and Delaware avenues in Somers Point. They closed on that property Oct. 27 and will convert part of it into an outlet for their business, the Ocean City Winery.

The 1905 Somers Point home is in the lively downtown, which Mike Halpern likes to refer to as the Beer-muda Triangle, a reference he said one of his new neighbors coined based on the layout of

the streets and the many well-established bars in the neighborhood. The Halperns will count other historic Somers Point watering holes as neighbors, including the Anchorage Tavern, Gregory's Bar, Josie Kelly's Public House and Charlie's.

The house the Halperns purchased, which looks across the street and onto the bay, will be primarily used as an Airbnb, they said, adding they plan to divide the backyard, converting a detached garage and part of the yard into the outlet for their winery.

The home was previously used as a bakery and, more recently, a catering business was run out of its kitchen. It borders other residential properties on a street with a mix of businesses and homes.

In an interview with the Herald, Mike and Robin Halpern said they presented their plan to Somers

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SCAN FOR

Designs of the planned Somers Point outlet and copies of the neighbors' and Upper Township's appeal and the Halperns' response



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Analucic

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Coverage of Election/Politics FIRST PLACE

Christopher South
Shay Roddy

Wildwood Election

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CAPE MAY COUNTY
HERALD

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Wildwood Commission Candidates Make Their Cases

 Ernie Troiano Jr.	 R. Todd Kieninger	 Krista Fitzsimons	 Phil Swetsky	 Gary DeMarzo	 Edward Harshaw	 Rocco Di Silvestro
 Timothy Blute	 Pete Byron	 Christopher Hines	 George Schwab	 Edward Tito Arroyo	 Jeanne L. Kilian	 Steve Mikulski

By Christopher South

WILDWOOD - The voters of Wildwood are getting the choice of something old, something new and more, with a field of 14 candidates for the three city commissioner seats.

The candidates for the four-year terms include the current board of commissioners and former Mayor Pete Byron, who resigned Sept. 21. Byron is running with Christopher Hines, a lifelong resident who works as a paraprofessional at Glenwood Elementary School.

Commissioner Steve Mikulski is a business owner who described himself as the only full-time commissioner. He has as a running mate former commissioner and Mayor Ernie Troiano Jr., who is also a lifelong resident and business owner.

Krista Fitzsimons is acting mayor, formerly the deputy mayor, and was the highest vote-getter in the 2020 election. She is the director of the Cape May County campus of Atlantic Cape Community College. Joining Fitzsimons are Wildwood School Board President R. Todd Kieninger, who has his own engineering company and owns a bed and breakfast, and Planning Board Vice-Chair Phil Swetsky, who owns CPS Marine & Mobile Shrink Wrap Service.

Former Wildwood police officer and commissioner Gary DeMarzo is running with Edward Harshaw, another former commissioner, and Rocco Di Silvestro. DeMarzo is also a former Wildwood mayor. He currently serves as the Upper Township administrator. Harshaw is a retired educator. Di Silvestro is a retired Wildwood deputy police chief.

A third slate of candidates consists of George Schwab, who owns his own food distribution business, Edward Tito Arroyo and Jeanne L. Kilian, running as "Residents for Wildwood."

Timothy J. Blute is running as a lone candidate under the slogan "A Better Wildwood."

Mikulski
Mikulski said his term as commissioner brought him a lot of experience. Covid taught him the importance of fast, decisive action and understanding that Wildwood has a tourist economy, but that the city first belongs to the people who live there. He said he learned to make decisions with the larger community in mind and as a commissioner demonstrated a go-to personality, conforming to the needs of the constituent, as opposed to working 9 to 4:30, Monday through Friday.

Mikulski highlighted his accomplishments as commissioner, saying he had oversight of four

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Environmental Writing FIRST PLACE

Collin Hall

New Butterfly Tracker Made in Cape May Brings Hope for a Monarch Recovery

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New Butterfly Tracker Made in Cape May Brings Hope for a Monarch Recovery



A monarch is held still and is tagged with a new cellular tracker that is applied using fake eyelash adhesive. The new tags, one of which can be seen on this monarch's back, will help researchers learn more about monarch migration and will hopefully provide new data that can be used to dial back drastic population declines that result from habitat loss and climate change. *Photo Credit: Collin Hall*

By Collin Hall

CAPE MAY - 2023 has been a revelatory year in the study of the migratory monarch, a subspecies of the monarch butterfly that is an October celebrity in Cape May but whose population has declined significantly over the past 20 years.

A new cellular tracking device, designed and manufactured by Cellular Tracking Technologies of Cape May County, gives local researchers hope that the human-caused drop-off in migratory populations can be stopped, and eventually reversed.

The data collected through new tags on the butterflies will help answer questions unanswerable with the old paper tags, which have been used locally by New Jersey Audubon for decades. What exact

habitats are monarchs using the majority of the time? How long are they staying in stopover spots like Cape May? Are they here a day? Two days? And how long does each leg of the migratory journey take?

Brett Ewald, head of the Cape May Bird Observatory, a local group that runs the oldest study of migratory insects in the world, said that answers to these questions will help naturalists understand how to help monarch populations grow.

"Humans are among the biggest causes of wildlife decline in general, so humans have to be the main source of recovery. It won't happen without us," he told the Herald.

High-Tech Butterflies Courtesy of a Rice-Sized Tracker

A crowd of over 30 people showed up to a tagging event at the Wetlands Institute in Stone Harbor on a Wednesday in early October to get a glimpse of the new cellular tracker tags in action. Participants, including the creators of the new tech, were giddy with disbelief as monarchs were awakened from a cold-induced sleep, tagged by the careful hand of a nature educator and released fluttering back to the wild.

Mark Garland, director emeritus of the Monarch Monitoring Project, sat at a plastic pop-up table with a small cooler in front of him. He pulled thin envelopes from the blue Igloo cooler, each envelope containing a gently folded monarch. Once outside the cooler, each monarch began to wake up and sat calmly in Garland's hand.

"We are simulating night in the cooler - at night they become still," he told the eager crowd. He held a small makeup applicator in his hand; the new cellular tags are affixed to a butterfly's back with a strong, but skin-safe adhesive designed to apply fake eyelashes to a human eyelid. Once the tag was affixed, Garland held up his hand, and the monarch flew free.

Onlookers grabbed their phones as each insect flew into the cool blue sky over the wetlands. Project Monarch, a mobile app developed alongside the tags, allows folks to scan a 100- to 150-meter range for any tagged butterflies. Sure enough, the freshly tagged and released butterflies showed up on everyone's app. App users can see the tag name, when the monarch was originally tagged, and how far it has flown from the tagging location.

The new app "crowdsources" the tracking of migratory monarchs, said Casey Halverson, the chief operating officer of Cellular Tracking Technologies. With enough data points, researchers can more accurately map out a butterfly's journey from the time it is tagged to the time it dies.

Project Monarch, a partnership between the Cape May Point Science Center and CTT, is not technically affiliated with the Monarch Monitoring Project, but they work together closely. The Monitoring Project does not yet tag butterflies with the new cellular trackers; fall 2023 was a "proof of concept" time for the tags. It was a miracle that they were ready in time for the monarch season at all, Halverson told the Herald.

Paper tags - small stickers developed by the University of Kansas in the 1990s - have been the norm for decades. If a butterfly made it to Mexico and a tag was found on the ground or on a monarch's wing, researchers could know that a Cape May monarch made the journey safe and sound. But the journey itself remained a mystery.

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2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Investigative Reporting FIRST PLACE

Shay Roddy

Margaret Mace Superintendent; Bullying Accusation 'Unsubstantiated'

CAPE MAY COUNTY HERALD
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Desiderio, Hayes Lead County Commissioners

New Director Vows Closer Ties to Municipalities
By AL CAMPBELL

CREST HAVEN - A new era began Jan. 5 when the Cape May County Board of County Commissioners reorganized. The top posts, director and vice-director, changed to Leonard C. Desiderio and E. Marie Hayes.

Sitting in the front row with the public, for the first time in over three decades, was Gerald Thornton, who chose not to seek reelection in November 2022.

For the first time, newly elected Commissioner Andrew Bulakowski took his oath remotely due to his recovery from Covid. His oath was administered by Michael J. Donohue, Esquire, former New Jersey Superior Court judge and county Republican chairman.

Accompanied by her family, Hayes took her oath from Assemblyman Erik K. Simonsen (R-1st). She and Bulakowski were running mates in the November election.

After the board was seated, the formal election of the director and vice-director took place. Desiderio, accompanied by his wife, daughter, and mother, was also sworn in by Donohue.

Propose Closer Ties
Desiderio proposed that board members "get closer with municipal and local elected officials." He offered quarterly meetings to learn the concerns of those officials because "their problems are our problems," he said.

Desiderio cited the recurring summer juvenile problems in seashore towns as an example where state edicts hindered police.

To mayors, he said, "Don't be surprised if you look out and see a county commissioner attending a meeting. They're there to listen to your concerns."

"We are a \$7 billion (with a B) economic engine. We sent \$7 billion dollars to Trenton, and we get nothing back, very, very little back," he said. Then he noted Essex County, "They get more money back than we do."

He said working with District I legislators could help move needed legislation to correct the problems. All those legislators attended: Sen. Michael Testa, Assemblyman Antwan McClellan, who delivered the Benediction, and Assemblyman Simonson, who sang "God Bless America."

Read more reorganization stories

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Lower Township	pg A8
Middle Township	pg A12
Stone Harbor	pg A16
Upper Township	pg A6
Wildwood Crest	pg A4

Veterans Recognized
Desiderio also asked all veterans present to stand; the crowd applauded them.

Later in the meeting, a resolution was passed allowing those veterans to be awarded a Cape May County Military Service Medal. (A previous story detailed the requirements for those seeking that medal.)

Other Business
As is standard procedure at reorganization meetings, various assignments were formalized. These include the departments overseen by commissioners:

- Desiderio - Administration, Emergency Management, Public Works.
- Hayes - Public Safety, Consumer Affairs, Weights, and Measures.
- Jeffrey Pierson - Health and Human Services, Veterans Affairs.
- Will Morvey - Planning, Economic Development, and Information Technology.
- Bulakowski - Transportation, Facilities and Services, Parks and Recreation, and Zoo.

In addition, Hayes and Desiderio were appointed to the Board of School Estimate for the Atlantic Cape Community College.

They and Morvey were appointed to the Board of School Estimate for the County Technical/Special Services School District.

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The Herald Supports and Prays

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Margaret Mace Superintendent; Bullying Accusation 'Unsubstantiated'

Juvenile Court Finds Incident Was Simple Assault
By SHAY RODDY

NORTH WILDWOOD - In a letter to a parent, who reported the alleged bullying of her eighth-grade daughter to Margaret Mace School administrators, the school's superintendent said the allegations were found to be "unsubstantiated."

Lizzy Paynter, the student, said in an interview with the Herald that a fellow student at the K-8 public school told her he would "blow her brains out" like her father did to himself. Paynter's father was a veteran who suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and eventually committed suicide, her mother said.

Melissa Hook, Paynter's mother, and Charlie Hook, her stepfather, pulled their daughter out of the school after the alleged incident to enroll her in Wildwood Catholic Academy, where they will pay tuition.

What they said they didn't expect was the school to deny that the incident ever took place.

In the letter, dated Dec. 22, which was obtained by the Herald, Superintendent Christopher Armstrong stated, "The investigation into this alleged act of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying has been completed, and, based on the findings of that investigation, the District did not find evidence that your child was the victim of the investigated act... Accordingly, the District finds that the allegations associated with this investigation are Unsubstantiated." (The word "unsubstantiated" was capitalized and underlined by the letter's author and not the Herald.)

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Feature Writing FIRST PLACE

Shay Roddy

His Connection to Bridges
Spans a Lifetime



His Connection to Bridges Spans a Lifetime

Court House's Bill Campbell
Once Had a Peak Experience
on the Brooklyn Bridge

By Shay Roddy

Standing on a cable, nearing the top of one of the towers of the Brooklyn Bridge, Bill Campbell was in blissful ignorance of the commotion he had caused a couple hundred feet below.

Even the helicopter circling above wasn't enough to alert Campbell to the fact that he was the reason four of the bridge's six lanes were closed, a Coast Guard boat was deployed and EMTs were rushed to the scene.

He was focused on the breathtaking sights of Lower Manhattan - which he photographed with a small, inexpensive camera while he hung off the side of the bridge's massive suspension cables - and the profound connection he felt with the world's first steel-wire suspension bridge, which he had studied and long admired as one of the wonders of 19th century engineering.

The year was 1997, and Campbell was not an iron worker. He was a civilian who had surprised himself by somewhat easily obtaining a permit to make an authorized bridge climb.

Police and other authorities who rushed to the scene for a call about a possible jumper were perhaps just as surprised that the person they were called about, Campbell, had the city's permission to be on the cables between the bridge's two iconic Gothic Revival stone towers that loom 275 feet above the East River.

In fact, he was having the time of his life. In an experience few other civilians have ever shared and that none will likely replicate in today's world,



In 1997, bridge enthusiast Bill Campbell, a Court House resident, convinced New York City to give him a permit to climb to the top of the Brooklyn Bridge.

Campbell, of Court House, said he felt "the realization of a dream."

It's a dream he was able to relive one other time, on the Manhattan Bridge a year later, in 1998, a few years before the world and security changed

forever, Sept. 11, 2001. **A Bridge Man in a Bridge County** Campbell, who has lived in Cape May County for 21 years, said he has been drawn to bridges

SCAN FOR
A YouTube video of the old drawbridge going into North Wildwood in summer 1987 and more photos
SUBSCRIBER EXCLUSIVE

since he was very young. In a recent interview with the Herald, he said he moved to the county because of a connection he felt to the boardwalk, the amusements, the history and (of course) the many bridges.

He has the plate at home from the old Grassy Sound train bridge, which still stands in fragmented portions in the Intracoastal Waterway off West Wildwood, along with the rusted-out abandoned crane that had once been commissioned to remove it.

Some of Campbell's earliest and fondest memories are of smelling the salt air while crossing the old wooden bridge into North Wildwood as a kid, entering town by car for a family vacation.

"You could literally see the beams in front of you, from cars that just crossed over them, bouncing back into place," Campbell, 52, recalled. "We held our breath, but we knew we were there, and it was so exciting."

Others share Campbell's nostalgia for the quirky and dated - but memorable - bridges that carried shoregoers on the final leg of their road trip to paradise. A video posted to YouTube from inside a car crossing that North Wildwood drawbridge,

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Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Ongoing/Extended
Coverage
FIRST PLACE

Vince Conti

Offshore Wind



Dead Whales Heat Up Controversy Over Offshore Wind

By VINCE CONTI

Seven dead whales have washed up on New Jersey and New York beaches since early December 2022. The appearance of so many whale fatalities in so short a time has added fuel to the existing controversy surrounding New Jersey's ambitions to push into offshore wind energy.

Numerous groups have pointed to the whales as casualties of ongoing preparatory work in advance of large-scale wind farm construction.

U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew (R-2nd) Jan. 13 called for an immediate halt to all offshore wind activity until an investigation can determine the cause of the whale deaths. He also said that he will seek congressional hearings into the matter.

Gov. Phil Murphy said he sees no reason to halt preparatory actions for wind farm construction. Murphy cited National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) analysis that states that

no humpback whale has been found to have died as a result of offshore wind activities.

Murphy also said federal studies show that whale deaths have been increasing since 2016, long before offshore wind initiatives began.

For the most part, those lining up on each side of the issue had already taken positions for or against the offshore wind initiative before the first of the recent wave of whale deaths occurred. For many, the deaths of the sea mammals have hardened positions already held.

In a press release, New Jersey Sierra Club, a nonprofit environmental group, has been a strong supporter of Murphy's aggressive push in wind farms as a major source of clean energy that will allow the state to meet its goals for eliminating dependence on fossil fuels. The Sierra Club calls attempts to link the whale deaths to offshore wind



Courtesy Marine Mammal Stranding Center's Facebook
A necropsy performed on a humpback whale that washed ashore in Brigantine Jan. 12 revealed that "the whale suffered blunt trauma injuries consistent with those from a vessel strike," according to a post on Marine Mammal Stranding Center's Facebook page Jan. 15.

Nearly 1,000 Plunge to Benefit Special Olympics



U.S. Navy Likely Source of Sonic Boom, Tremors

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH

RIO GRANDE — A spokesperson for the U.S. Navy confirmed Jan. 14 that it was likely responsible for a sonic boom and resulting tremors that started in south of Cape May County Jan. 13.

Patrick Gordon, public information officer for Naval Air Station Patuxent River, in Maryland, said it was likely one of the Navy's aircraft had gone supersonic about the time the shock was felt all around Cape May County and beyond.

He said the Navy was still "running it down," trying to identify the exact cause of the sonic boom.

There is a testing sector off the eastern coastline where the Navy tests aircraft capable of exceeding the speed of sound, which is what

(Photo AP Photo)

**PRIZE
TIME!!!**

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

**East Orange
Record Transcript**

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Feature Writing SECOND PLACE

Joe Ungaro

Chief Living Her
Childhood Dream

East Orange Orange Record - Transcript

THURSDAY, AUGUST 10, 2023

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VOL. 124 NO. 24 — \$1.00

Remembering Sheila Oliver



— See Page 3

Careers & Education



— See Pages 9-13

A 'Giant' donation!



— See Page 27

Chief living her childhood dream

By Joe Ungaro
Editor

EAST ORANGE — East Orange Police Chief Phyllis L. Bindi was very young when she first got involved with public safety.

Her grandmother and aunt both worked the Bingo games at St. Joseph's School on Telford Street. Bindi would ride her Big Wheel tricycle to the games with her grandmother and they would come to a corner manned by East Orange Police Officer Bobby Thompson, who Bindi described as big in stature and very popular among neighborhood residents who all stopped to say hello as he served as a crossing guard for the Bingo crowd.

"I would watch how the community interacted with him, older people, students, they adored him," Bindi said. "I begged him to let me help and he got me an orange safety belt and let me help."

Bindi has been in the news since she was awarded an honorary doctorate degree and Humanitarian Platinum Leadership Award from the Institute of Public Policy and Diplomacy and the Humanitarian Focus Foundation during a reception held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. The event celebrated the efforts of exceptional leaders who dedicate their lives to improving society and advocating for the United Nations agenda of promoting harmony, peace, and sustainable development. Bindi was one of only 40 individuals from around the world so honored.

The chief has been part of an historic drop in crime in East Orange, which has seen the overall crime rate drop by 80 percent since 2003. Violent crimes - murder, rape and robbery - have dropped 77 percent while property crimes - larceny, theft, burglary - have fallen 81 percent from 2003 to 2022.

A native of East Orange who was surrounded by grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins in the city's 3rd Ward, she remembers being about eight years old and at a friend's house when the friend's mother came home wearing a police uniform.

"I was like, 'You're a cop?' That she was female, I never knew you could be a female cop," Bindi said. "It became tangible for me."

Her parents moved to Belleville when she was 12 but Bindi spent summers in East Orange with her grandparents



East Orange Police Chief Phyllis L. Bindi is a native of East Orange who knew from an early age that she wanted to be a police officer.

because her parents were both working full time.

She graduated from Belleville High School, where she played softball, and took a job with the U.S. Postal Service but planned on becoming a police officer.

"I took a civil service test to become a police officer in Essex County," Bindi said. "Newark called me first but my parents told me to turn it down, they wanted me to go to East Orange. This is where my roots are."

East Orange did call and she was 20 years old when she went into the Police Academy.

Her hiring had been made possible by a Safe Neighborhoods grant from the Clinton Administration. The city got about 50 new police officers through this grant but it stipulated they needed to be beat cops walking the streets.

"I knew everybody on the South Side and they put me on the North Side," Bindi said. "That was my introduction to community policing."

For three years, Bindi walked a beat before she was moved into what was

called the "vice unit," at the time. The unit investigated drug cases, prostitution, and gambling that included dog fights, rooster fights and dice games. "It was extremely challenging, you put a lid on one thing and something else would rear its ugly head," she said. Bindi worked undercover details, buying drugs on the street. She called it a great learning experience that provided her with experience that she was able to put in her "tool box" for later on.

In 2002, she was promoted to sergeant and assigned to the Enhanced Community Safety Team which was responsible for suppressing street level crime with an emphasis on narcotics and gang-related activities.

"We were still experiencing a lot of violence; carjackings, robbery, homicide, those were the main things," she said. "We had over 50 people in the unit at one point in time. We would flood the streets with community policing, educating the citizens, letting them know what we were doing and that we needed their assistance."

See POLICE, Page 40

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

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Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Hanover Eagle and Regional Weekly News

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Environmental Writing SECOND PLACE

Mike Condon

For One Morris County Town, Fighting Floodwaters

For one Morris County town, fighting against floodwaters has been a decades-long endeavor But, Denville has taken groundbreaking steps to solve stormwater issues

By MIKE CONDON
STAFF WRITER

DENVILLE TWP. — If you have to get the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) involved, you know you have a serious flooding problem.

Denville did just that and a comprehensive plan of possible mitigation efforts has been prepared.

The lengthy study, prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, offers several mitigating possibilities from building floodwalls and levees to rerouting river flows.

And although Denville may call itself "The Hub of Morris County," it's also a flood-prone zone and severe flooding at that.

With the Rockaway River running right alongside Saint Clare's Hospital, severe storms bring massive floods, enveloping the entire lower parking lot, swallowing up cars and forming a near-lake in what used to be a paved lot.

A YouTube posted video of Broadway—the township's main shopping thoroughfare—shows feet of water following Hurricane Irene in 2011.

Many stores and businesses had to undergo massive repairs and renovations in order to even reopen. Some closed for good.

And Broadway fares little better. Some of the businesses along the typical American "downtown" thoroughfare had lines delineated on their walls, showing just how high flood waters had reached.

Just this past June, Township Administrator Steven Ward gave a comprehensive overview of the recent storms on the sixth consecutive day of rain. In the month of June, Denville averaged five inches of rain, and Ward reported that in a three-hour period on Monday evening, June 26, Denville collected four and a half inches of rain.

One of the bridges in town, the Diamond Spring Road bridge, estimated to weigh between 4,000 and 5,000 pounds, actually picked up and moved due to



Photo by Mike Condon

Roxbury Township resident Bill Demary mullied pulling his son's vehicle from the partially flooded parking lot at St. Clare's Hospital in Denville in 2021, following Hurricane Ida. Ultimately, he opted to leave it there, and let the floodwaters recede for another day. More severe storms have brought more severe flooding to towns all over the state, making stormwater management a top priority of the state Department of Environmental Protection.



TOM ANDES STEVEN WARD

way River, this project also begins to address the public's desire to increase trails along the river.

He also said the township installed three state-of-the-art "flap valves" on storm drains.

Flap valves are flow control valves placed at pipe outfalls discharging into rivers, swale ditches estuaries and ocean outfalls. The units prevent high tide events, river water floods and storm surge conditions from entering the drain system.

With a state grant, the township has also dredged the Rockaway River under



Several years ago, Denville purchased 11 homes in flood prone area, and replaced them with a park known now as "Denville Park Meadow." Then-state Assemblyman Anthony Bucco, R-Morris, stands beside a sign in 2014 which shows the level the water once reached after flooding.



"The Rockaway River valley and the river's floodplain are major geographic features of the Township of Denville. The downtown business district lies within the Rockaway River floodplain, with the Rockaway River bounding the north side of the downtown business district and Don Brook bounding the south side. The downtown business district is generally flat, with maximum slopes of less than 15 percent. Along the north and south sides of the Rockaway River Valley, slopes of greater than 35 percent occur locally. Elevations in the downtown business district range from about 500 to 520 feet above sea level," the comprehensive study states.

Key Recommendations of the Plan

• Focus on Most Vulnerable Structures: The primary plan entails nonstructural measures on 38 structures in three clusters, spotlighting the downtown business district with the gravest flood risks.

• Elevation and Floodproofing Measures: 30 structures (28 residential and two non-residential) will be elevated to a height one-foot above the one percent annual exceedance probability (AEP) water surface level. Moreover, eight structures (two residential and six non-residential) will undergo floodproofing, which includes protective measures such as flood shields, flood-proof sealants, skimmer pumps, and more. The exact measures for each structure will be finalized in the design phase.

• Stakeholder Involvement: Eligible homeowners and building owners will be contacted by USACE and the Township of Denville to discuss the nonstructural

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Editorial Comment FIRST PLACE

P.C. Robinson

Compromise is Still Censorship;
We Can Keep It

OPINION

"The greatest lesson we can learn from the past... is that freedom is at the core of every successful nation in the world."
Frederick Douglass

PAGE 4 Thursday, June 29, 2023

OBSERVER-TRIBUNE

observer-tribune.com

EDITORIAL

We can keep it

"All men are created equal."
Wise words worth remembering as we prepare to celebrate America's 247th birthday.
This country, after all, was birthed from the ideal of a social contract that all were created equal, and that no one stood above the law.
That is well-documented in The Declaration of Independence, as grievance upon grievance against King George III is ticked off as a reminder of royal arrogance.
"A Republic - if you can keep it."
That's what Ben Franklin said when asked about the new country's form of government.
That's something to remember as disconnected factions of extremists continue to bully those who fail to agree with them, allowing national political crusades to sully neighborhoods.
The key word here is national. Today's threats to our country are home-grown.
They include those demanding parental rights, rights that strip children of their right to grow and choose.
There is also the easy condemnation of differences, including the need to censor truths and weaponize education.
And let's not forget those who continue to believe they need to "take back America" when America has been here all along.
Yes, there will always be challenges. Yes, we will never all agree on everything - but that is what democracy is about - the willingness to choose, to agree to disagree and still be able to get along.
And, it is about preserving and protecting what is still the best country in the world.
Try to remember all of this as we head into this year's Fourth of July celebrations.
Rather than focus on toxic rhetoric meant to gin up negativity, why not just focus on ways to delete the divisiveness from our lives. Is it that difficult?
Go watch fireworks. Mendham Township hosts them at Mosle Field on Friday, June 30. The fun starts at 6:30 p.m. We advise you get there early for parking. There will be food trucks and entertainment before the Big Bang.

KUDOS



PRIDE CELEBRANTS
From left, Mendham Township Recreation Director David Guida, Recreation Committee members Rochelle Abraham and Trish O'Brien and Deputy Mayor Sara Neibart enjoy the third Annual Mendham Has Pride Move Event at Brookside Beach on Wednesday, June 21. Please see Page 6 and observer-tribune.com for more photos.

You, too, can organize a big event by the seat of your pants

Imagine this.
You're 24, in an unfamiliar city, standing outside a hotel in nice clothing 700 miles away from your hometown.
You're waiting for your ride to a ritzy club where an event you've helped organize, and gather money for, will take place. None of the people at this event are familiar to you beyond names replaced by the Sportsman Division. I don't know what made me love it so much, but I was intrigued by the opportunity given.
I got in contact with some of the retired drivers, and over time, we organized a reunion at the club, which was attached directly to the speedway. Thankfully, I

this Southern Belle, who lost her husband so horribly, was an outgoing and hilarious.
I prepared the last few parts of the event from the hotel room. It was going to be a get together of old friends, with a nice dinner and some small events. I threw on a formal outfit, and headed outside to wait in a light drizzle for Jen to take me to the club.
And then I got a message. "Call an Uber... I just fell down the stairs and may have broken my lower leg."
My first thought was, "Well..."
I shook my head, ordered my cabshare, and arrived at the speedway. I entered



COMMENTARY
TYLER BARTE
The writer is the new editor of *Observer-Tribune*. Contact him at tbarthe@observer-tribune.com or 609.398.3333, ext. 241.

are not many racing fans in northern New Jersey.
However, it was the more idea - the thought that a college kid could raise at one of the most famous tracks in the world and receive tips from Richard Petty in person - that resonated with me. It would have been a dream come true. Also, this series had been the predecessor to a series I spent hours watching on television when I was younger.
We had a fantastic Southern dinner of chicken and grits, talked about what we loved about the series, and while we had the location for six hours, we wrapped up after four. I had farewell to everyone, and headed downstairs to the lobby,

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Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Ocean City Sentinel

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Sports Writing Portfolio THIRD PLACE

David Nahan

Mustangs Top O.C. for S.J. Title;
Mustang Baseball: S.J. Champs;
Ousted OCHS Coaches Suing
For Defamation

SENTINEL SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 2023

S.J. Champs: Mustang baseball

Coach said his team was 'dangerous' come playoffs; Mainland boys pull off string of upsets, knock off top seeds on way to sectional title

By DAVID NAHAN
Sentinel staff

FRANKLINVILLE — After a 12-2 drubbing by Millville and sporting a sub-.500 record, Mainland Regional baseball coach Bill Kern was still searching for consistency late in the season but was convinced his team could be "dangerous" come playoff time.

He wasn't wrong. In 92-degree heat under Friday afternoon's sun in Franklinville, Mainland was behind 4-2 through the end of the fourth inning in the South Jersey Group III sectional final. But a big swing by Jack Haines proved Kern's point to Delosa Regional High School's team.

Haines' big hit — he was 3 for 4 with two doubles on the day — sent all three Mainland runners home and gave the Mustangs a 5-4 lead. After a Bryan Ferez single sent Haines across the plate, pitcher Cohen Cook and his teammates made sure the 6-4 margin held up.

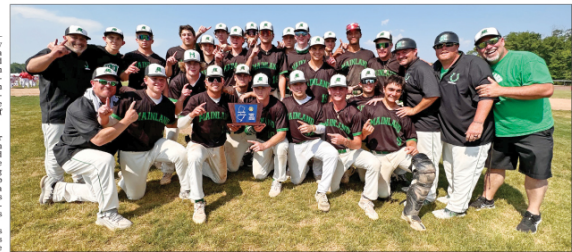
Steady at 200 with a 13-15 record, the No. 9 seed Mainland Mustangs defeated No. 2 seed Delosa (20-7) to become South Jersey champions, finishing an unlikely sectional run that included knocking off top seed Shawnee along the way.

Well, call it unlikely by an observer just looking at records and seedings. The Mustangs entered the sectional tournament with a 9-13 record and upset their way to the final, first beating No. 8 Cumberland (13-9) 4-1, then surprising No. 1 Shawnee (22-4) 3-1 and shutting out No. 4 Hammon (12-12) 3-0.

All we ever talk about in the playoffs for as long as I've been here is they are a series of one-game elimination tournaments," Kern said. "The seedings only matters as to where you're going, are you home or away, since you get on the field, you don't score runs based on your seed. All we've been saying is better than the team across from us for that seven innings on that day and they've responded every single time."

"We just came into this game with so much confidence," Haines said. "The teammates cheering you on from the dugout ... just having them behind me, having my back, means everything. You really can't do it without them."

Haines said he wasn't watching the fielder trying to chase down his hit. "I really wasn't," he said, laughing. "I just started running."



David Nahan/SENTINEL The Mainland Regional High School Mustang baseball team celebrates June 2 after beating Delosa Regional High School 6-4 to win the 2023 South Jersey Group III sectional championship. Below, head coach Bill Kern presents the trophy. PHOTO GALLERY ONLINE AT OCNJSENTINEL.COM



Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Feature Writing THIRD PLACE

Craig D. Schenck

Take That, Redcoats! Legend a Blast in Upper Twp.

OCEAN CITY SENTINEL



Craig D. Schenck/SENTINEL

Sandra Johnson of Kennett Square, Pa., and Maria Lemma of Brooklawn, portraying Rebecca Stillwell Willetts and Sarah Stillwell, fired a cannon Sunday afternoon at Beesley's Point Park while acting out a legend from the Revolutionary War. While the legend may not hold up to historical scrutiny, Upper Township honored modern-day women with Stillwell Sisters Awards.

Take that, Redcoats! Legend a blast in Upper Twp.

By CRAIG D. SCHENCK
Sentinel staff

BEESELEYS POINT — It was the shot heard 'round the world, echoed in such backwater places as Golden's Point, that set colonists on a collision course with their British masters in 1775, sparking the Revolutionary War. Legend holds that local sisters

Rebecca Stillwell Willetts and Sarah Stillwell played their part in the revolution when they repelled an attack at what is now Beesleys Point by firing a cannon at approaching longboats filled with soldiers intent on pillaging the village's stores.

Upper Township celebrated the folklore about the heroines' courageous act March 26 by pre-

sending the Spirit of Stillwell Sisters Awards to 15 women leaders from the community.

According to legend, Stillwell Willetts spotted a British sloop in Great Egg Harbor Bay off Golden's Point (now Beesleys Point). She and her sister raced to the cannon on the beach. They were alone since their father was away buying supplies and Capt. James

Willetts was off defending Philadelphia.

"Rebecca fired a round of cannon grapeshot towards the long boat and the British returned to their sloop and left the bay, its settlers and their homes unscathed," a marker at the site reads.

A group of re-enactors from the First Battalion of New Jersey

Volunteers, outfitted in appropriate colonial garb — civilians, militia members and the dreaded Redcoats — gathered on the beach and in longboats to act out the scene.

A marker at the site honors the sisters. The New Jersey Women's Heritage Trail uses historical

See Stillwell, page A6

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Editorial Comment THIRD PLACE

David Nahan

Board Put Issue to Rest and Tenure Should Matter in Superintendent Choice

A8

SENTINEL

WEDNESDAY, JULY 5, 2023

THE OCEAN CITY SENTINEL HAS BEEN WATCHING OVER THESE SHORES SINCE 1880

OPINION

THIS IS YOUR FORUM. SHARE YOUR VIEWS WITH THE COMMUNITY

OUR VIEW

Tenure should matter in superintendent choice

School district needs continuity, not revolving door of leadership

Ocean City Board of Education President Chris Halliday said a new superintendent of schools should be chosen near the start of the 2023-24 school year. That's only about two months away. We hope the board is getting more community involvement in the choice for the next leader of the district before deciding.

No matter who is chosen - and we hope internal candidates are given as much consideration as those from outside - potential tenure should be a factor in the board's decision.

The district needs continuity, something that has been desperately lacking.

In the course of four school years, the district will have five different superintendents.

Dr. Kathleen Taylor was in place for more than a decade before retiring at the end of the first COVID-impacted year. (Her predecessor, Dr. Donald Dearborn, had a similar long tenure in the position.)

The district hired Dr. Thomas Baruffi as interim while it searched for Dr. Taylor's replacement. The board hired Dr. Matthew Friedman last spring and he covered this past school year, but was searching for a new job about halfway into his tenure. He left last week and the board hired another interim, Dr. Scott McCartney, to cover July 1 through Dec. 31.

If Halliday's prediction holds true, the new superintendent, we expect, would begin Jan. 1, 2024.

To recap by school year: 2020-21: Taylor; 2021-22: Baruffi; 2022-23: Friedman; 2023-24 (first half): McCartney; (second half): Superintendent X.

That's a lot of change at the helm.

We don't believe the Ocean City School District has been rudderless since the departure of Taylor because there are so

many professionals from principals, to other administrators and teachers who have kept the ship on course for the most important reason: the students and their education.

We do believe it is hard to put forward and implement an overarching vision with short-timers, interim or otherwise. That keeps district employees unsettled. By the nature of the job, interims are not accountable for long-term progress.

We have mixed sentiments about the criticism that allows retired administrators to keep receiving their pensions while getting paid handsomely for interim work. It is double-dipping on an already stressed and grossly underfunded state pension system. The value, we assume, is that it keeps experienced administrators, who otherwise might not opt to extend their careers once they retire, in the pool to cover vacancies.

We also have mixed feelings about the choice of an acting superintendent from within the district instead of a push at the last school board meeting. We like the idea of a familiar face temporarily at the helm rather than an outsider, but the better argument was that the internal candidate suggested for the acting role already has a taxing job and making her cover two positions didn't make sense.

Regardless, the school board needs to choose a leader it can count on for an extended haul.

This is a very good school district, with abundant funding, community and parent support, and the coolest location right by the beach. There are students (and their parents) eager to fill nearly 200 School Choice slots.

There is no guarantee whomever the district chooses will stick around, but we hope and expect the board to choose a superintendent with the promise site or he will.

Rethinking e-bike limits

Ocean City Council was should be allowed because



ANOTHER VIEW

By Jay Watson

Science, history meet in Cape May Point

As real estate people often say, the three things that matter most about a property are location, location, location. And if you're an organization dedicated to helping birds and marine life, there's no better location in New Jersey than the tip of the Cape May peninsula.

That's why the future looks bright for the new Cape May Point Science Center, which just opened to the public in a Victorian-era building situated where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Delaware Bay.

"Avian and marine life are our two focuses," said Bob Mullock, president of the science center, located in an iconic red-roofed building most recently known as St. Mary-by-the-Sea, a retreat house for Catholic nuns. "This building is so blessed for its location."

Cape May is internationally famous as a hotspot for wildlife. Migrating species, including birds and monarch butterflies, funnel into the Cape during their fall migration, awaiting the right conditions to cross the Delaware Bay. The waters surrounding Cape May are filled with marine life, including whales and dolphins.

The Cape is also a significant Black history site, with the recently-opened Harriet Tubman Museum and places associated with the Underground Railroad. The Cape Mayighthouse served as a beacon for enslaved people escaping their captors by crossing the Delaware Bay in boats. The science center property - practically in the shadow of the lighthouse - is believed

about them." The center's research is guided by a Science Council made up of leading scientists. Of course, the Cape May Point Science Center also wants to engage the general public. On June 2, the center held its official grand opening, making tours available to visitors interested in the center's unique mix of science and local history.

"We have a great history in this building - it's an amazing building," said Mullock, who also helped establish the Harriet Tubman Museum. Inside the science center's welcome center, known as the community room, tour guides recount the building's rich history. The welcome area includes a wall filled with photos of birds, all taken within a mile of the center.

The building's former chapel has been repurposed as the center's exhibit room, filled with information about wildlife species found in and around Cape May, including monarch butterflies, dolphins, whales, sharks, and eagles. Each exhibit includes an advocacy project calling on visitors to take action to help protect the animals and the environment.

The science center's vision for the future is to continue to grow, both as a museum and a hub of scientific research. Mullock envisions offering retreats where members of educational and scientific communities can immerse themselves in classes and the surrounding environment.

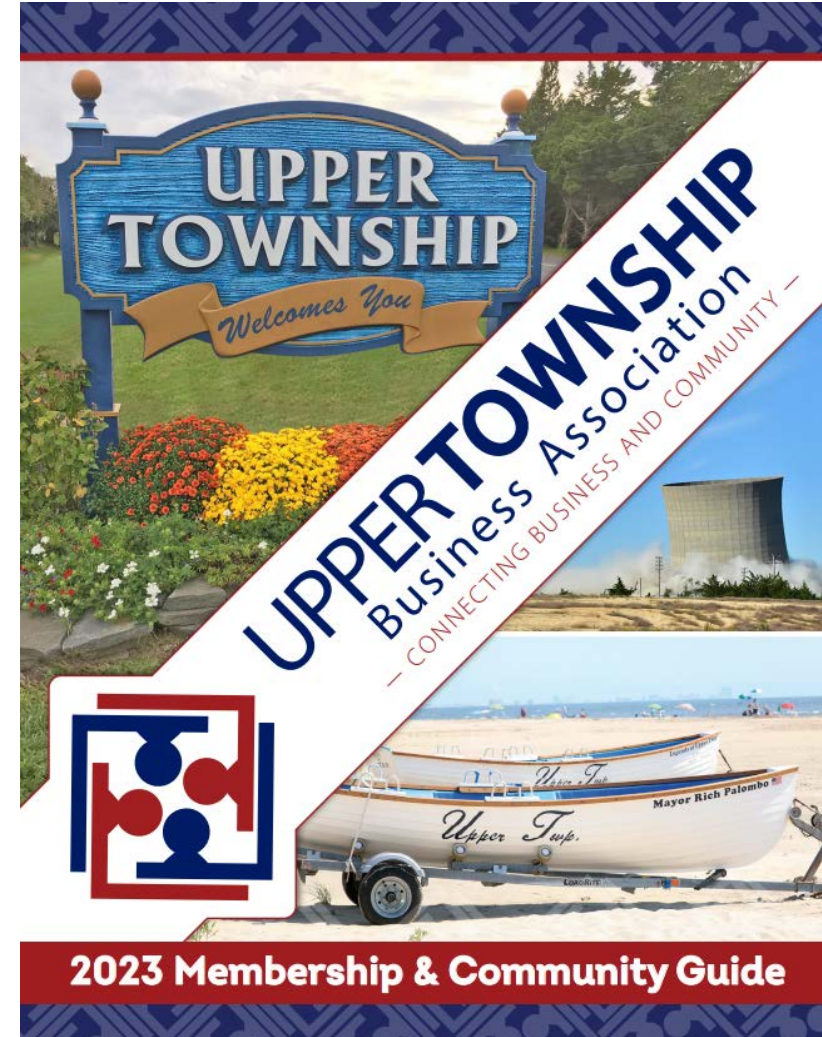
"I think we're going to see this become one of the most outstanding science centers on the

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Special Issue FIRST PLACE

David Nahan, Sam Hutchins,
Craig D. Schenck

Upper Township
Business Association
Community Guide



Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Critical Thinking FIRST PLACE

Richard Stanislaw
Reviewer

Maestro leads Pops; Atlantic City Ballet joins Ocean City Pops; Margovich, Pops Highlight

A12

SENTINEL

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2023

Margevich, Pops highlight 'Great American Songbook' Ocean City Pops also celebrates John Williams' prolific movie scores

By RICHARD STANISLAW
For the Sentinel

OCEAN CITY — The Ocean City Pops Orchestra last week presented a program called "Great American Songbook." The "book" doesn't actually exist. Instead, it is descriptive of songs mostly from the 20th Century that are characterized by memorable melodies, clever lyrics, and traditional performances — songs by such American iconic composers as Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Harold Arlen, Richard Rodgers, Duke Ellington, Jerome Kern and Victor Herbert, recorded by singers such as Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby or Tony Bennett.

On Wednesday night, Musical Director Vince Lee with soloist Emily Margevich proved why these songs are "great." Margevich was superb, giving personal new life to each of these standards with flawless diction, charming interpretation, and excellent vocal control.

"There's No Business Like Show Business" opened the evening, with Margevich starting to sing without so much as a note

for Margevich's "Meet Me in Dreamland," setting up a wonderful give-and-take freedom and even a kneeling "proposal." String bass (Laura Russ) introduced "Cheek to Cheek," leading to a dancing "Alexander's Ragtime Band." The audience would not let Margevich go even after "I'll Be Seeing You," so she encored "Show Off" from "The Drowsy Chaperone," complete with tap dancing and an extra curtain call.

On Sunday night, the Pops explored the wide variety of John Williams' film music; he composed over 75 scores. Each selection conjured up an image of a familiar film. Even though a reminder was not needed, Lee included film clips on the Music Pier screens interspersed with close-ups of the orchestra. The ensemble was enlarged to 42 musicians (usually 25 perform) and the sound was spectacular.

The large audience came prepared to enjoy this music they knew they would recognize. One youngster had a light saber, another guest brought his "Jurassic Park" Jeep and parked it in front of the Music Pier. Lee had to add the theme for that movie, a ponderous reminder of the dinosaurs.

Williams employs abundant brass and Lee turned them loose beginning with driving calls for "Superman" and the fanfare theme for the Seoul Olympics, a stunning opening to the second half of the concert. Tuba joined two trombones to give a solid underpinning to three trumpets. Brass powered the title music for "Star Wars" and triple-tongued through "The Last Jedi Rebellion." Trumpeter Andrew More-schi aptly handled the high and exposed tribute from "Lincoln."

Strings were in more of an accompaniment role than usual, occasionally interrupting the dominant brass with a sweet melody as in the "Raiders March" or a flight with "E.T." Violinist Luigi Mazzocchi carried the sensitive long phrases of "Shindler's List," reminiscent of Jewish tunes in its wide registers. "Fan and Away," a lesser-known score, started with Celtic rhythms and transfigured into a smooth air before the low strings scratched out a very busy and difficult theme leading to a "wow" ending.

Woodwinds and French horns responded to the low strings with

for Margevich's "Meet Me in Dreamland," setting up a wonderful give-and-take freedom and even a kneeling "proposal." String bass (Laura Russ) introduced "Cheek to Cheek," leading to a dancing "Alexander's Ragtime Band." The audience would not let Margevich go even after "I'll Be Seeing You," so she encored "Show Off" from "The Drowsy Chaperone," complete with tap dancing and an extra curtain call.

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Woodwinds and French horns responded to the low strings with

a romantic oboe melody for "Across the Stars" and full-voiced French horn section. Flute and oboe introduced "War Horse, Dartmoor." The brass were tacit for "Luke and Leia" as horn soloist Dan Wions joined the soft harp and winds for the gorgeous rendition.

After "March of the Evil Knights" as an encore, Lee acknowledged each of the sections of the orchestra to a long round of applause for their virtuosity on this demanding repertoire.

Only three Pops concerts remain in the 2023 season: Vince Lee and friend Eric Svejar on dueling pianos Sept. 6; Scottish pop singer Sheena Easton Sept. 9; and closing Sept. 16, with ballet music and guests from Atlantic City Ballet.

Richard Stanislaw

For the SENTINEL

Emily Margevich performs with the Ocean City Pops. Below, trumpeter Brian Kuszyk. Below left, Maestro Vince Lee with violinist Luigi Mazzocchi.



2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Roxbury Register

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Column Writing THIRD PLACE

Mike Condon

All Hail the Rumpy Riser; Well, At Least We Found a Use

OPINION

"When free discussion is denied, hardening of the arteries of democracy has set in, free institutions are but a lifeless form, and the death of the republic is at hand."
William Randolph Hearst (1863-1951)

PAGE 4 Thursday, September 7, 2023

ROXBURY REGISTER

roxburyregister.com

EDITORIAL

Crickets from Kean

On Monday, Aug. 21, Congressman Tom Kean Jr., R-7, held a roundtable discussion at Alstede Farms in Chester for a conversation about an ongoing debate over a Farm Bill.

According to a press release sent out after the event by Dan Scharfenberger, Kean's communications director, Mendham Borough Mayor Christine Serrano Glassner called the discussion "an important forum" that was attended by a diverse group of farmers, the New Jersey Farm Bureau, agriculture experts and local mayors. Like Kean, by the way, Glassner is a Republican.

Apparently, it wasn't important enough to share with the press, however. Our newspaper group wasn't notified in advance or invited to attend.

Contrast that with an event held just days later in Morristown by Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill, D-11. On Thursday, Aug. 24, Rep. Sherrill held a roundtable on a far more controversial topic, reproductive rights, at a Planned Parenthood facility. We were invited to attend for coverage and prepare our own story.

Locally, both Roxbury and Mount Arlington are in Kean's jurisdiction.

The episodes speak about attempts to control the message. And there is an irony here. The talk on a much more controversial topic, run by Democrats, was open to the press while the more run-of-the-mill governance discussion run by the Republican was closed to the press.

This certainly wasn't the first time Kean has held events in our part of the district without providing advance notice.

In early August, the Congressman joined the Lake Hopatcong Foundation, Lake Hopatcong Commission, Musconetcong Watershed Association, the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to discuss...

All hail the Rumpy Riser!

He's got 200 Instagram followers! That's not much you say. Selena Gomez, Kylie Jenner, Dwayne Johnson, Ariana Grande and Kim Kardashian have combined billions. Well, read on.

He's entertained the entertainers! We brought him to Coney Island with us. The "freak show" award swallowing-type were obsessed with seeing him. In fact, they had never seen his likes there before. Ever.

He's been to the Readington Balloon Fest. We've pictures of him in the foreground, with the colorful balloons rising everywhere behind him.

He visits WalMart. He's been to restaurants. He's got his own rain coat, and hat, and booties for when it's cold outside.

This is all common place stuff, who cares, you say. Well, he's a cat. He's our four year old "Slash" named, of course, after the Guns N Roses guitar player. We call him "The Nub," or "The Nubster."

But, his real since-birth condition defines him as a "Rumpy Riser."

You see, he has no tail. Just a nub. "He was bad, and we had to cut it off." I joke. We didn't. He was born that way.

He and his brother, Steven, or "Stevie" as we call him (we thought he was a girl at first, so my daughter named him after Stevie Nicks), came to us right at the start of the pandemic. They came as a pair. We drove way out into Pennsylvania to pick the brothers up, and I remember we paid \$40 each for them! A bargain compared to all the attention Slash has garnered.

A "Rumpy Riser" has a hump, or rump of a tail - either just cartilage or a few vertebrae. And that's opposed to a "Stumpy" or a "Stubby." Those, of course have a little bit more in the

Mike Condon
AS I SEE IT

The writer is the editor of The Citizen and The Roxbury Register, whose papers he can be reached at 202-765-2903, or 223 @ mcondon@roxburyregister.com

tail department. But now let's get to what I call him: The Traveler. He's a young man in a hurry! This guy likes to be on the move.

"Is that a cat?" we'll hear often, as he travels about, in his personal "kitty stroller" (yes, those exist!) He's an outdoorsman-though we don't let our boys roam free. He prefers car rides. When my daughter, Samantha and her fiancée, Liam, come down stairs, he's at their heels, ready for his "car ride."

And no place seems to be off limits! The grocery store? No problem! He's there. Headed to the restaurant? He's ready! When they go to Liam's house, he's the first one out the door. In fact, it's his "second home." He has his designated spots, and he careens through the door like he owns the place.

At home, he's antsy and nervous when the kids aren't there. He'll circle the living room and the dining room and kitchen nervously, wondering if they'll ever come back and take him for a ride again.

In the car, he's a cool customer. He's got nerves of steel, and is apparently not subject to motion sickness. Oh, and did I mention? This weird, tuxedo tabby of ours is also a "Zoomie."

You know, one of those strange kitties who will suddenly start tearing around the house, up and downstairs, from room to room with an indescribable, but definitely noticeable, burst of energy. He'll bolt down the stairs at mid-



Daughter Samantha holds her award-winning kitty named "Slash."

night, seemingly in mid-flight, reaching the kitchen in mere milliseconds. What's there, I'll wonder? What's the rush? Nothing. He's just ambitious!

I call Stevie a "Kitty's Kitty." I tell him he's distinguished enough- and even tempered enough- to represent his race!

His brother? Well, he's an odd one. Oh, and here's something more. He's one of those guys- and he's little, so he can do it- who likes to somehow stay one step ahead of you, and somehow intermingle with your legs as you're walking up the steps at night, in the dark.

I haven't tripped yet, but I surely wouldn't rule it out as a future occurrence!

So let's recap. He's a "Rumpy Riser." He's a "Zoomie." He's a damned near professional traveler. He's an oddball. He actually LIKES going to WalMart and the grocery store.

He has even been to an amusement park! Go figure.

He's unique. He's fun. I call him the "Little Bugger."

He's a handful. Oh, and he keeps his distance when he wants to. Sitting in the living room, he parks himself just out of my reach, preventing petting and belly thumping.

Sometimes, I just call him "No Tail." Keeps it simple. We'll keep him. He's surely not a typical tabby!

Oh, one more thing! How could I leave this out? Yep! he's got no tail, but Slash is now officially an award winning kitty! He won for "best cat" at the Salem, Mass., Halloween Pet Parade in October of 2022. And, we got the \$5,000 check that came with it. Well... ok, we got a basket full of kitty stuff he took home to share with his brothers!

As the day went on, he was tired of being asked for pictures, so he put his sunglasses on!

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Enterprise FIRST PLACE

Mike Condon

Remember the Pilot Truck Stop; Union Works Again; Roxbury's Economic Boom



Remember the Pilot truck stop application? Now, 2.5 million square feet of warehousing possible

By MIKE CONDON
EDITOR

ROXBURY TWP. - Some 20 years ago, Pilot proposed a truck stop for Howard Boulevard.

Just off of Exit 30 in Mount Arlington, the proposal drew fierce critics from both Roxbury and Mount Arlington, just at the mere possibility of thousands of vehicles per day invading the area.

Eventually, Pilot dropped the proposal and moved elsewhere.

Now, the shoe is on the proverbial other foot. It's Roxbury's Planning Board that has been hearing a proposal from Hariz Mountain Industries to construct some 2.5 million square feet of warehousing on the former 1,200 Hercules property.

The proposal calls for five warehouses, to be set on some 200 acres of the mostly wooded, vacant property.

Roxbury Township Councilman Robert DeFillippo, who also sits

on the Planning Board, said at Tuesday night's council meeting on Oct. 24 that if one pictures the property, where gunpowder was manufactured by the Hercules company for more than 100 years, as a bowl, the warehouses would be situated in the bottom of the bowl.

Both DeFillippo and Mayor Jim Rilee, who also sits on the Planning Board, explained the Planning Board has been reviewing a "general develop-

ment plan" for the area.

DeFillippo said he is pleased with the proposal and that he will be supporting it.

Roxbury Township Councilman Robert DeFillippo, who also sits

on the Planning Board, said at Tuesday night's council meeting on Oct. 24 that if one pictures the property, where gunpowder was manufactured by the Hercules company for more than 100 years, as a bowl, the warehouses would be situated in the bottom of the bowl.



JIM RILEE



ROBERT DEFILIPPO



BRIAN KINCAID



For more than 100 years, gunpowder and explosives were manufactured on the 1,200 acre Hercules tract in Kenil. Now, there's a Planning Board discussion to construct 2.5 million square feet of warehousing on some of the property.

PLEASE SEE WAREHOUSE, PAGE 2

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

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Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

The Bernardsville News

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

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Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Special Issue
THIRD PLACE

Phil Nardone

Football 2023

NJPA

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

News Writing FIRST PLACE


W. Jacob Perry

Trucks a Concern;
GOP Candidates Oppose;
Office Slump Cited

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Simoneau, Kouflie earn football honors • 11  Deputy police chief named in Bernards Twp. • 3 Sign up for daily email alerts at bernardsvillenews.com

ST. PADDY'S DAY FUN




Photo by Charlie Zavalick

Local families got into the spirit of St. Patrick's Day a bit early at the Bernardsville Public Library on Sunday, March 12, during a concert featuring the Banjo Rascals. Among the audience were Bernardsville residents Elizabeth Stryker, left, with her daughter, Julia, and Kristi Phillips and her son, Teddy. The free show was sponsored by The Friends of the Bernardsville Public Library.

BERNARDSVILLE BOROUGH COUNCIL

B'ville fills top post

Long Hill Township's administrator is selected

BERNARDSVILLE — Nancy Malool, a former Scotch Plains mayor who has served as administrator in nearby Long Hill Township for the past five years, was named the borough's new administrator Monday night, March 13.

Malool was unanimously appointed to the town's top administrative post by the Borough Council. Her starting date will be Monday, April 17 at an annual salary of \$175,000, according to Mayor Mary Jane Canuse.

She'll be taking over for current Borough Administrator Tom Czerniecki, who is retiring after having served in the post since January 2021.

"I'm excited about the opportunities that await in Bernardsville," she said in an emailed statement to this newspaper. "I've heard only very positive comments about the borough."

Malool has served as administrator in Long Hill Township since 2018. She will be working with the governing body and staff to continue to improve upon the qualities that make Bernardsville a wonderful community."

PLEASE SEE B'VILLE, PAGE 6

CAMPAIGN 2023: BERNARDS TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

GOP candidates oppose manufacturing plan

Political statement spurs wife's recusal from board reviewing controversial application

By W. JACOB PERRY
STAFF WRITER

BERNARDS TWP. — A Republican duo running for the Township Committee has issued a statement opposing a proposed "light manufacturing" plant on Allen Road but in doing so, it complicated the Board of Adjustment's review of the proposal.

One of the GOP candidates, Gary Baumann, who is running with Tyler Seville, is the husband of Lisamarie Baumann, who serves on the Board of Adjustment and has been participating in the project review.

As a regular member of the seven-member board, Lisamarie Baumann was to have a vote in deciding whether to approve or deny a site plan and variances for

raised a question of whether there was an actual or perceived conflict of interest for a board member to vote on a proposal when their spouse is a candidate for local office and running on a platform opposing that proposal.

Email messages sent by this newspaper in the following days to Gary Baumann, Seville, the Bernards Township Republican Municipal Committee and GOP Chairman Scott Mitzner seeking comment were not returned.

The Baumann family does not appear to have a listed phone number.

A message sent by this newspaper to Board of Adjustment Secretary Cynthia Kiefer on Sunday night, March 12, asking if Baumann had recused herself, was referred the next morning to Board Attorney Steven R. Warner.

Warner said in an email response on Monday afternoon, March 13, that "Board member Baumann addressed the issue with me as board attorney as soon as the candidates' statements were issued and, in consultation with me as board attorney, she determined

PLEASE SEE GOP, PAGE 6

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

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Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

**The Citizen of
Morris County**

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Sports Writing Portfolio SECOND PLACE

Joe Hoffmann

Thanks Coach; Knolls Makes Regan Day a Win; Regan: Sees 'Age Discrimination'

SPORTS

Morris Hills' Mulroony sisters named All-Stars - 11

Contact Phil Nordone at pnordone@morrisjerryhills.com

THE CITIZEN AND THE BUGLE EDITION

Wednesday, June 21, 2023 PAGE 9

'Thanks, Coach...'

Gerry Gallagher honored with football award

By JOE HOFFMANN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

ROCKAWAY - Gerry Gallagher was disappointed at first. Then he grew angry.

Then, he'd had enough. So he packed his belongings and walked out. He ran away from home.

It was August, 1963. Gerry Gallagher was 12.

There he was, with his stuff tied up in a knapsack over his shoulder on Mount Pleasant Avenue in Rockaway. He walked up the big hill leading up toward Wharton. Destination: Who knows?

But he was serious. Gallagher wanted to play for the Rockaway Rams, but his room said no. How much did football mean to a young Gerry Gallagher? Enough to leave everything and everyone else behind and walk out.

That was then, of course. These days, 60 years in the sport as a player and coach later, his life consists of God, Family, and Football, in that order.

But then? Football was king. And if there was no football... well, why go on living at home?

At least, that was his mode of thinking back as a kid.

"I wanted to play, and my mother would not let us play," he said. "This is a big part of my life. I went upstairs in my room. I packed my boy scout knapsack and I was running away from home.

Then, his dad - and later - intervened. His dad drove up Mount Pleasant, spotted Gerry and talked him into the family car - and off the ledge.

"He asked, 'Where are you going?'" Gallagher recalled. "I said,

Bob Decker
COMMENTARY

The author can be reached at deck-1@163.com

Gallagher can still deliver his message

The first time I met Gerry Gallagher, I yelled at him.

I mean, c'mon, kid... what does it take to put the damn newspaper on the porch every day - not the sidewalk, not the bushes, not on the grass, not in the driveway, and especially not under the car.

The porch, kid! THE PORCH!

Once the target area for the morning delivery of The Daily (Deer) Advance was established and consistently hit, however, everything was fine.

That was 1961 - maybe 1962... and everything has been fine ever since.

Gallagher left the newspaper business in 1963 when he was graduated from St. Cecilia School in Rockaway and entered Morris Catholic High School. Paterson State was next and then four years later his football coaching career started.

Morris Catholic freshman coach; Morris Catholic assistant varsity coach; Morris Catholic varsity coach; offensive coordinator at Edinboro (Pa.) College; head coach at St. Francis (Pa.) College; Mountville High School head coach; Roseton assistant coach; Parsippany assistant coach and, since 2014, special teams coach at Dellbarton School.

He tried to retire a couple times toward the end of the list "... to see if I could live without foot-



Photo by Kathleen Murphy

Gerry Gallagher (top photo) takes in a Roseton High School football game last fall with his 3-year-old grandson Kellen, the son of Roseton head football coach Bryan, who is Gallagher's son. In photo below, Gallagher speaks at a recent clinic for football coaches.

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Sports Section Layout/Content FIRST PLACE

Phil Nardone,
Bob Decker

Sports in The Citizen

SPORTS

Contact Phil Nardone
at philn@morrisknolls.com

THE CITIZEN AND THE BUGLE EDITION

Wednesday, September 20, 2023 PAGE 9



MONTVILLE FOOTBALL
Par Hills pulls out victory

By ANNE BISHMANN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

MONTVILLE — Par Hills has pulled out a breathtaking speed on the play at the Meet of Champions.

Friday night, he gave Montville a lead.

The running back rushed for 120 yards and three touchdowns to lift the Vikings to a 28-16 victory over the Mustangs in high school football.

"Dain is good and steady and you know how fast he is," Montville coach Rick DeBacco said. "You never contain him but we give up big plays. We didn't make that well, especially in the first half. We had him make a couple times but we didn't block well."

Dain scored a 10-yard touchdown run to break a 21-21 tie in the third quarter. Earlier, he scored touchdowns runs of 22 and 2 yards on the two teams were tied at 14-14 in halftime.

Par Hills quarterback Justin Smith, watching for the injured starter Jake Simons, kept Vikings drive alive with his passing. He finished 27 for 38 passing for 236 yards, including a 63-yard touchdown to Jerry Ciriello (7 for 10, 137 yards) and two times for 54 yards.

"The QB they brought in did a really good job," DeBacco said. "It is a really runner and a good addition to their running game."

"Go To Guy" Ciriello (7 for 10, 137 yards) and two times for 54 yards. The 12-22 received another strong effort from running back Anthony Frazier, who was 16 for 71 rushing and caught four passes for 85 yards.

"Frazier did a really good game," DeBacco said of his 23 yards. "He is our go-to guy. We look to get the ball into his hands."

The youthful Mustangs need more contributions from the entire roster.

"We are a young team, with a lot of new guys, and we are growing and developing," DeBacco said. "It was not our best week. We didn't play a great game, but we love the kids and look forward to getting back this week."

Photo by Dan Ianni
lan Rodriguez of Mountain Lakes High School lunges for more yardage in The Herd's victory over Madison on Thursday, Sept. 14, in Mountain Lakes. The Herd won its third straight, 34-7.

MOUNTAIN LAKES HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Herd coasts with 27-point 2nd quarter to move to 3-0

By MARK RITCHIE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

MOUNTAIN LAKES — Mountain Lakes High School football continued its unbroken string in dominating fashion with a 34-7 triumph over Madison on Thursday, Sept. 14, at Wilkes Field.

Marco D'Amico caught a 10-yard TD pass and had a 60-yard interception return for a score to highlight the Herd's 27-point second quarter of play.

Jordan Hernandez rushed for two 5-yard touchdowns and Connor Finch had a 25-yard TD run for Mountain Lakes (3-0). Luke McGee had a 19-yard TD run in the fourth quarter for the Dolphins (0-3).

Four of the five touchdowns for Mountain Lakes came from taking advantage of Madison mistakes.

Once the Herd had the ball they only ran a similar front line with the coach's son, 16-year-old Connor Finnan setting the tone. Darks Hernandez, Finch and other grounders out the yardage and kept the fire in two clutch moments for most of the game.

"We put in so much work this summer, getting every single day," said Hernandez. "That's what work gets you off. When you run behind guys like Connor Finnan the holes are just made. He knows to run through it."

Defensively, the Herd put pressure on the Dolphins and quarterback Jack McEneaney. He threw three picks including one that D'Amico ran back for a 60-yard return for a touchdown that gave Mountain Lakes a commanding 14-0 lead with 10:20 left in the first half.

"I saw the screen coming," said D'Amico. "I went to the running back. The quarterback threw it. I was there at the right place and the right time and took it into the end zone."

It was a difficult night overall for Madison, which has been having difficulty getting together offensive drives this season. Despite the loss, the Dolphins are committed to continuing to work hard to turn their season around.

"They made good plays," Madison coach Chris Knolls said of Mountain Lakes. "We made some mistakes. They are a good football team and they played really well tonight."

"The whole Madison team worked hard. A lot of guys are trying to do a lot of things. We are just trying to find our rhythm. Investors need teams have to find rhythm. We are trying to find the best one can to get them right."

Mountain Lakes focused on limiting what Madison's Greg Randall could do when he touched the ball. The Dolphins' standout was

PLEASE SEE OTHER PAGE 10

Knolls puts scare into unbeaten before falling

Morris Hills, Boonton also fall in high school football

By CARLOS VARGAS
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

DEWOLFE TWP. — Morris Hills' Knolls took a touchdown late into the final quarter of play but Washington Hills Regional won a high school football game on Thursday, Sept. 14.

Knolls led 10-0 in the second quarter in the middle of a scoring drive that ended with quarterback Blake Siskovich throwing one of the three TD passes of the game. Knolls led 10-0 in the middle of a scoring drive that ended with quarterback Blake Siskovich throwing one of the three TD passes of the game.

Washington added a late touch-down when Siskovich connected with Brookes Kelly on a 60-yard scoring pass.

Washington's two-point conversion try failed, giving the Golden Eagles another chance to seal their victory. A 30-yard field goal by Jake Moran and three PATs by Moran sealed the win.



Photo by Carlos Vargas
Bill Regan of Morris Knolls High School patrolled the sidelines on Thursday, Sept. 14.

PLEASE SEE FOOTBALL PAGE 10

**PRIZE
TIME!!!**

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

The Retrospect

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Public Service THIRD PLACE

Matt Enuco

Secrecy Surrounds Local Police Misconduct Records

The RETROSPECT

Camden County's Finest Weekly Newspaper

www.theretrospect.com

\$1

Volume 122, No. 33

Hometown News You Can Trust

Friday, August 18, 2023

Detailed Oaklyn Curriculum Site Unveiled

by Brett Ainsworth

Parents of Oaklyn students will be able to review in detail the sources and materials used in classrooms, along with unit goals and objectives, on the school district website for the coming school year. Jennifer McPartland, the departing assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction for the Oaklyn and Collingswood school districts, presented the new site's tools by PowerSchool

Unified Curriculum (PUC) at the Oaklyn board of education meeting on Tuesday night.

McPartland noted that the district updated health and physical education standards, in alignment with state education standards. On the district website, she noted, the district "parsed health separately so it is easy for families to access." Also provided online are opt

(Continued on page 4)

Secrecy Surrounds Local Police Misconduct Records

by Matt Enuco

Public disclosure of police misconduct and discipline has historically been tightly held by departments but in June 2020, shortly after the nation witnessed George Floyd die under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer, New Jersey attorney general Gurbir S. Grewal issued directive 2020-5 requiring law enforcement agencies to post annual reports of officers who were issued major discipline. Since 2022, three police

officers in The Retrospect area have been reported under that directive. However, prying loose details of those incidents remains no easy matter.

Over the past year, The Retrospect has tried to collect details of internal affairs reports on two officers in Barrington and one in Collingswood. All three officers were suspended in the timeframe between 2021 and 2022.

Most of The Retrospect efforts for transparency were denied under existing laws protecting internal affairs disclosures.

(Continued on page 8)

INSIDE
Sports..... p.8

Edison Elementary Gets a Rain Garden



A GARDEN GROWS: A lush new rain garden was installed at Edison elementary school in Haddon Township this week. The garden is the product of a grant administered by the Rutgers Cooperative Extension and under their water resources program. The project was a joint effort between local organizations and the university to collect and filter stormwater.

by Matt Enuco

The Edison Reading Garden now has an environmental twist in its plot. The outdoor reading and common area at Edison Elementary School in Haddon Township now has a rain garden that will absorb over

10,000 gallons of rain each year that would have otherwise washed pesticides and sediment into the nearby Cooper River and other tributaries of the Delaware River.

(Continued on page 2)

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

First Amendment THIRD PLACE

Joan Buehler

Haddonfield's Centennial Field Still Soggy Despite Reno

Inside This Week:

- *New Language, Food Service and Apples in Township Schools*
- *Barrington Council Lauds Pride Event*
- *Haddonfield Police, Commission Questioned*

Camden County's Finest Weekly Newspaper

The RETROSPECT

www.theretrospect.com

Volume 122, No. 25 Hometown News You Can Trust \$1 Friday, June 23, 2023

Luke's Place Awards First Scholarship to Rebecca Savidge



NEW SCHOLARSHIP: Luke's Place in Audubon serves adults with special needs who have aged out of the local school district programming, and the organization recently decided to award its first scholarship to a college student pursuing a career in a field supporting those with special needs. AHS grad Rebecca Savidge, center right holding a check with Luke Jensen, the nonprofit's namesake, was the recipient of the first scholarship of \$1,000 in a special ceremony held at Luke's Place.

by **Molly Parks**

Rebecca Savidge, an Audubon High School alumna and current rising senior at Rutgers University Camden, stood hand-in-hand with her sister Rachel as she accepted a \$1,000 check for the first annual Luke's Place Community Scholarship on Tuesday. Rebecca, inspired by her sister's jour-

Audubon Family Park to Be Ready for Summer Camp

by **Molly Parks**

The Audubon commissioners were all resolutions as they ran through another borough meeting Tuesday evening. The agenda featured nine resolutions, including the authorization of a grant application for phase two of the funding process for the reconstruction surrounding Audubon Family Park, and reports on the borough's 4th of July plans.

The commissioners provided updates on the construction surrounding Audubon Family Park. They plan to have the

Devon Ave. Fields Sod Project Halted

by **Joan Buehler**

Haddon Heights is taking action to fire the contractor it hired to re-sod the Devon Ave. soccer fields, a surprising development in what until now had been mostly a feel-good story of good government combined with civic cooperation, operating with

Haddonfield's Centennial Field Still Soggy Despite Reno

by **Joan Buehler**

The borough of Haddonfield poured over \$262,000 into improving the Centennial football/lacrosse field just four years ago, but representatives of the town's youth football and lacrosse leagues that play there now say the drainage situation wasn't substantially improved despite the sodding, regrading and re-curling work the borough paid for in 2018-19.

A trio of youth team coaches and parents calling themselves the Haddonfield Turf Field Committee appeared at the Haddonfield commission's June 12 work caucus, armed with large photographs showing a huge bare-dirt spot running the length of the 100-yard field right down the middle, from end post to end post, as well as large puddling around the perimeter of the field, between the field boundaries and the new curbing. They sought permission from the commission to launch a formal town-wide fundraising campaign to purchase and install artificial turf at the field, a project that comes with a \$1.5 million price tag, not including soft costs.

Kyle Turner, Bob Hunter, and Dan Silvestri told the commission the youth football, lacrosse, field hockey, and cheerleading teams endure schedule disruptions every time it rains, asking what representatives from the Crows Woods youth soccer association were saying almost exactly a year ago.

"The field doesn't drain very well, there's very poor drainage all around it, and the grass turf does not hold up well at all," Hunter said. "Everyone who uses the field (over 1,000 children and teens) lost plenty of practice time because of the mud."

Counting the year lost to the pandemic, the field has only seen three full years of

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Interpretive Writing THIRD PLACE

Katrina Janco

Thorny Issues Surround OPRA Request Reforms

Camden County's Finest Weekly Newspaper

The RETROSPECT

www.theretrospect.com

Volume 122, No. 49 Hometown News You Can Trust \$150 Friday, December 8, 2023

Colls Buys Sun Bank Lot, Aims to Redevelop

by Katrina Janco

On Monday, the Collingswood Board of Commissioners swiftly went through a jam-packed agenda. They adopted a resolution that authorizes the borough to purchase the vacant Sun Bank/Ocean First Bank property and its parking lot for roughly \$1.5 million, which mayor Jim Maley called "a pretty good deal" given that the property was assessed for roughly \$1.9 million. The borough will be able to buy it using cash on hand using the borough's surplus funds and intends to sell it next year.

(Continued on page 7)

Christmas Comes Early for Colls Enviro and EV Advocates

by Joan Buchler

Shiny new electric vehicle superchargers were laid under the PATCO train tracks in Collingswood Wednesday, and Santa was spotted sneakily trying one of the new toys out before heading back to the North Pole in his clean energy mode of transportation, Collingswood mayor James Maley joked at an official "plugging-in" ceremony that morning. The two new fast chargers are the first of their kind to be installed in Camden County for public use, and cost \$250,000, paid for with a combination of grants from three entities, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, the state Department of Environ-

(Continued on page 7)

Dealing with Animal Shelters 'Ruff' for Oaklyn

by Lily Gannon

The steep price of animal shelter services were discussed at Oaklyn's caucus meeting on Monday. According to borough administrator Bonnie Taft, "we pay almost \$40,000 a year... that gives us up to 50 animals."

"Today eight rabbits were dumped at the VFW. They were white rabbits," said police chief Jayne Jones. "They don't know where they came from...they were in an actual tote."

While Jones added that the

(Continued on page 8)

Audubon Tax Sale 'Lowest Number of Properties Ever'

by Joan Buchler

Audubon tax collector Megan Giordano said at the Audubon commission's Tuesday work caucus that the number of properties up for tax sale this year, 67, represented "the lowest number I've ever seen, as we're usually in the 80s and above, and that's a good thing, because it means homeowners have been able to pay their taxes, sewer and CCMUA bills."

The amount of premium dollars the borough collects in a special account and reimburses lien holders dropped from \$300,400 in 2022 to just \$45,200 in 2023, another measuring stick Giordano referenced. Giordano is the tax collector for both Audubon and Haddonfield.

(Continued on page 19)

Thorny Issues Surround OPRA Request Reforms

by Katrina Janco

Changes to New Jersey's public records law could upend the process of keeping government accountable. Legislators in Trenton are drafting potentially significant changes to the Open Public Records Act, commonly known as OPRA, steps that have public records custodians hopeful for relief and transparency advocates deeply concerned. OPRA governs how newspaper-like *The Retrospect*, activists and concerned citizens can access records at all levels of government in New Jersey. Commercial interests, however, have also found OPRA immensely useful: driving demand for records and straining government resources. Transparency advocates worry about what revisions legislators could make during the lame duck session, the period after the November election and before the new legislature members are sworn into office. "We've heard so many different things from different people and that's a core problem. There's talk of rushing it through lame duck, but here we are at the end of the year and we don't even know what those bills are," said CJ Griffin, an OPRA expert and litigator for Fashman Stein Walker Hayden. "So how could

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Ongoing/Extended Coverage THIRD PLACE

Staff

Colls Students Slam Super; Race Issues at Core of Colls Student Protest; Colls Students, Community Speak Out; Student Reps Resign

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Volume 122, No. 4 Hometown News You Can Trust \$1 Friday, January 27, 2023

County Freedom Medal Awarded




EVERYBODY CAN BE GREAT BECAUSE EVERYBODY CAN SERVE. Several residents from The Retrospect area were recently awarded the Camden County Freedom Medal. Above left, Tom Martin, of Haddon Township, an advocate for the homeless and founder of the Camden County Pop-up Library, is given his medal by county commissioner Ed McDowell. Above, county commissioner Melinda Kane congratulates William and Gloria Jensen, of Audubon, founders of a nonprofit organization devoted to serving the adult special needs community. Jan DeSimone, left, of Collingswood, an LGBTQ+ activist receives his medal from county commissioner Jonathan Young. Peter J. Fontaine, lower left, of Haddonfield, a leader in sustainability and environmental improvement is recognized by county commissioner Jeff Nash.



Last week a ceremony honored 11 Camden County residents for their contributions to improving their community at the 2023 Camden County Freedom Medal Ceremony. Five of the recipients hail from *The Retrospect* coverage area. The award, created by the Camden County Board of Commissioners in 2011, is presented to civic leaders who demonstrate ideals and actions that reflect the principles of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Since it began 22 years ago, more than 1,200 Camden County residents have received this prestigious honor. "This process has always brought forth incredible stories of selflessness and sacrifice and this year's group of recipients are no different," said county commissioner Jonathan Young.

Collingswood Students Slam Superintendent-

by Joan Boehler

Student leaders at Collingswood High School late Monday evening shifted from asking the board of education to not renew superintendent Dr. Fredrick H. McDowell Jr.'s contract next year to calling for his immediate resignation at the body's regular monthly meeting.

"He's got to go," wrote Aidan DiMarco, student representative to the board, in an email to *The Retrospect* after Monday's meeting, which included a link to the online petition he and fellow student representative Riley Stacy are circulating.

Hours earlier, the students had read a searing indictment of McDowell's performance into the record during the time allotted for their student report. That time is usually a tame affair with subjects such as football game scores, prom plans, and awards won by various student groups but not on this occasion.

Included were 11 separate anonymous testimonials from teachers who the two

(Continued on page 6)

Haddon Township School Referendum Taking Shape

by Bethany Mitros

The Haddon Township Board of Education heard a "state of the district" presentation from superintendent Dr. Robert Fiscaro at its meeting last week which included updates on two trending topics – the planned bond referendum and preschool expansion.

"There is no doubt we are heading toward a referendum," said Fiscaro, though what items the referendum, tentatively scheduled for March 12, 2024, will include are yet to be determined. Over the next few months, the scope of work will be finalized and prepared for community engagement.

"We have a fairly short window of time between now and April, when we will hold

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Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Ongoing/Extended Coverage SECOND PLACE

Bethany Mitros,
Joan Buehler

Bombshell Lawsuit; Haddonfield Declares Developer in Default; Housing Plan Goes Up in Smoke; Haddonfield to Pay Developer

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 Volume 122, No. 1 Hometown News You Can Trust Friday, January 6, 2023

Woodlynne Teacher Krystal Valianti Needs a Kidney

by Bethany Mitros



GIFT OF LIFE: Sisters Krystal (left) and Nicole Valianti have a special bond in many ways. The pair teaches together in Woodlynne and Nicole donated a kidney to Krystal in 2015 after she went into kidney failure. But now, Krystal is in need of another kidney and searching for a viable donor.

by Matt Emco

The Valianti sisters of Oaklyn are a rare breed. When younger sister Krystal was in desperate need of a kidney in 2015, Nicole came running. She stepped to the front of the donor line and gave the gift of life to her sister who was only 21 years old and a stellar collegiate athlete at the time. But now, Krystal is in need again and looking for a new kidney.

Becoming a transplant recipient was never on Krystal's radar. She was an elite athlete all her life and in peak physical condition. But in her junior year of college, just before her third lacrosse season with the Rutgers-Camden Scarlet Raptors her mother noticed something Krystal seemed more tired than usual.

"She was always petite, but that winter break she was losing weight and my mom noticed she was sleeping a lot more." Nicole recounted about what led to her sister's diagnosis in 2015. Krystal went to the doctor for bloodwork and a few

(Continued on page 5)

Bombshell Lawsuit Could Blow Up Bancroft Deal

by Bethany Mitros



WHAT NEXT?: In the foreground, to the right of the path, there used to be a building for the Bancroft school which is now part of the contested developable land. The building at right is part of the borough's recently completed land swap with the school board. Behind the trees is Haddonfield Memorial High School.

The next chapter for the long-embattled Bancroft parcel is unfolding in Haddonfield, thanks to new litigation filed by developer 2 Hopkins Lane against the borough and its zoning board last month. The 191-page complaint filed by Marino, Tortorella and Boyle of Chatham, NJ, on December 6 is a proverbial bomb of a lawsuit, alleging discrimination and fraud on the part of Haddonfield dating back to 2015, when 2HL proposed turning the parcel into a residential drug and alcohol treatment facility, and continuing to the present day.

It seeks, in a trial by jury.

(Continued on page 6)

Some Heat as Barrington, Heights FDs Merge

by Brett Ainsworth

After two decades of talk and studies, Barrington and Haddon Heights fire departments started 2023 under a one-year shared service agreement which runs a paid three-firefighter squad weekends from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. with volunteers from the two boroughs covering calls on weekends and overnight.

Barrington council approved the agreement at its Tuesday night caucus meeting with the lone fire department member on the governing body, councilman Wayne Robenolt, voting against the deal. Earlier in the evening, during the governing body's reorganization meeting, the councilman thanked outgoing Barrington fire chief Ken Baus for his steadfastness in "these trying times" and for his service.

As of January 1, 29-year-old Joe Hales from the Heights department took the reins as fire chief for both departments with Heights fireman Sean Fer-

(Continued on page 3)

Residency Provision Nixes Wright from Oaklyn BOE

by Matt Emco

Few things will change in Oaklyn regarding the board of education. The board's reorganization meeting was quick and didn't include much reorganizing as longtime president Bill Stauts was nominated to remain in his seat and unanimously approved. Current vice president Iodd Schaefer nominated Stauts to continue as pres-

ident and was nominated by board member Colleen Faupel to maintain his role as vice president. Schaefer was unanimously approved by the board to continue as vice president.

One glaring loose end is a vacancy after write-in candidate David Wright did not meet the residency requirement to sit on

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2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Health/Science Writing **SECOND PLACE**

Bethany Mitros

Area Schools Respond
to Youth MH Concerns



Area Schools Responding to Youth Mental Health Concerns

by Matt Esuoco

BOOKS AND BARKS: Therapy dog Lola has been on staff in Barrington schools for a year and half with counselor Sara Plunkett, and students have responded positively to her calm, everyday presence during the school day.

by Bethany Mitros

The CDC reported last year that more than a third of high school students experienced poor mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic, but the pandemic alone is not solely responsible for issues that were increasing even before the virus caused global shutdowns.

Haddon Township student assistance counselor Morgan McDonald said that she now sees a record number of students with anxiety. "They have anxiety about everything," she explained. She thinks that mental health awareness has helped students more easily identify and talk about problems like anxiety and depression, but

(Continued on page 16)

St. Mary's Redeveloper

Audubon BOE Seeks Open Lines with Teachers

by Matt Esuoco

Policy and governance occupied a large portion of the Audubon board of education meeting last Wednesday where the issue of establishing a liaison committee to the Audubon Education Association took centerstage. Governance committee chair Jim Blumenstein reported that his committee was in favor of establishing a dedicated committee to maintain lines of communication with the AEA, but the board's solicitor cautioned that doing so could be used as a way to sidestep administration.

"Things have certainly improved, but there is still room for improvement," Blumenstein reported on communications between board committees and the AEA. "One of the things we did discuss is forming our own

(Continued on page 15)

Barrington Expands Ambulance Partnership with Runnemed

by Jean Boehler

Barrington is amending its shared service agreement with Runnemed to help the neighboring municipality staff its ambulance during daytime hours, according to a resolution approved by the governing body at its business meeting May 9.

In greenlighting the new arrangement, the Barrington Ambulance Association will pocket 30 percent of the revenue generated by that crew's annual emergency calls, projected to be in the \$20,000 to \$40,000 range, BAA chief Kate Bowen told council members when she presented the idea for the amendment the previous week.

Oaklyn BOE Discusses Cops in School

by Matt Esuoco

Oaklyn's board of education worked through an efficient meeting on Tuesday that included a discussion about their partner district Collingswood's much more interaction with students. The adoption of an SLO in Collingswood has been met with broad criticism from the community and students.

The context of the discus-

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2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Investigative Reporting **SECOND PLACE**

Joan Buehler

Twp. Rent Control Passes 4% Hike; Past Discrepancies Found

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Volume 122, No. 5 Hometown News You Can Trust Friday, February 3, 2023

Students Interview Black Seniors, Gain Perspective



A GENERATIONAL THING: HMHS ninth-graders from Holly Mames's accelerated English class got to bond with some of the town's older residents during a life-story transcription project for a class assignment this fall. This year the Haddonfield Historical Society specially requested the students' work in capturing the stories of black Haddonfield residents, either currently or formerly living in Haddonfield, and their transcriptions of those interviews have been gathered in an anthology the historical society will premiere next week.

by Bethany Mitros

Haddonfield is a predominantly white town and has been for centuries; however, the contributions of some of its black citizens will now be preserved for generations to come thanks to students at Haddonfield Memorial High School. The work

(Continued on page 3)

Paul VI Students Raising \$50,000 to Fight Cancer



A FORCE FOR GOOD: PVI students Will and Colin Mrozinski formed Team Generation Care to raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Their goal is to raise \$50,000 for research that could lead to a breakthrough cure for cancer. That's because their lives have been affected by cancer as well. Straus said his aunt was diagnosed with lymphoma a year ago. "She is a very strong individual who treats every day like it is the best gift she has ever received. She has taught me to be proud

of who I am because there is only one me," she said. "My aunt is supportive of every person she has ever met. And now, I have a chance to show

(Continued on page 7)

Twp. Rent Control Passes 4% Hike; Past Discrepancies Found

by Joan Buehler

Haddon Township apartment dwellers living at one of the six township rent-controlled properties are in for an unpleasant surprise this year when they open lease renewal letters containing a four-percent increase, the maximum allowed under the town's rent control ordinance.

The increase, which hasn't been close to this high in at least the past 12 years, is sure to strain some resident budgets as it will require digging into pocketbooks to come up with approximately \$800 extra per year for the average \$1700 per month one-bedroom apartment.

At the Jan. 26 meeting of the town's rent control board (RCB), the five-member panel approved the four-percent increase for 27 apartments at Haddon Crossings, 62 apartments in Haddon View, and one apartment in Colonial Village; eventually, every tenant at these apartment complexes seeking to renew his or her lease in 2023 will see

the increase, plus the tenants of Haddon Hills, Lynne Gardens, and Cedar Crossing. In total, the RCB sets the rents for 1,189 apartment units.

A 25-page ordinance, chapter 189 of the town's code, vests the RCB with its authority, describes the qualifications of members and how they are seated, and puts forth

the exact method to calculate each year's rent increase.

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Boys for Camping Cans in Public Under Scrutiny

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Enterprise SECOND PLACE

Molly Parks

The Young and Reckless: Giving Bike Life a Bad Name

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Volume 122, No. 30 Hometown News You Can Trust \$1 Friday, July 28, 2023

Tracing Harriet Tubman's Route




The Young and the Reckless: Giving Bike Life a Bad Name

by Molly Parks

Rising incidents of reckless bike riding among youth, swerving at cars a common offense, could leave young riders bike-less in Haddonfield or facing differing punishments in other *Retrospect* area towns.

On Sunday Haddon Township observed a brutal incident at the Target in Westmont Plaza, where a juvenile biked into the store and repeatedly punched a Target employee after he tried to stop the joy ride. The investigation into that incident is ongoing.

(Continued on page 4)

Summer Storm: Public Turns Up Heat in Township

by Molly Parks

Though the Haddon Township commissioners took less than five minutes to run through the agenda during their meeting on Tuesday night, comments from the public prolonged the meeting to over one hour. Nearly every public comment, whether concerning neighborhood flooding, reckless juvenile biking, or the community's music festival, sparked either considerable discussion or action from the commissioners.

After the July 4th storms deluged local towns with storm-

water, the neighborhood cohort from the 200 block of Westmont Avenue returned to the municipal hall on Tuesday to resurface concerns about their repeatedly flooded properties. Residents from the neighborhood previously appeared in front of the commission in a July 2019 meeting to air their concerns after a

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Special Subject Writing SECOND PLACE

Joan Buehler

How Safe is Local Rail?

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Volume 122, No. 18 Hometown News You Can Trust Friday, May 5, 2023

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by Brett Ainsworth, Publisher

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How do we do it? For starters, our professional staff all live here and have roots in this part of Camden County.

(Continued on page 23)

Little Lily Loves to Help Others

by Bethany Mitros

Lily Cuticchia isn't even double digits, but already the St. Rose of Lima fourth grader has made a big difference for people who are less fortunate. This Sunday, she hopes the local community comes out to help her help others at a basket auction at her home in the West Collingswood Heights section of Haddon Township. With the funds she raises, Cuticchia will purchase essential items for those struggling with substance use disorders, many of whom are also homeless, at the Cooper Center for

HEART FOR HOMELESS: Fourth grader Lily Cuticchia, of Haddon Township, invites everyone to attend a festive basket auction at her home this weekend with the proceeds used to benefit the Cooper Center for Healing where her mom, Jordan Warner, works. (Continued on page 20)

Collingswood Looks to Take, Redevelop Sun Bank Building

by Joan Buehler

Having not exercised the right to take property by eminent domain in quite some time, on Monday Collingswood's commission resurrected the redevelopment tool to make something happen with the former Sun Bank/Ocean First Bank building, which "is and always has been, a big corner of commerce in our town," said mayor Jim Maley, speaking on the resolution that will start the condemnation process.

"We've had a few development proposals come in, and those proposals have made it pretty clear that nothing is ever going to happen there, because people are proposing like six-story buildings... We have an owner who thinks it's worth more than it is, because

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Audubon Police Chief Files Complaint Against Boro Admin

By Bethany Mitros

Accusations of impropriety, a hostile work environment and retaliation flew in Audubon Tuesday during the public discussion of an employee complaint at the commission's caucus meeting, held via Zoom. The commission has been meeting via Zoom for caucus meetings and in person for regular meetings.

Prior to the discussion, solicitor Sal Siciliano explained that the commission had two separate employee complaints to evaluate. Rice notices, which advise public employees that their employment will be discussed in an upcoming meeting, were sent to both employees. Personnel matters are held for closed sessions, unless the individual chooses

(Continued on page 21)

Freighted Question: How Safe is Local Rail?

BIRDS EYE VIEW: The Pavoria Yard in Camden is Conrail's operations hub, where freight cars are organized just outside of residential neighborhoods.

Are our communities in danger from a freight train going off the rails? The short answer is yes, because "we get our fair share" of freight trains carrying hazardous chemicals traveling through *The Retrospect* coverage areas, says Christopher Costa, Camden County's emergency management coordinator — though railroads aren't obligated to update communities about the cargo they carry and where and when it's transported.

The recent news that the Norfolk Southern train that derailed in East Palestine, Ohio on February 3 was heading for South Jersey carrying 900,000 pounds of the toxic flammable gas vinyl chloride prompted a *Retrospect* investigation into the county's preparedness plan in the event of a derailment here.

Freight trains containing as few as 10 cars and as many as 200 arrive daily in South Jersey over the Delair Bridge in Pennsauken, then head for the Pavoria rail yard in Camden. In that vast yard, located just off State St, mere yards from residential neighborhoods, small retail businesses, schools, and public parks, freight cars are added,

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Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Column Writing SECOND PLACE

Mark Zeigler

Don't Tell Anyone You Have a Pony; People Used to Use These (He Still Does)

Memory Lane

“Don't Tell Anyone That You Have a Pony”



Photo courtesy of Tommy Willford

PONY EXPRESS: Eight-year-old Tommy Willford, fittingly sporting his Roy Rogers cowboy boots, rides “Lightning” in his backyard corral on East Madison Ave., in Collingswood, in 1954. Inset below is Willford, AKA Tommy McCarthy during his early radio days.

You've got to nip it! Nip it in the bud!

“Collingswood had a ‘Mayberry’ feel when we were kids,” Tommy Willford reflected, likening his early childhood days living in the borough in the 1950s to the quintessential small town in television’s *The Andy Griffith Show*.

“Absolutely! That’s what it was like,” agreed Frank Hill, as the two reminisced of childhood adventures — hunting for pennies and railroad spikes along the Pennsylvania-Railroad Seashore Lines tracks that once cut through town, playing alone pee-wee football behind the Cordier’s home on Park Ave. and making “motorized” bicycles by clothspinning baseball cards in the spokes of their bikes.

“I probably ruined a Jackie Robinson!” Tommy said, laughing.

The two Collingswood natives had not known each other prior to meeting at *The Retrospat* office recently to share memories of St. John School, but quickly discovered that they shared similar experiences growing up.

Kids Would be Kids

“I lived on Woodlawn Terrace and had to cross the railroad tracks to go to the park to go ice skating,” Frank explained. “I remember thinking that if I slipped through the ice I would drown, because [my friends and I] were only three feet tall. The lake was only a foot and a half deep, but we didn’t know.”

“After a decent snowfall, we’d hide in the bushes and when an oil truck came along, we’d run up and grab the bumper. We had those big black boots with the buckles and we’d hold on and just ski along,” he continued.

“In those days, the soda trucks, the Coke and Pepsi trucks, had open backs where the soda bottles were,” Tommy added, shaking his head, while explaining his childhood exploits.

“We’d ride up on our bikes when they stopped at a light and take a bottle. Kids would be kids.”

The two recalled how, even as youngsters, kids pretty much had unsupervised free reign of the town back then, but...

“There were two places in town where you were forbidden to go for the penalty of a spanking,” Tommy cautioned. “The cigar shop [Dad’s United Cigar Store, where Atlantic Travel is now] because they sold girlie magazines and the Triangle Luncheonette [where the June BYOB restaurant is now] because Rock ‘n Roll music was played there and they had a pinball machine and also a condom machine in the bathroom.”

FUN FACT: Some readers may be familiar with Tommy Willford, AKA radio personality and *Breakfast Pioneers* member Tommy McCarthy, from his days as music director of 58.1 WOGL-FM or as host of music specials on QVC-TV.

Everyone Likes a Kid with a Pony

“We lived on East Madison Ave when I was little,” Tommy said. “When I was eight, my father bought me a pony for my birthday! I can still remember the flat-bed truck out on the street with the pony in the back and the man bringing him down the ramp. His name was Jimmy. But I didn’t want a ‘Jimmy’! I named him Lightning.”

“My father [John] was from Texas, and he was going to show us how to do it. He was going to run and jump on Lightning from the back. Well, he landed on Lightning’s rump and startled him and he bucked him and threw him off.”

“Some kids’ dads built dog houses or rabbit hutches in their yards for their pets. ‘My father built a corral in our backyard,’ Tommy said. “Next door were the Wirtzes and we kept the pony in their garage at night.”

“Now this was the ‘60s, and you weren’t allowed to keep live stock in Collingswood. My dad told me not to spread it around that I had a pony. But hey, I’m eight years old! What do you expect? I went to school on Monday and told everyone, ‘I have a pony. I have a pony. Come over and ride my pony!’” Tommy said, laughing.

Word got around town of Tommy’s new friend and soon the dead-end E. Madison Ave. would be dogged with cars bringing onlookers wanting to see the pony. “Now there was nowhere for the neighbors to park and my dad told us, ‘You’ve got to keep it down.’ On Sundays after church at St. John, my street would be lined with my classmates’ parents’ cars who brought them over to ride the pony.”

“I don’t remember Lightning being all that fast!” Frank interjected. A smile had been growing on Frank’s face as he listened to Tommy tell the story of the pony. “Now there was nowhere that morning at *The Retrospat* office, but it seems Tommy’s pony was legendary. “I know exactly where you lived. I was in your backyard,” Frank chuckled. “I was there to see the pony.”

It seems what Lightning lacked in speed he made up with in smarts. The pony eventually mastered how to get out of that garage all by himself. “It was an old garage that was empty and had the kind of doors that swung out,” described Tommy. “The pony would push against the doors and he eventually learned how to undo the lock. He would wander the neighborhood at night.”

“My eighth birthday was on November 2, 1954. We kept Lightning until the following May. We had to get rid of him when we moved to Cape May.”

140,000 residents assist the commission to halt plans for a \$10 million addition, called a “monstrosity,” to the town library because the space planned was more than Haddonfield needed. They wanted to convene a new committee and hire a library space consultant. Others defended the plans, stating that the addition was needed to support 21st century needs and the collections of the Haddonfield Historical Society.

50 Years Ago

January 15, 1973

Strawbridge School in Haddon Township implemented a pilot program called ACT in Miss Margaret Olsen’s fifth grade class. ACT, which stood for Achievement Competence Training, provided instructional materials specifically designed to teach children a behavioral method that would help them learn to be effective in setting and achieving their own goals.

The Collingswood High School dance band, under the direction of Mr. Albert Lamberino, was invited to perform at the Walden Army Hospital at Fort Dix. Members planned to play songs from the past and present, as well as selections from the school’s talent show.

75 Years Ago

January 15, 1948

Collingswood residents required some form of police assistance or protection once every hour in 1947. The 6,875 total calls included reports of robberies, suspicious persons, suicides, “domestic brawls,” attempted sex crimes, traffic violations, accidents and more. Calls for fire and ambulance services went down in 1947.

Teachers in Collingswood requested salary increases totaling \$52,000 for the upcoming school year and \$108,000 in total over the next three years. The board of education, however, rejected the proposal and instead offered a compromise of the full sum over five years.

100 Years Ago

January 19, 1923

Eight members of the Collingswood Fire Company narrowly escaped death when the fire truck on which they were riding to return from a brush fire collided with a truck carrying a load of lumber that did not yield at Haddon and Woodlawn Aves. One suffered a complete fracture of the femur and others walked away with cuts and bruises. Haddon Ave. tailor Mr. Klinger witnessed the collision. “With that grinding crash, the sound of splintering wood and breaking glass, men were thrown in the air and all directions — it is indeed fortunate that no one was killed.”

Collingswood’s John B. Kates, a member of the Delaware River Bridge Commission and former judge, informed the governor of Pennsylvania that New Jersey had money to complete its portion of the project and needed the Pennsylvania legislature to approve its share of the cost to complete the bridge.

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Arts/Entertainment Writing **SECOND PLACE**

Lily Gannon

Glass as Art: Graeber Captures
A Great Through the Lens

Camden County's Finest Weekly Newspaper

The RETROSPECT

www.theretrospect.com \$150

Volume 122, No. 50 Hometown News You Can Trust Friday, December 15, 2023

Glass as Art: Graeber Captures a Great Through the Lens

by Lily Gannon

New Jersey, well known for its glass industry, has developed some of the best glass artists in the world. Haddon Township's David Graeber worked alongside one of the greats, Paul J. Stankard, as an assistant in 1989 before striking out on his own in 2009. Once a student, Graeber wants to pay homage and capture Stankard's journey in a documentary.

Look up Stankard in art catalogues or online and the list of awards for his paperweights, encapsulating delicate glass flowers and foliage, would be the first thing you see. But, as often is the case, the man and the life behind that art can be just as intricate.

Graeber, a renowned glass artist in his own right, felt the world should know the real Stankard, who is now in his 80s. "I had this epiphany...I gotta start to record (loved ones) stories. And then I said, you know what, I gotta do this for Paul, too."

Flower and Flame documents the life and



CLEAR AS GLASS: Artist David Graeber showcased his talent by creating a snowman out of glass while speaking about his mentor, Paul Stankard. Top right, one of Stankard's glass paperweights showcases the master's workmanship in creating lifelike flowers, branches and bees entirely from glass.

(Continued on page 2)

Planning Board OKs Crystal Lake Redevelopment

by Joan Buehler

Crystal Lake Shopping Center in Haddon Township, having lost its anchor Thriftway grocery store a decade ago and recently having lost a Rite-Aid pharmacy, is "crying out for redevelopment," township planner and engineer Gregory Fusco told the town's planning board last week in advance of the board voting to check off the

next box in the redevelopment process of the property.

"The site is within walking distance to the elementary, middle and high schools, to the PATCO train station, to the Target shopping center, to Saddler's Woods — it's a very attractive area, and because of all these amenities, I can't think of a property more suited to redevelopment than this one," Fusco testified, concerning the large retail property at the corner of Crystal Lake Ave. and MacArthur Blvd.

(Continued on page 15)

Heights Council Considers Levying Sewer Tax

by Joan Buehler

Haddon Heights council is mulling a new tax to be added to property tax bills come 2024 — a sewer use charge, apparently long overdue, according to borough engineer Steven Bach, because century-old terracotta sanitary sewer pipes are near the end of their useful life.

Bach read from a research report credited to his name,

council on December 5, Bach recommended establishing such a tax to start a new revenue stream that would be solely dedicated to funding an estimated \$20 million dollars' worth of infrastructure renewal and replacement of the town's original sanitary sewer system.

Bach read from a research report credited to his name,

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Coverage of Crime, Police, Courts FIRST PLACE

Matt Enuco

Haddonfield Native Stedman Set to Stand Trial on Jan. 6 Charges; Jan. 6 Rioter Stedman Facing Prison Time

The RETROSPECT

www.theretrospect.com

Volume 122, No. 22

Hometown News You Can Trust

\$1

Friday, June 2, 2023

Haddonfield Native Stedman Set to Stand Trial on January 6 Charges

by Matt Enuco
A trial date has been set for Haddonfield native Patrick Stedman for his involvement in the January 6 insurrection at the United States Capitol. Stedman was arrested on January 20, 2021 just two weeks after a mob of Donald Trump supporters laid siege to the Capitol in hopes of stopping the constitutionally mandated electoral college count to certify the election of Joe Biden as the next president. Recently filed court documents share details of plea agreements Stedman declined over the past two years as he will stand trial on a five-count indictment in D.C. dis-

trict court beginning on June 5. The documents also provide a list of expected evidence to be presented at the trial which is estimated to take approximately four days. The listed evidence suggests where Sted-

man entered the Capitol and where he traveled throughout the building. Stedman was active on social media that day, snapping photos of the riot. (Continued on page 16)

Brews, Vino and Spirits Puttin' on The Ritz

by Molly Parks

On May 23, Haddon Township commissioners adopted a series of resolutions granting a liquor license to The Ritz Theatre Company, Inc. Resolutions 2023-069 through 2023-071, approve the issuance of a plenary retail consumption license for the Ritz Theatre, allowing the small non-

profit theater company to sell alcohol to its patrons. Bruce Cutless, the founder and producing artistic director of the Ritz, explained that the theater company has been working on obtaining a liquor license since before the COVID-19 pandemic and began the (Continued on page 6)

Four-Town Stormwater Study a Roadmap for the Future

by Joan Buehler

Improvements to stormwater management in four *Retrospect* towns, in the face of increasingly frequent heavy rain events, will cost a minimum of \$11 million if 16 projects identified in a grant-funded stormwater study are all completed. That is the conclusion reached in the final version of a "Stormwater Drainage Study and GI Plan" authored by Pennoni Associates' senior engineer Beth-Ann Grasso. Released this month, the 334-page report reviews the urban

flooding problems of Haddonfield, Haddon Heights, Audubon, and Barrington, across 10,757 square miles of essentially shared geography when it comes to onrushing stormwater. The study maps all the drainage areas and recommends green infrastructure fixes where appropriate. The work was funded by a \$167,000 grant awarded by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission in mid-2021, with each town contributing \$8,350 toward the required 20 percent cash match.

The report's release a few weeks ago was too late for its recommended projects to make it into the towns' 2023 capital improvements budgets. None of the towns have even begun the process of unpacking the report's conclusions according to three of the town's mayors and Audubon's business administrator. (Continued on page 15)

Having a Cop on Campus Draws Colls Parent Protest

by Bethany Mitros

A partnership between the Collingswood Police Department and Collingswood School District was approved last month, but parents still hope the board will reconsider the agreement that will bring an armed school liaison officer (SLO) to the district. Board president Regan

Kaiden updated the school board on the progress of the partnership committee during the committee of the whole session at last week's meeting. The committee is currently working on a job description for the SLO. "We know that there are concerns in the community about what the (Continued on page 4)

Remembering Memorial Day's Meaning



HEIGHTS HEROES: May 26, Haddon Heights High School students and community members gathered at the HHHS football stadium to honor the sacrifice of service members during the school's annual Memorial Day ceremony. The Heights Heroes Club hosted Friday's event. Students Madison Clark and Caroline Meeklen of the club spoke at the event, including alumnus Jacques H. Allen into the Heights Heroes Hall of Fame and honoring several staff and community members who have served in the armed forces. The guests of honor included Matthew Merin, Sonny Leeper, Bob McGrath, and Lauren Orl. Haddon Heights mayor Zachary Houck introduced the two guest speakers, Shaun and Zach Ferguson. The two veteran brothers graduated from Haddon Heights High School in 2011 and 2013, respectively, and spoke about the meaning and importance of Memorial Day. The event was bookended with music as the 2nd Avenue Singers sang the National Anthem to begin the ceremony, and the students gathered around the flagpole in front of the school to listen to Taps and participated in a moment of silence as the event concluded.

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Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Arts/Entertainment Writing FIRST PLACE

Lily Gannon

Colls Dance Co. Fresh Take On Nutcracker

Page 20, The Retrospect, Friday, December 8, 2023

Collingswood Dance Company's Fresh Take on *The Nutcracker*

by Lily Gannon

No one can deny that *The Nutcracker* ballet is a staple of the holiday season. However, at Collingswood's Flair Dance Company, the famous show is getting a hilarious and creative update. *Cracked Nuts* showcases the myriad of talents welcomed and expanded upon by Flair owner and creative director Christina Dunnington.

The show follows the main character of the original *Nutcracker*, Clara, who is aged up and described by Dunnington as "like the single wacky aunt that people have." In the story, Clara ends up at her sister's house with a group of people on Christmas Eve, which sets in motion a party. From there, Dunnington says, "she has a little too much to drink, and the rest of the story is kind of following her wacky drunken Christmas dream."

As a side note, Dunnington warns that although kids are welcome and the show is not inappropriate, there is "some adult humor in it with the drinking" that she wants parents to be aware of.

On top of that, while ballet is definitely featured, there is much more to it. Rats and soldiers will be performing hip-hop battles and Rockette-style showgirls will do routines in the land of snow. Tap dancing and salsa will also be included, each style headed by one of



seven choreographers brought into the studio to help bring the performance to life.

In total, there are around 60 dancers included in this year's show. "We cast every single dancer that walked through the door," said Dunnington, who added that every skill level from professional to novice had a part. Auditions for the show happened in late

August, which was also when the Collingswood studio had opened. According to Dunnington, since starting in September, the company has had rehearsals every Sunday, with "random rehearsals throughout the week for smaller pieces."

This is only the second iteration of *Cracked Nuts*, which was first performed in 2022. Producer and business advisor John DeStefano Jr. explained that each year's show is purposefully unique. "It's never the same," said DeStefano, "Just with the story, the music is different, the dancers are different, we have different groups." The goal is to keep things fresh for both the dancers and the audience.



SPICE IT UP: While *Cracked Nuts* takes inspiration from *The Nutcracker*, audiences should know that it is far different from a traditional ballet. Around 60 dancers will show off styles of dancing from tap to salsa as they take you through a Christmas spectacular like no other. Tickets are available now for their December 21, 22 and 23 shows at Suzanne Roberts Theatre in Philadelphia.

Altogether, with intermission, the performance will last about two hours. A cash bar will also be available during that time. *Cracked Nuts* is not the first show that Dunnington has taken on. Since starting her company in 2021, she has hosted a summer

dance festival which focuses on adult dancers. In fact, the choreographers featured in *Cracked Nuts* were all picked from the 30 involved in Flair Dance Company's festival.

"I realized that there was this really big need for an adult dance community," said Dunnington, "I kind of went full force and built this company from the ground up from the festival." She noted that the first version of *Cracked Nuts* came to be after she noticed a need for adult-centered dancing opportunities.



Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Health/Science Writing FIRST PLACE

Bethany Mitros

Drug Overdose Settlement in CC

Drug Overdose Settlement Funds Come to Camden County

by Bethany Mitros

Overdose deaths spiked during the pandemic but numbers had been on the rise well before that. There are myriad causes, but pharmaceutical companies have been accused of downplaying the risks associated with opioids, while overstating their benefits, along with other troubling practices.

Those companies, including manufacturer Johnson and Johnson and distributors McKesson, Cardinal Health and AmerisourceBergen faced a barrage of lawsuits, many of which were settled last year with no admission of wrongdoing but nevertheless garnered a commitment to pay up to \$26 billion to resolve the claims and deliver meaningful relief to communities affected.

As part of the settlement, Camden County will receive \$32 million over the next 20 years as part of the \$641 million awarded to New Jersey. So far, the county has announced that \$12 million of that will go toward a mobile pilot program where medically assisted treatment will be dispensed from an outreach van, take-home kits of naloxone to overdose and substance use disorder patients treated in county-wide emergency departments, Narcotics Overdose Prevention & Education (NOPE) in middle and high schools and increased advertising and public service announcements about the dangers of opioids and county resources.

While those measures will make an impact, Haddon Township resident Heather Ogden says it is just a start. Ogden, as a linkage to care coordinator for the CDC Foundation, founded by Congress to support the CDC's public health work, is working both on the front lines and at the bureaucratic level to connect those with substance use disorder with harm reduction and recovery services.

Her job is unique in the state, as most people typically work on the front lines or on the political side. "There is a lot going on, but nobody talks to each other. I am a go-between," Ogden explained. She often shares what each of the different agencies, like Mental Health and Addiction Services, the NJ Department of Health, and the Attorney General's NJCans.gov website, New Jersey through May 31 this year, has 1,144 reported overdose deaths, with 151 in Camden County. The only county with a higher total is Essex with 193 deaths. Atlantic County is a distant third with 81.

One of the most helpful initiatives by the governor's office so far, said Ogden, has been to increase the prevalence of naloxone, an FDA-approved medication that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose. The AG's office recorded an estimated 15,407 naloxone administrations in 2022. Naloxone boxes have been installed in all schools in *The Retrospect* coverage area, as well as most municipal buildings. It is also available to anyone at pharmacy counters.

The latter development was a shift that did not get much publicity, though it should have, said Ogden. "Anyone can go in and get it, no questions asked, for free." This shift was important

opioid use, which helps avoid duplicating services. "This way there is a little more communication between the two worlds. I can let the people who make the decisions with the money know what is actually needed from the people using the services," she said.

Much of her work revolves around training and education with a focus on recovery and harm reduction, as well as language training to ensure that those with substance use disorder are referred to respectfully and with terminology that does not cause additional harm or stigma.

"There has been a really good push toward implementing new and more effective frontline services," said Ogden, but the treatment landscape has not changed. "It's exactly the same as it has been forever," she said. Those seeking help often struggle to find treatment options, as it can be costly and insurance, if a person has it, does not always cover the needed services. The effects of that are deadly.

Though overdose numbers have leveled off a bit since the pandemic, Ogden said numbers are still way too high. "This is still considered an epicenter. This is still where drugs are coming in."

According to the Attorney General's NJCans.gov website, New Jersey through May 31 this year, has 1,144 reported overdose deaths, with 151 in Camden County. The only county with a higher total is Essex with 193 deaths. Atlantic County is a distant third with 81.

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naloxone were getting turned down for other important services, whether it was for themselves or a family member. "It was a huge problem. Now people can still easily get it and not have to worry. We're making sure to get it into more people's hands."

While the prevalence of naloxone has been encouraging, another trend remains concerning. Right now, they are finding more drugs mixed with xylazine, which does not respond to naloxone.

"It is super dangerous. It is a respiratory depressant like fentanyl, but naloxone works on fentanyl," Ogden explained. "We stress the importance of rescue breathing to keep that person alive until emergency services arrive [even when naloxone is administered]. We knew this was going to happen eventually. We have seen it creeping in. It has been a huge problem in Kensington, Philadelphia and it is coming into our supply a lot more now," she said.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy in Washington, DC, declared xylazine an emerging threat, which freed up funding to combat problems associated with it. "It's not just an East Coast problem anymore. We can yell all we want but until they see it, it doesn't get a lot of traction."

The increase in drugs laced with xylazine has led to other problems, Ogden explained that something about the chemistry of xylazine causes wounds in those using it. Though it is common for people injecting substances to have some injection site wounds due to a lack of access to clean syringes, xylazine causes open sores.

This was one instance in which Ogden's position as frontline responder and political go-between was particularly important because she was able to let those making the financial decisions know that more resources needed to be directed to providing wound care supplies.

"Unless you are working directly with people, you wouldn't know. It took us quite a while, even though we are working directly with people, to

the drugs themselves," she said.

Another important harm reduction service has been to increase the availability of fentanyl test strips that allow anyone to test for the presence of fentanyl, which has been associated with a spike in overdose deaths. Fentanyl test strips were approved legislatively but the measure was specific to fentanyl, so xylazine test strips are not yet available. "We are back to the drawing board until new legislation is passed for that," said Ogden. "By that time, something else could be hitting as well."

What would help most, said Ogden, is a push for decriminalization in general for substances and paraphernalia. "It's like whack-a-mole when laws are so specific. If we keep everything criminalized, it is hard to help people. We can't give people test strips or clean supplies without worrying about whether they will be locked up for it. People hear the word decriminalization and are scared, but they don't understand that the landscape has changed."

The pervasiveness of deadly fentanyl in all kinds of drugs is one of the biggest reasons why decriminalization could make a big difference. "People that are not using drugs on a daily basis and do not have a substance use disorder, who are just using casually, maybe at a party, they don't know what they're getting. Those people are overdosing and they are not making it back. It's a completely different situation. People don't have time to come around after making repeated mistakes," she said.

"We have to approach everything in a very different manner because things are different."

She would like to see improvements in treatment as well. Most of the people she works with are uninsured, on Medicaid or are Medicaid-eligible, and there are just not that many in-patient treatment options. Additionally, Ogden said that the abstinence-based approach is not always the best fit for a person. Sometimes, harm reduction methods, like medication-assisted treatment (MAT) are better options that can lead to recovery.

"We're asking the wrong questions and collecting the wrong statistics. We're now working with a new drug demographic and profile of substance," she said. Insurance companies do not typically pay for the length of treatment a person needs either, and other supportive services for housing and employment can be difficult to find. "It's pretty crazy. We know what works but we can't get the real key players to change the format. What we have been doing is not working well. We need to widen the net and offer more solutions."

Ogden said she is always looking for people with lived experiences, either personal or with a friend or family member, to share with legislators to encourage changes. "People want to help pass legislation or stop legislation that is harmful," she said. For example, there are often calls to increase penalties for fentanyl, particularly in election years when politicians want to look like they are tough on crime. However, while people think those laws will help arrest people like Pablo Escobar, the reality is "it will be your next door neighbor's son whose turn it was to buy drugs for their friend group." It might be enough to get a drug-dealing charge, which comes with felony penalties. With a felony record, it can be difficult to recover and get a job or to go to college without federal student loan assistance. "You guarantee that person is in the carceral system for life."

She encourages Camden County residents to contact the board of commissioners to ask what programs they are using the settlement funding to support. Anyone interested in joining the front lines or who needs to connect with resources can contact The National Center for Advocacy and Recovery for Behavioral Health (NCAAR-BH) at ncaar.org. "We have resources in every county," she said, and they can help support individuals and family members struggling with substance use disorders.

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TIME!!!**

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

The SandPaper

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Arts/Entertainment Writing THIRD PLACE

Jon Coen

Author, Filmmaker Comes Home to Shoot Movie Set on '70s LBI



DIVING IN: Underwater scenes are shot in an Ocean Acres pool. A few years ago, Novotny yielded to the pull of the saltwater tides.



NIGHTLIFE: 'Six Miles at Sea,' a short film by LBI's Bruce Novotny, wrapped up filming recently in several nearby locations and at all times of day. The story, set in 1974, tells of two boys' adventures in saving Springsteen.



JOKERIE: Actors Finn McKenna (left) and Colin Perrone play characters Finn and Gary in the film. In it, they 'harass' a garvey to get to Le Garage Discotheque As Go-Go, a short-lived Long Beach Township nightclub.

Novotny's 'Six Miles at Sea' Author, Filmmaker Comes Home to Shoot Movie Set on '70s LBI

By JON COEN
I t has been said the best art comes from suffering. On the second day Bruce Novotny was directing his first film, "Six Miles at Sea," on the bay, his legs were covered with goosebumps. For eight hours, he hunched, waded, flailed and calmed while soaked with salt and spatulated blood as he directed the action from a skiff. If the insect-avoidance, oppressive heat and raging winds held true to the saying, this should be a fantastic short film.

Fortunately, Novotny is familiar with the stinging job of the marlin pool. Though he now lives in Orland, Calif., he grew up on Long Beach Island. Novotny's grandfather bought Island Marina (currently Duck Cove Marina) in 1957. He graduated from Southern Regional High School in 1980.

"In the '80s my brother and I carved out a space in one of the buildings where we stored our surfboards and sometimes spent the night in a hammock or on crash-picked furniture. We called it, half-jokingly, 'Island Marina Surf Shop,'" Novotny recalled.



ON A MISSION: Late-night filming in Spring Beach captures the spirit of the project, which is Novotny's directorial debut. He also wrote the screenplay. Biographical elements pepper the tale.



RECORD: A vintage promo poster from the original Le Garage presents 'a live with' The Boss.

Continued on Page 38

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Coverage of Government THIRD PLACE

Monique M.
Demopoulos

Tuckerton May Reinstate Fire Co.; Tuckerton Fire Ignores Advice from Attorney

The SandPaper/Wednesday, March 8, 2023

30 CURRENTS

Tuckerton May Reinstate Fire Co. But With Stringent Conditions

Shared Services With Little Egg Harbor May End

Once again the issue of fire and EMS coverage in Tuckerton was brought to the public forum, with residents looking for reassurance.

The borough's fire services have been covered by Little Egg Harbor Fire Districts 1 and 3, and its EMS services have been covered by Great Bay EMS. Those services, provided through a shared services agreement in November, offer Tuckerton temporary aid, since the Tuckerton Volunteer Fire Co. was ordered to shut down on June 9, 2022.

The local fire company's shutdown was the borough's response to a June 6 letter from the Shore Region fire coordinator senior planner in the N.J. Department of Community Affairs, Division of Fire Safety. The letter outlined numerous deficiencies in the fire company, and multiple citations. The multiple fines already levied, plus the eventual insurance premiums as a result of the department's deficiencies, would have been an unfair burden on local taxpayers,

said Borough Attorney Christopher Connors, during a special meeting on June 6.

During the Feb. 22 council meeting, South Green Street resident Gary Corriero asked if there was a plan to reinstate the fire company and what that process would be.

"The reestablishment of the Tuckerton Fire Co. has not been decided as of this evening," said Connors, who added a decision could be made during executive session.

Connors outlined conditions under which the department could be reinstated. "They would have to conform with all of the standards in the Division of Fire Safety, N.J. Department of Health, N.J. Department of Labor and Workforce Development with regard to PEOSHA because that was an issue as well with the Tuckerton Volunteer Fire Co." However, if the fire company was unable to conform with the aforementioned standards, "then we would be right back to the situation that we have now," he said.

With regard to mutual aid, "West Tuckerton



Ryan Morrill

SHUTTERED: If the all-volunteer Tuckerton Fire Co. is returned to service, it will once again operate out of this building. The company, established in 1895, was closed down in 2022.

and Parkertown fire companies are now covering Tuckerton." While residents seem to have been happy with current coverage, Connors reminded that the coverage falls "under a shared service agreement, which has an expiration to it." Following the expiration, both companies would have to decide to continue the arrangement, "and we're not so certain that they would."

Connors advised. "In fact, there's a possibility they would not."

If the shared service agreements expire and are not renewed, and the Tuckerton Volunteer Fire Co. is not reinstated, the only alternative would be for the borough to establish its own department, Connors elaborated.

"Now, that might sound intriguing to a lot of individuals, but it comes with a lot of costs," warned Connors. First, while the borough owns the firetruck, it does not have possession of the firehouse, which is owned by the Tuckerton Volunteer Fire Co. The cost of purchasing a firehouse would fall, immediately, on taxpayers, he explained. Secondly, to meet the required standards, the borough would have to obtain a sufficient number of volunteers, which are hard to come by in almost every district.

"The governing body is now deliberating in a manner that will not cost the taxpayers an undue burden, and being able to get the coverage that it needs to protect the people," Connors said. "If it goes forward with that, there are going to be some guarantees that have to be met, or we're going to be right back to where we were in the first place."

While the reinstating of the Tuckerton Fire Co. seemed to be the implication, Connors emphasized, "We're not going to put our firetrucks in a firehouse and not have it operating properly, because not only does it threaten the fire service to the town, but it threatens the person that hangs on the back of the truck, and so we have to make sure they are protected as well."

Blaze Consumes 418 Acres

Wildfire Contained In Little Egg Harbor

A windblown wildfire that began midday Tuesday in the vicinity of Route 539 and Forge Road in Little Egg Harbor Township was reported "contained" at 7:30 p.m. by the New Jersey Forest Fire Service. It has been named, as is the custom of the Forest Fire Service, the Governor's Branch Wildfire, after a stream in the area.

The blaze was first spotted at 11:44 a.m. by forest service personnel manning aerial observation towers in Bass River and Lacey townships. Despite the recent rains, wildfire danger was listed as moderate throughout the Pinelands, meaning "No Campfire Restrictions" were in effect.

For a short time, part of Route 539 was closed because of smoke. For a brief period during the afternoon, the road was closed to

Forest Fire Service, told the media, adding, "State, county and local investigators were looking into how it might have started, but no cause was immediately apparent."

Authorities emphasized the wildfire was not the result of springtime "prescribed burns," conducted annually by the service to reduce the buildup of "potential fuels such as undergrowth, leaves, branches and pine needles on forest floors." Those

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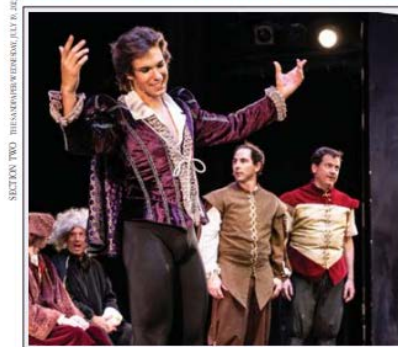
Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Critical Writing THIRD PLACE

Rick Mellerup

Surflight's 'Something Rotten'; Surflight's 'Annie Warbucks'; Hall's 'Out There' Gives Ken Burns Run for His Money

SECTION TWO • SECTION TWO • SECTION TWO • SECTION TWO • SECTION TWO



LEND ME YOUR EARS: Shakespeare (played by Noah Lyon), the rock star of Elizabethan London, waxes theatrical in Surflight's 'Something Rotten' production.

Surflight's 'Something Rotten' Actually Quite Fresh and Tasty

Quite simply, Surflight Theatre's current main-stage production, "Something Rotten," is hilarious. Those who take it in will have fun fun fun 'til Daddy takes their Tesla away.

Did you see what I did there, that I sampled the lyrics of 'The Beach Boys' hit? Well, the creative team behind "Something Rotten" — the brother team of Wayne and Karey Kirkpatrick, who conceived the show and wrote its music and lyrics, along with Englishman John O'Farrell, who joined Karey to write the show's book — sampled to a degree far beyond even any hip-hop performer I have ever heard. The snippets of songs from many Broadway classics can be heard, significant chunks of Shakespeare's greatest hits are repeated.

Even Surflight's costume designers, Shon LeBlanc and Will Bratman, with a tip from the show's tap choreographer, Paula Hammans Sloan, joined the sampling fun, with a certain pliancy, a recognizable fiddler and Victoria, the white cat from "Cats," making cameo appearances.

What! What is Victoria doing in a show set in London in 1592?

That will soon be explained. But first, let's take a look at the thriving theatrical scene in the days of Elizabeth I, as recounted by a misanthrope (Isiah Tucker) and the company in the musical's opening number, "Welcome to the Renaissance."

And we have a list of writers who are always writing something new:

Like Dicker! Whoa! John Richard! Whoa! Ben Jonson! Uh-huh! And Christopher Marlowe!

Thomas A'd, Thomas Middleton
Thomas More and our brightest star Whoa!
He's the bomb, the soul of the age
The wit of the Elizabethan stage
He's incredible
Unforgettable
He's just so freakin' awesome!
Shakespeare!
If the song had lasted longer, well over 100 additional playwrights could have been mentioned. There were some 20 playing companies involved in English Renaissance theater, and they seldom performed the same show two days in a row or even in a week. Instead, they relied on a repertory system.

In 1592, for example, Lord Strange's Men played at the Swan Theatre between February and June, six days a week excepting Good Friday and two other days. They performed 25 different plays. Where, Surflight actors are busy enough performing in one show while rehearsing the next.

Needless to say, the companies needed tons of fresh material. Thus the huge number of playwrights. And the companies were extremely competitive, which meant the playwrights had to scramble to come up with the next big hit. So they weren't averse to stealing each other's ideas, which persists to this day in so many of the arts.

In "Something Rotten," the brother team of Nick and Nigel Bottom (Vince Wingeter and Christopher Strangfeld, Surflight's technical director, who got the chance to step out onstage) and their company are rehearsing their next play, "Richard II." But their patron, Lord Clapham (Kyle Atkinson), arrives and tells them that Shakespeare is preparing his own "Richard II," which ticks off Nick mightily, considering the Bard had already done "Richard III" — how dare he go backward! He sings a song that many high school students would likely agree with:

*God, I hate Shakespeare!
That's right, I said it!
I do! I hate Shakespeare
I just don't get it
How a mediocre actor from a measly little town
Is suddenly the brightest jewel in England's royal crown*

Meanwhile, Nigel adores Shakespeare:
*But he's brilliant
What majesty flows from his pen.
His poetry pours like a sweet nectar
God's own inspiration like lightning darts strike him
And he captures my soul!*

Continued on Page 45, Sec. 2

Calendar

Mon. Jung. Staffed Beach Ocean County Library, 129 North Main St., Manahawick (609-997-3381) Some previous experience is helpful. Players are asked to bring their current-year game card and game sets. Seating is limited. 12:30-4 pm.

SATURDAYS

Ceramics Drop-in Classes. LBI Foundation of the Arts & Sciences, 120 Long Beach Blvd., Loveladies (609-494-1241 or lbifoundation.org) All ages 6 and older are welcome to play with clay using either hand-building or wheel-throwing techniques. 10 am-2 pm. Call for fees and other information.

Fire Me Up! Ceramics Painting Drop-in Classes. LBI Foundation of the Arts & Sciences, 120 Long Beach Blvd., Loveladies (609-494-1241 or lbifoundation.org) All ages 6 and older are welcome to paint a wide variety of already-made ceramic pieces. 10 am-2 pm. Call for fees and other information.

Concerts on the Green. Veterans Memorial Park, Beach Ave. between Englecliff Ave. & Amber St., Beach Haven. Wed., 7:30 pm. If inclement weather, held at LBI Historical Assn. Museum, Englecliff & Beach avcs. July 18, McLean Ave. Band; July 26, Diablo Sandwich Band; Aug. 2, The Kooze; Aug. 9, Curahy Street Band; Aug. 16, Jimmy & the Parrots; Aug. 23, Swift Band; Aug. 30, AN3 Band.

THURSDAYS

Concerts by the Bay. Ship Bottom Waterfront Park at the Bay, 1008 St. & Shore Ave. 6:30 pm. July 20 & Aug. 11, Jimmy & the Parrots; July 27, Voodoo; Aug. 5, The Counterfitters; Aug. 18, Tequila Rose Band; Aug. 17, Wood Science; Aug. 24, Danny's 52nd Street Band.

FRIDAYS

Free Pet Fridays. 60th Street ocean beach, Brent Beach (longbeachtownship.com) Fri., 7:30 pm. July 21, Kiki's Boneyard Band; Aug. 28, Jimmy & the Parrots; Aug. 4, Jon T. H. Always; Aug. 11, Englecliff; Aug. 18, Chris Fied & the Impulives; Aug. 25, Frontiers; Sept. 1, Suez Attack.

Music at the Seaport. Tackerton Seaport, 120 West St. 9:00-2:00 (info at tackertonseaport.org) Attendees should bring a beach chair or blanket. 6:30-8 pm. July 21, Joey D & Johnny B; July 28, Bloodred Rocks.

SAUNDAYS

Concerts at the Bay. Municipal dock, Bayshore Drive, Barnegat (609-698-4000), sat. 12:30-3 pm. If rain, at Brent Beach Middle School, Barnegat Blvd. South doors open at 6:30 pm. July 22, the Kooze Band; July 29, Joey D & Johnny B; Rockin' Oldies; Aug. 5, Woody 60s; Aug. 12, the Jalapeño Trio; Aug. 19, Joey Jackson; Aug. 26, White Rabbit; Sept. 2, Reflection Station.

Indoor Concerts. Albert Music Hall, 111 Wells Mills Rd. (Rte. 532), Waterford (609-971-1593) or albertmusic.org A variety of Magician and Pictorial bands perform. Admission: adult, \$5; child younger than 12, \$3. Doors open, 6 pm; show, 7:30-11:30 pm.

SUNDAYS

'Kiss Me, Kate.' Ocean County College, Gramin Center (Parking Lot #2), College Drive, Toms River (732-255-0500; TTY, 732-255-0424; gromanager@oceancc.edu) Tickets: adult, \$25; senior, \$22; student, \$18. Fri., 7:30 pm; Sat., 2 pm; Sun., 2 & 7:30 pm.

AUGUST 1-20

'Annie Warbucks.' Surflight Theatre, Englecliff & Beach avcs., Beach Haven (609-492-9477 or surflight.org) View schedule and purchase tickets online. Tickets also available at the box office and by phone.

FRIDAY/SUNDAY, JULY 21-23

'Kiss Me, Kate.' Ocean County College, Gramin Center (Parking Lot #2), College Drive, Toms River (732-255-0500; TTY, 732-255-0424; gromanager@oceancc.edu) Tickets: adult, \$25; senior, \$22; student, \$18. Fri., 7:30 pm; Sat., 2 pm; Sun., 2 & 7:30 pm.

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FRIDAY/SUNDAY, AUGUST 4-6

'Finding Nemo Jr.' Ocean County College, Gramin Center (Parking Lot #2), College Drive, Toms River (732-255-0500; TTY, 732-255-0424; gromanager@oceancc.edu) Tickets: adult, \$19; senior or child, \$17. Fri., 7:30 pm; Sat., 2 & 7 pm; Sun., 2 pm.

MONDAY, JULY 24

Xtreme Opera. Surflight Theatre, Englecliff & Beach avcs., Beach Haven (609-492-9477 or surflight.org) Ticket, \$41.50. 5 & 8 pm.

THURSDAY, JULY 27

The Peter Beroa. LBI Foundation of the Arts & Sciences, 120 Long Beach Blvd., Loveladies (609-494-1241 or lbifoundation.org) Doors open, 6:30 pm; concert begins, 7 pm. Purchase tickets online.

SUNDAY, JULY 30

Haley Bonard. LBI Foundation of the Arts & Sciences, 120 Long Beach Blvd., Loveladies (609-494-1241 or lbifoundation.org) Doors open, 6:30 pm; concert begins, 7 pm. Purchase tickets online.

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SATURDAY, AUGUST 5

Chevy Lopez. LBI Foundation of the Arts & Sciences, 120 Long Beach Blvd., Loveladies (609-494-1241 or lbifoundation.org) Doors open, 6:30 pm; concert begins, 7 pm. Purchase tickets online.

NGCB: Rockin' the Hits on 80 Keys. Island Beach Ocean County Library, 217 South Central Ave., Surf City (609-494-2480) The concert features classic hits and standards from the 1950s, '60s and '70s. 2 pm. Call to register or visit thecountyslibrary.org.

WEEDS/DAYS

Concerts by the Bay. Sunset Park, West Salem Ave., Harvey Calan (609-361-7090) 7 pm. July 19, Ryan Greenman and Cecilia Fish; July 26, The Dandelions; Aug. 2, Tequila Rose Band; Aug. 9, Barbara Lin Band; Aug. 16, Dual Reckoning.

Theater

Comedy

Music

Notes

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

New Writing THIRD PLACE

David Biggy

Stafford District Faces \$2.3 Million State Aid Cut; Stafford Mayor to Make Run at Assembly; Jen’s Links Goes Up for Sale

Price Tag Nearly \$6 Million

Jen’s Links at LBI Goes Up For Sale In Barnegat Light

When owner Jennifer Lackland passed away unexpectedly about five months ago, the future of Jen’s Links at LBI became an uncertainty. On Wednesday, Jan. 4, the newest miniature golf course on Long Beach Island, which opened in Barnegat Light in May 2019 and had become the premier amusement attraction on the north end, officially was listed for sale.

“Jennifer’s heart and soul went into it, but, unfortunately, the sad reality is I have to put it in the hands of somebody else,” said David Lackland, who became the decision maker with regard to the property following his sister’s passing on Aug. 9 at age 53. “I’ve lived out of state for over 20 years, and it’s just not a practical decision to keep it.”

The property, located at 501 Broadway, is listed for almost \$6 million.

After a zoning change – removing golf courses and other uses from the list of projects previously not permitted within the borough – passed in 2013, paving the way for a miniature golf course, Jennifer Lackland sought to bring not just a unique family entertainment business to the north end but also a walking history lesson, utilizing

replicas of historic sites and other attractively themed elements to accompany informational signs with tidbits detailing LBI’s past.

Designed by Wildwood-based Harris Miniature Golf Courses Inc. with two levels and unique obstacles and challenges, the plans for Jen’s Links were approved by the Barnegat Light Planning Board in July 2016, with groundbreaking and construction beginning in 2018.

Once the project was finished and the two 18-hole courses opened for business, it became a popular destination. Jen’s Links had a financially strong first season as mini golfers from across the globe stopped by to play a round or two while visiting the Island, according to management. The COVID-19 pandemic put a significant damper on operations during the 2020 season, but in 2021 and 2022, even with Barnegat Lighthouse closed for renovations for much of this past year, business was solid, management said.

After Jennifer Lackland passed, the course’s operation fell into her brother’s hands. And while he initially intended to keep his sister’s dream of providing a fun miniature golfing experience to residents and visitors intact, he recently realized it simply would be too much for him to manage from afar.



David Biggy

BACK IN THE DAY: When Jen’s Links at LBI opened in May 2019, miniature golfers of all ages packed the courses throughout the season. Now, the family entertainment venue’s future is an uncertainty.

“I love my sister and it hurts that I even have to think about this,” said David Lackland, now principal owner of Lackland Associates, which oversees the operation of Lackland Self Storage. “But I’m not there and I don’t really have the time to run the operation, and I don’t have a management company in place that can run it, so selling the property is the most sensible option.”

He said the hope is that somebody will buy the property and keep it as a miniature golf course, but he also understands a buyer has the right to convert the property into something else. Jen’s Links at LBI is listed for sale on the website of Barnegat Light’s Joy Luedtke Real Estate with an ask-

ing price of \$5,999,000.

“This spacious parcel is currently being operated as a state of the art 36-hole miniature golf course with extensive hardscaping, waterfall holes, and ample parking,” the listing states. “The adjoining building is well fitted with a spacious patio deck, full electric kitchen with commercial walk-in freezer, and front/back office space. Jen’s Links is being offered turnkey with all commercial appliances included.”

“The general business and marine commercial zoning allows for a wide range of possibilities, including residential development. Keep on putting or revert this coveted parcel back to 7 single family lots for prime

development.”

On the Jen’s Links at LBI Facebook page, the Dec. 31 post reads: “Another season and year in the books for us! Thank you to each and every one of our employees, guests, and the management team. Happy New Year and we will see you again in 2023.”

Depending on when the property’s sale is complete, whether Jen’s Links will open for another season, or many more seasons, is unknown at this time. During the past few seasons, the course has opened for weekend play in April and closed for the year on or shortly after Halloween.

— David Biggy

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Enterprise THIRD PLACE

David Biggy

Donohue Sr. Has Always Given
His Best; Donohue Jr. Has
Watched Dad Pour Into
Programs; Donohue Q&A

82

Mentoring On and Off the Field for 50 Years

Donohue Sr. Has Always Given His Best

By DAVID BIGGY

Coaching and football. Are they really different? Or, they are. But while the job of a classroom has a lot more static and most involved, the job of a football coach isn't too much different in the sense that he often has to take something, clean it up and prepare it for presentation.

Classroom deliverables for the market. Football coaches deliver football scars for the next game. Chuck Donohue Sr. knows quite well the similarities – he spent many years coaching during his stints on Long Beach Island.

However, he also knows one major difference. Class is determined to enjoy as a read. High school football players are delivered into their adulthood.

"When a kid goes to high school, he's running out of time to be coached," said Donohue Sr., one of his 50th seasons as a head coach and 26th at Southern Regional High School. "A kid has to be ready for what's coming after that, and the kid needs to remain solid through a lot of ups and downs. And it doesn't matter what position the kid plays. You don't have to be a star or starter to learn from the game. You can be the game and learn to do the right things because the game teaches you about life."

For 50 seasons – and let's get what defines a season out of the way right now, since for him a season encompasses almost the entire year, not just August through November – Donohue has poured his heart and soul into thousands of off-season workouts, practice sessions, team meetings, locker room checks, uniform diapering, post-game speeches, pep assemblies and anything else the job required.

And in doing so, the lifelong teacher – that's really what a coach is, he says – has always remained focused on his utmost responsibility: the commitment to the student-athlete under his care and direction.

"It's not about me," he said. "It's about wins and losses the way they should be taken, knowing we either did a lot of things right or a lot of things wrong, and you fix things and make them better on, at least, keep them consistent. But it's about next week. When one game's over, you're thinking about next week and getting the kids ready for the next challenge."

"And it's all about the kids. That's the goal. It's their experience that matters. No matter how happy or depressed you are, you have to remember that it's about the kids. You can't get too full of yourself when you're having success and can't get too down when things aren't going the right way. As coaches, we still have to coach every kid every single day. Correct them all. Praise them all. Kill them all. Every kid on the team matters."

Q&A

Q: Is there a single piece of advice you've given over the years that is the most important piece of advice you've given?

A: Stick out a career that's going to make you want to go to work every day. That's what has happened to me, and I've always passed along that advice to kids.

Q: What's your favorite position to coach?

A: Offensive line. Those kids are very team oriented and very close, and they're the ones that get the least amount of individual attention.

Q: Who's been your most favorite player to coach?

Probably a kid by the name of George Maxwell. He was at Bayside when I got there, he was an offensive guard. We went to the wilderness and made him a fullback. So, he became an inside linebacker and fullback and he was a tremendous leader. He never said a word, but he was never about the way he carried himself; the way he played. Each school had a couple of kids, but he really stuck out.

Q: Do you eat before games?

A: I don't really eat much on the day of a game, except for maybe in the morning. It's tough to concentrate on anything else but the game. There's a lot to do, and food just doesn't really make its way into the mix. If we're on the road, I'll usually eat some pasta. But for home games, I might get to a bowl of cereal or something like that, whatever I have time for.

Continued on Page 64

that's where the benefits were – you took it," Donohue said. "At that point in my career, we already had three kids, so I was mostly concerned about getting benefits for my family. It was just the best move for my family."

Still, while coaching at Haddon Heights for five seasons reaped its over-rewards as his team went 20-20-1, Donohue believed he couldn't pass up his next opportunity, which came in the form of Southern Regional High School, where his squads went 43-2 through 12 seasons.

Haddon Heights won 45 minutes away and Bayside was five minutes from our house," Donohue said. "It was pretty much right down the road, so it was an easy choice. It was a much better situation for me and my family."

Once Donohue's children were grown, Southern Ocean County seemed to be calling to him. When the head coaching job opened up at Southern following Terry Miller's exit from 1987 through 1993, Donohue applied for it. He was named down in Favor of Larry Shaskan, who coached the Bays through the 1997 season.

"John never laid me out to get into the 1970s, so if you had an opportunity to get into a public school – because



Supplied and Staff Photos

JOURNEY THROUGH TIME: During his first season as a head coach, a 26-year-old Chuck Donohue Sr. (top left) led St. Joseph-Hammonson in a 4-4 campaign and a victory over rival Haddonson on Thanksgiving Day. As a head coach for five decades, Donohue has mentored thousands of players at Southern Regional High School. He's been calling for them since 1976, after the second time he applied to take the position.

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Coverage of Elections/Politics THIRD PLACE

Eric Englund

Oldham Withdraws from Race; Mayor Oldham Accepts Write-In Bid; Down by 15 Votes, Mayor Jon Oldham Files for Recount

34
The Star Ledger/Thursday, September 6, 2023



U.S. Coast Guard video by Petty Officer 3rd Class Carmen Carter
ALL TIED UP: After the lines of two kite surfers became tangled near Sledge Island, a crew from Coast Guard Station Barnegat Light recovered one of the individuals who needed assistance.

Coast Guard Rescues Kite Surfer Across From Station Barnegat Light

A kite surfer was rescued from a sandbar about a mile from Coast Guard Station Barnegat Light, near Sledge Island, on the afternoon of Aug. 31. A 29-foot response crew responded to a call from a Good Samaritan who notified watchstanders at Sector Delaware Bay, navigated the shallow bay waters to locate the individual and transferred him back to the station. The man said he became stranded after he tangled with another kite surfer, who released his kite and swam to the side of the channel. Both kite surfers were reported to be in good condition with no medical concerns, according to the Coast Guard. —G.G.S.

Samaritan who notified watchstanders at Sector Delaware Bay, navigated the shallow bay waters to locate the individual and transferred him back to the station. The man said he became stranded after he tangled with another kite surfer, who released his kite and swam to the side of the channel. Both kite surfers were reported to be in good condition with no medical concerns, according to the Coast Guard. —G.G.S.

At the taxpayers group meeting, which Oldham attended, there were questions raised about the Bible Conference's tax-exempt nonprofit status, according to association President Kathleen Reis. "They were asking whether it was a taking organization, or a giving organization," said Reis. "People wondered if they are paying their fair share. They do pay for their own trash pickup and water." Gieger, who was also in attendance, said there was talk of initiating an "impact study" on the conference in relationship to the municipality. "The conference has expanded over the years," he said. "The question was if the conference's contributions are in line with the services they receive." Gieger said the level of questioning about the conference was unexpected. "I could sense some anger in their voices," he said. "But then this is the once-a-year meeting, so people probably felt like venting."



Jack Reynolds

CURRENTS Oldham Withdraws From Harvey Cedars Commissioner Race

Imperiale Next in Line to Become Mayor

Last month, longtime Harvey Cedars Mayor Jonathan Oldham had planned to seek another four-year term on the Harvey Cedars Borough Commission. But that all changed when the Harvey Cedars Bible Conference, of which he has been executive director for 28 years, came up as a hot-button topic at a recent borough taxpayers association general membership meeting. "I had decided to run one more term until politics brought the conference into the conversation and spotlight," said Oldham. "I do not want to start a war, but I removed my name because I cannot damage the conference over politics." With Oldham out of the race, Deputy Mayor John Imperiale, Commissioner Paul Rice and Joe Gieger will be running uncontested for the

three commission seats in November. Oldham has held the gavel for 30 years and was first elected in 1991. A non-denominational facility, the conference was founded in 1941. Ten years later, Oldham's father, the late Rev. Albert Oldham, became its director. When he retired in 1995, Jonathan succeeded him as director. The centerpiece structure is the building that was once the Harvey Cedars Hotel. Dating back to the 1830s, when it was originally a one-story vacation spot for fishermen and hunters, it is the last of the 19th-century hotels on Long Beach Island still standing. "The conference conducts regular services of religious worship and uses its lands and premises as a place for religious education and wholesome recreational activities," said Oldham. "Activities include operating a retreat lodging facility, offering Christian Bible conferences, (and) distributing Bibles, books and other Christian materials through a bookstore." At the taxpayers group meeting, which Oldham attended, there were questions raised about the Bible Conference's tax-exempt nonprofit status, according to association President Kathleen Reis. "They were asking whether it was a taking organization, or a giving organization," said Reis. "People wondered if they are paying their fair share. They do pay for their own trash pickup and water." Gieger, who was also in attendance, said there was talk of initiating an "impact study" on the conference in relationship to the municipality. "The conference has expanded over the years," he said. "The question was if the conference's contributions are in line with the services they receive." Gieger said the level of questioning about the conference was unexpected. "I could sense some anger in their voices," he said. "But then this is the once-a-year meeting, so people probably felt like venting."

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Investigative Reporting THIRD PLACE

Gina G. Scala

Wind Survey Says: Most LBI Taxpayers Don't Like Plan; JCTA Survey Grabs Only One Moment

14
The SandPaper/Wednesday, June 7, 2023

CURRENTS

Wind Survey Says: Most LBI Taxpayers Don't Like the Plan

JCTA Survey Grabs Only One Moment
'Don't Allow Any Bias to Exist'

Six months. That's how long it took members of the Joint Council of Taxpayers Associations of Long Beach Island to design a survey aimed at learning more about the feelings of its constituent organizations' members when it comes to the proposed Atlantic Shores wind farm planned off LBI.

It took that long to ensure it was as objective and thorough as it could be, said Rand Pearsall, president of the Holgate Taxpayers Association. With a professional background in advertising, communications and marketing, he helped develop the survey for the JCTA.

"When we give people things to rate, they are rotated. If you were to take the survey, this would not be

Continued on Page 36

More Information Still Needed About Offshore Proposal

After this month, federal officials will hear from Long Beach Island homeowners, among others, about their attitudes and beliefs regarding proposed offshore wind farms off the coast of New Jersey. Member organizations of the Joint Council of Taxpayers Associations of LBI already know how its members feel about one planned off the barrier island.

"Attitudes toward the wind farms are negative overall and generally consistent geographically and demographically across LBI," according to the survey's executive summary. "There is a significant amount of people who would like to have more information."

As proposed, the Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind farm will see 1,000-foot-high turbines between 9.5 and 13.5 miles offshore of the entire length of LBI, extending farther eastward into the Atlantic Ocean. While offshore construction is expected to begin later in the decade, an exact date has not yet been set.

"As project owners, Atlantic Shores and the Bureau of Ocean



Standing Room
Space to Practice for Summer

Jack Reynolds
UPRIGHT: A stand-up paddleboarder gets a jump on the season on a day with the bay to themselves. Soon the water will attract enough other like-minded water travelers to have a flotilla.

Energy Management have been less effective in reaching our members and could be more active," according to the survey, which said taxpayers groups are the most frequently cited source of information about the plan followed by traditional media and Save LBI.

In fact, the survey shows Save LBI's community outreach appears to be having an impact on homeowners' attitude on the proposed wind farm. The organization, formerly known as LBI Coalition for Wind without Impact, is the grassroots, nonpartisan organization comprised of more than 8,000 businesses and homeowners

fighting to move the placement of offshore wind turbines farther into the Atlantic.

The survey, which was conducted via email over a three-day period in February, had a total of 1,545 respondents that yielded 1,343 completed questionnaires. Of the JCTA's 11 member organizations, only Ship Bottom and Loveladies did not participate in the survey, which provided 15 impact statements and asked participants to rank their feelings on a scale of 1 to 7 with the latter being the most positive impact.

Of those who completed the survey, 53% do not support wind energy

off LBI or elsewhere, while 37% support wind energy, but not necessarily the current plan. In fact, only 13% support the current plan. This means 77% of respondents do not support the plan for the proposed wind farm off the Island even though some in this group still generally support wind energy off LBI.

And while three out of four respondents believe extreme weather is a threat to the Island, only 24.2% believe wind energy could be part of a solution to address extreme weather, the survey said.

Additionally, the highest rated negative impacts of the current offshore facility planned for off LBI are on wildlife, 75.1%; daytime visibility of turbines, 74.1%; commercial fishing and construction of the wind farm, both with 71.5%.

Old Barney's Facelift Is Done; Lighthouse Reopening

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Critical Writing SECOND PLACE

Victoria Ford

Pine Shores Brings Exhibit to Tuckerton; Scenes Awash in Light; Spring Tides Art Show; Plein Air Plus at LBIF

The Sun/Paper/Video/Photo, May 10, 2023



Ryan Johnson



Ryan Johnson

Scenes Awash in Light: Spring Tides Art Show At Black Eyed Susans

By VICTORIA FORD
Their sky meets water. Where clouds and atmosphere play, catching light and casting shadows on life below. Where the horizon pulls the eye to the reaches of imagination. At the intersection of image, memory and emotion is where photographer Ann Coon and scenic painter Elizabeth Sabine eye; up, look up, and share their most expressive selves.
The "Spring Tides" art exhibit was for one weekend only and the first of its kind to occupy the upstairs space at Black Eyed Susans in Harvey Cedars.
Coon lives in High Bar Harbor; Sabine lives in Barnegat. They were mutual admirers from afar until they met last year at an event at The Mound in Manahawick and right away realized their work shares a certain dreamlike quality, most often described as serene. They get coffee and forged an alliance. The idea to have an art show at Susans had already been discussed by Sabine and restaurant co-owner/art patron Ashley Pellegrino. So they said, "Let's do this," and the rest fell into place rather easily.
"Ashley's very good at setting a scene," Coon said. "She saw this before we did."
"She went over and beyond to make this happen," Sabine added.
The three women together could not be stopped.

With grasshopper laid, they turned their eyes to the skies. With a combined total of about 30 photographs and paintings, the women transformed the dining room, currently used only for private parties, into an intimate art venue, bathed in soft grays, blues and whites, amplified by natural light.
The available wall space lent itself to hanging works of different sizes and in different arrangements.
The installation was a piece of cake, Coon said.
"I really just jived," she summarized, pointing out similarities in how they use negative space and proportions in their compositions.
The cocktail reception on Friday brought friends and loved ones to celebrate the artists and their work. Saturday brought a steady stream, as well.
Stephanie and Stephen Smetrycz of Forked River, owners of Sorely Rae's Kitchen food truck, attended in support of everyone involved.
"I thought all the pieces were calming and serene," Stephanie said. "Very beautiful."
Amy Grady of Manahawick, a longtime friend of Sabine's, said the paintings convey tranquility, "which, growing up at the beach, is how it makes me feel, so I love her work. I feel like it also reflects her still, laid-back personality, which I also love."
Sabine describes her style as modern impressionist seascape, moving toward abstract as she learns to



Victoria Ford

ART-BEAT

loosen up artistically. Her intention is to evoke "calmness in a crazy world," she said. "My overall goal is to have my client's viewer make a personal connection to the art, that it would speak to them on an emotional level, perhaps reminding them of a beach they visited and made amazing memories."
"Many have expressed that my artwork brings them peace."
Coon has no pop-up gallery this year, and she has purposefully cut back on wedding photography to make more room for exhibition, having whetted her appetite at the end of last summer with her first solo show, "As the Fog Rolls In."
Coon said she loved that show, the body of work and the venue, her temporary storefront in Beach Haven — "but I don't want to put my energy into a space that's not going to be there in a year. It's too much work."
So, until a more permanent solution comes along, she's learning the art of floating.
Meanwhile, Sabine has a continuous flow of commission work and shows her paintings about 12 times per year. She is inspired about her art, clocking in at her home studio every day from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., whether she's actually painting, or instead tending to the business of prepping canvases or building frames.
"If I know that I'm not 'feeling it,' I'll go outside, do some landscaping," she said. For an extra boost of inspiration, sometimes she'll take her kids, 14, 12 and 8, to the beach.
Coon's son turns 11 this week. The two mothers/artists/businesswomen will show and sell their work at Beach Haven's Art Walk in June and the Harvey Cedars Arts Festival in July.
victoria@thebeandsunpaper.net

ETHEREAL: (Clockwise from above) Images by Coon (left) and Sabine go together like oil and flour. The art lovers pour in, to drink it in. Tony Coon helps install.

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Public Service SECOND PLACE

Gina G. Scala

Public Safety Concerns
Prompt Legal Action to Stop
Summer Work



16
The StarPapers/Wednesday, July 12, 2023

Jack Reynolds



Ryan Morrill

CURRENTS Public Safety Concerns Prompt Legal Action To Stop Summer Work

*DOT Says Decision
Hasn't Been Made
About LBI Roads*

Despite fierce objections from local elected officials, emergency personnel and the public, the N.J. Department of Transportation appears committed to continuing road work in Ship Bottom at the height of the Long Beach Island summer. Some local leaders have gone so far as to suggest the untimely work is payback for the Island's vocal opposition to the governor's offshore wind agenda.

"Sounds like it's (Gov. Phil) Murphy's 'Bridgegate.' We're fighting offshore wind. We have lawsuits against the DEP (Department of Environmental Protection)," Long Beach Township Mayor Joseph Mancini said Monday, noting in the past when road or lane closures were set to happen during the summer, state officials gave the Island a break, understanding there is only one way on and one way off. "It's just a little coincidental" that the consideration for public safety and for first responders, too, is off the table this summer, Mancini said.

On Tuesday morning, Steve Schapiro, state Department of Transportation spokesman, said, "No decisions have been made regarding the summer work schedule in Ship Bottom. Any claims of a decision being made are premature and purely speculation. NJDOT is investigating feasible op-



Ryan Morrill

WIND JAM: Offshore wind and summer road work are two fronts that have pitted Island officials, including LBT Mayor Joseph Mancini (above), against the state recently.

tions to mitigate impacts to the community while still moving forward on this very important regional project without further delays."

Ahead of the Fourth of July, Island officials met with New Jersey's deputy attorney general and representatives of the DOT to lay out their concerns about shutting down lanes and road work, Mancini said. Road work at the gateway to LBI was temporarily halted from June 28 through July 7, when Island officials said they were notified the project would continue on weekdays this summer.

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

First Amendment SECOND PLACE

Gina G. Scala

2025 New End Date for
Causeway Work
After Summer Break

44
The Sand Paper/Wednesday, September 27, 2023

CURRENTS

2025 New End Date For Causeway Work After Summer Break

Land Encroachment Unresolved Until Then

Completion of the state's multi-year, federally funded \$312 million Causeway expansion and rehabilitation project has been pushed back from late 2024 to early 2025.

"The original completion date was the end of 2024," Stephen Schapiro, spokesperson for the state Department of Transportation, said Tuesday. "With the resumption of work after the summer hiatus requested by the town, the completion date has been adjusted slightly to early 2025."

Meanwhile, a memorializing resolution, unanimously approved by the Ship Bottom Land Use Board last week, lays out the conditions and expectations related to the operations of Hotel LBI, located at the gateway to the Island. Still, final site plan approval cannot be granted until the state Causeway rehabilitation project is completed.

"... The applicant is dependent

upon the NJDOT (N.J. Department of Transportation) either selling, transferring or providing a license to the applicant to be able to use portions of the state right-of-way in conjunction with the hotel's operation," according to the memorializing resolution.

While the 62-page document notes the applicant's interactions with the state agency are beyond the board's jurisdiction, "in this instance, the hotel's operation is dependent upon some final resolution with the DOT as to how the lands adjacent to the hotel will be used by either the general public coming to Long Beach Island, or in-turn, those guests and visitors using the Hotel LBI facility."

Initially, the board set Dec. 1, 2024 for Baldwin Residence LLC, trading as Hotel LBI, to obtain its final site plan approval. At its Sept. 20 meeting, attorney Glenn Kienz recommended the board push out the timeframe one full year, saying the Causeway project



Ryan Morrill

WAITING: The resolution of right-of-way issues between the owners of Hotel LBI and the N.J. Department of Transportation won't be finalized until after the multi-year Causeway project is completed, sometime in 2025.

probably wouldn't finish up "until at least June 2025." He acted as special counsel for the board during the hotel's 2023 application process.

On Tuesday, the DOT confirmed the completion date of the Causeway project has changed.

In July, the DOT announced its decision to pause the project after a tense summer in which Island officials, businesses, first responders and the public made their traffic concerns known in Trenton. Work resumed earlier this month in Ship Bottom. It marked the second consecutive summer where work was halted. In

2022, the DOT shut down the project in the borough due to water and soil contamination. It also stopped work in Stafford Township after crews discovered a culvert under Route 72 near Marsha Drive needed repair before a new lane could be built over it.

At issue where Hotel LBI is concerned is the status of the acquisition of the DOT-owned land near the hotel property, which stems from encroachment concerns on state-owned rights-of-way. The concerns first came to light at a 2019 land use board meeting, where it was noted the hotel owner was still awaiting a response from the

DOT. In October 2020, state transportation officials said the issue would be resolved during the final phase of the Causeway project.

"(The) applicant must await completion of the DOT improvements until it can acquire the property on which it currently has a limited license for these improvements and, therefore, while shown on the plans, are not appropriate for final approval until such time as the borough's construction department receives written notification that the DOT property has been acquired," the memorializing resolutions reads. "The board concludes this is the best way of moving forward in allowing the hotel to function as a resort while at the same time ensuring that all other appropriate agency approvals have been received."

Look Up: LBI Fly International Kite Festival Returns

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Best Lede SECOND PLACE

Gina G. Scala

Beach Patrol, Volunteers Rally to Beached Whale; Indicators Show Risk; Tradition on Full Display at Coast Guard Ceremony

42 CURRENTS

Save LBI Fights Feds' Proposal To Change Law

NEPA Update Would Eliminate the Public

The federal government is proposing changes to the National Environmental Policy Act that would, if approved, delay the preparation of impact statements until the end of its decision-making process and eliminate public input.

"NEPA is one of the most important environmental laws in the United States," said Bob Stern, Save LBI president. "It ensures that the public has a say in any federal decision that could significantly affect the environment, and it helps to protect our natural resources. The proposed rule would effectively gut the NEPA by allowing agencies to ignore the environmental impacts of their decisions until it is too late to do anything about them."

The changes are being proposed by the Council of Environmental Quality. Stern, who managed the NEPA affairs for the U.S. Department of Energy, addressed the council during an Aug. 26 webinar.

"The proposed rule is a clear attack on the NEPA and on the environment," the Beach Haven resident said. "We urge the CEQ to withdraw this harmful rule provision and uphold the intent of NEPA to protect our environment and give the public a meaningful voice in the decisions that affect them."

Under the proposed change, agencies would decide on programs, technologies and geographic locations for projects without an environmental impact statement and public input, Stern said.

"This provision excludes the public from early decisions when real alternatives are open and environmental problems can be avoided," he told the council Aug. 26. "Postponing those environmental issues to a late stage when only a restricted and often prejudiced go/no-go decision on a specific project is the subject invites litigation, dissension and delay. This serves neither the interest of the public, the environment, nor the developer."

Stern also testified Save LBI supporters care about the NEPA process and making it work, saying they recognize the wording was included in the recent Fiscal Responsibility Act

'What They Did Was Heroic'

Beach Patrol, Volunteers Rally to Beached Whale

On his day off as co-captain of the Long Beach Township Beach Patrol in Loveladies, Nick Delfico simply stopped by to check out the waves. Instead, he found himself assisting with a stranded pygmy sperm whale on Seaview Avenue.

He noticed the beach patrol emergency lights flashing when he arrived after attending an Aug. 29 event for Alliance for a Living Ocean, of which he is executive director. The Marine Mammal Stranding Center was already aware of the stranded, nearly 11-foot-long whale. Local MMSC volunteers had been immediately dispatched while the center's staff mobilized from Brigantine with the cetacean response vehicle.

"Joe Dolphin was filling in for me, so I waved him down and jumped in the passenger seat," Delfico said, adding staff from the stranding center had just arrived, too. "They got in the back (of the truck), and we rode down to Seaview."

Once there, they discovered Kenny Gomez, a beach patrol lieutenant, along with local MMSC volunteers, had kept the whale alive for two hours by keeping her upright and wet as she lay on the beach, he said. Pygmy whales feed at depths of more than 1,000 feet and are rarely spotted close to shore.

"He and our local MMSC volunteers were soaking wet in the shore break with this amazing alien-like creature; I had never seen anything like it," Delfico said. "She weighed over 800 pounds, but we were able to slide her onto a stretcher with the added help of my co-captain, Chris Burkhardt, who I had called earlier."

A crew from the township's public works department drove a truck to the water's edge, where the whale was lifted into it and later moved off the beach to the transport vehicle, he said.

"It was honestly amazing no one got hurt moving that much weight, but as lifeguards and animal lovers, we tapped into that second gear and got it done," Delfico said. "Kenny is a Marine, and he, Chris and Joe are some of the strongest people I know, so we were really lucky to have them on the beach that day."

Workers from David Ash Jr. Landscape Contractors were also enlisted to help transfer the whale into the MMSC vehicle, which was an even heavier lift than the middle



Supplied Photos
COME TOGETHER: Long Beach Township lifeguards and local volunteers for the Marine Mammal Stranding Center kept a female pygmy sperm whale alive until MMSC staff arrived from Brigantine to take over her care.

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Fresh Approach to Routine Reporting SECOND PLACE

Juliet Kaszas-Hoch

Fathers and Fishing: Generations of Shapiros 'With Saltwater in Their Veins'



INNOVATION: From top left: Max Shapiro and son Patrick show off their catches. Max and his dad, Mark, hold up bluefish in a shot from about 1968. P.J. is an avid and adept surf-caster. Herb Shapiro shows the crab trap in an old photo. Herb, Mark, Max and P.J. walk. Top: Herb goes fishing in 1928. On the lookout for fish.

Fathers and Fishing: Generations of Shapiros 'With Saltwater in Their Veins'

By JULIET KASZAS-HOCH
Patrick "P.J." Shapiro held his first fishing rod at age 11, a 4-foot-long pole his dad Mark bought from Jimmie Hall and Tackle in Beach Haven. The father and son, now 9, fished Hobbie Lake in Manahawick, near where the family resides, and P.J. — as this story of course begins — was hooked.
Really, though, the story of the Shapiro family pursuing fish from the shores of Long Beach Island begins nearly a century ago.
Herb Shapiro, now 100 and P.J.'s great-grandfather (his "Pop-Pop-Pop" or "Three-Pops"), said his father, Morris, was not an angler, but he certainly enjoyed a fish dinner. "My dad, who bought 55 acres ocean to buy in 1926, developed Beach Haven Park and knew nothing about crabbing. As I grew up, all the local kids learned how to crab, dig for clams and fish."
"My dad, almost every day,

would go to Beach Haven Crest where the pond fishing boats emptied. The nets set 3 miles offshore and they were pulled ashore by horses," added Herb, who recently traveled from his residence in Maplewood to his home on LBI for the summer. "Always in a jacket and tie and hat, the fishermen knew him and would give him the small unsalable butterfish, some of them still alive. That's the closest he came to fishing."
Mark, meanwhile, remembers fishing with his father, Mark, off the beach at from the deck of a boat while growing up in Holgate and Beach Haven. He's also been deep sea fishing with grandfather Herb, who, along with the rest of the family, loves to crab.
As Matt's wife, Allison Ryan, explained, "what developed a love for surf fishing and was LBI's first youth fishing scholarship when he was in his teens. During his college years he used to drive back from Rutgers, New Brunswick, late at night to get lines in

the water."
For Matt and P.J., both fishing is a fundamental, and naturally fun, part of life. "Matt and Pat are inseparable and have spent many summers and seasons together fishing the tides," said Allison. "During the fall tournament they're out in the freezing cold at 4 a.m. waiting on striped bass, and in the spring dirty they're out until either the sun is long down or they catch something worth keeping — which ever comes first."
"They certainly put the time in," she continued. "P.J. often goes to school with salty hair and sand in his shoes," and nearly every day after school or soccer practice, she does heads to the beach.
Allison said P.J. is "having the spring of his life, having reeled in a 20-44-pound bass," which currently

holds second place in the dirty (the 21st Annual LBI Surf Fishing Tournament), as well as a few other large strippers, a keeper fish and a 18.25-pound black drum.
P.J., who noted that he and his dad primarily fish the beaches of south Beach Haven and Holgate, has learned all the intricacies of the venue from

his father. "He's definitely has taught me a lot," P.J. remarked. "You have to be patient for things to happen. He's very patient. You have to put in the time and effort. My dad puts a lot of time into fishing, and he puts a lot of time into me."
Continued on Page 46, Sec. 2

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

**Interpretive
Writing
SECOND PLACE**

Gina G. Scala

**Save LBI Eyes Energy
Rates from Turbines**

20
The SandPaper/Wednesday, June 28, 2023

Offshore Wind Opposition Mounts

Save Our Shores Rally Draws Beachgoers



A day at the beach took on a different meaning Saturday as offshore wind opposition groups came together to educate the public about the impact of wind energy on Jersey Shore communities during a "Save Our Shores" event on the 68th Street beach in Long Beach Township.

A short distance from where groups like Save LBI, Clean Ocean Action, Defend Brigantine, and Save the East Coast set up, Jon Shields and Emily Fiore, both of Surf City, put a familiar Save LBI sign in the sand and stood behind it.

Shields said he comes from an engineering background, learned about wind turbines and what to do when they are built in school and that's where his concerns stem.

"We had this technology, nuclear. (People) were taught to be afraid (of it)," he said, adding that wind turbine technology was pushed as the way to clean energy. "No one is talking about blade replacement. What do you do with it?"

Shields said one blade is roughly 16,000 pounds.

While the June 24 event was a first for both Shields and Fiore, who is concerned about how the sonar used in survey work could be impacting marine life and their ability to navigate, Fiore said she has kept abreast of offshore wind projects.

Beachgoers placed chairs in front of the outdoor stage, where 3 AM Tokyo was running through its checklist, walked passed Shields and Fiore, returning with signs of their own before Long Beach Township Mayor Joseph Mancini was introduced.

"I want to thank everyone for coming and showing your support for this ridiculous thing that (President Joe) Biden and Gov. (Phil) Murphy are doing to us," Mancini said of the proposed Atlantic Shores offshore wind farm planned off the coast of the Island. "We really appreciate you showing up and we appreciate

CURRENTS

Save LBI Eyes Energy Rates From Turbines

Challenges BPU's 2021 Approval

Save LBI is contesting the N.J. Board of Public Utilities' 2021 approval that grants above market prices for power produced by the Atlantic Shore Offshore Wind Project 1 and on June 12 filed a petition with the state agency requesting a formal hearing on the issue.

"The BPU has given Atlantic Shores the sweetest of sweetheart deals at the expense of the New Jersey electric customers and taxpayers," said Bob Stern, Save LBI president. "They have added \$7.7 billion to our bills over the 20-year life of the project, for, based on international science reports, only a nine-day delay in future sea level rise, while causing irreversible damage to the shore, its economy and marine life."

Stern said the Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind Project 1 is expected to begin construction in 2025, and operations would start in 2028. Its operational period ends in 2048.

Edward O'Donnell of Whitestrand Consulting LLC, who prepared a financial report of the offshore wind project for Save LBI, said the cost/benefit analysis by the BPU's consultant "ignores the negative economic impacts of the project on beach tourism and on shore and fishing communities, and on the environmental benefit side uses an unproven model to take credit for a world-wide benefit result when New Jersey law says it must use only the state's benefit."

O'Donnell's report shows the developer stands to make 18% to 21% return per year on its investment, "not at all a fair balance of financial risks and rewards with ratepayers. This level of return is well beyond the 9% allowed to regulated utilities," he said.

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

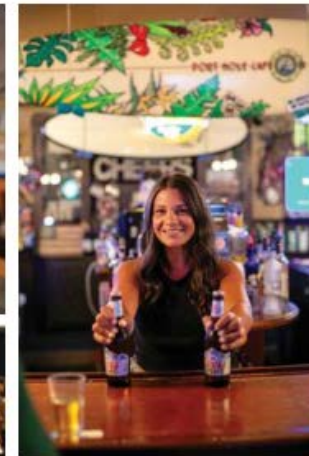
Business/Economic Writing Portfolio SECOND PLACE

Jon Coen

Late Night Heroes; Tradition of Shave Ice from Hawaiian Islands; Brighton Beach Surf Shop Will Close After Summer



BEYOND THE MIDNIGHT OIL: (Clockwise from above) The security team at Blvd & Betty's tends to a sea of late-night challengers. The ebb and flow of the after-hours scene may have a lot to do with the throngs of partiers in Beach Haven, like those kids in Taylor Gorman's. Brian Gorman, who works four overnight shifts a week at the Chegg, shows off his prized coffee mug. Kaitlyn Hogan tends bar during the closing shift at the Port Hole Cafe in Ship Bottom. Hugh Shields is second lieutenant of the Barnegat Light Fire Aid Squad. Distinctly Davien owner Ricky Davies is the first to see the aftermath of every big party night in the summer. After midnight, the tickets pour in at the Chegg.



They Keep LBI Going Until Dawn Late Night Heroes: Meet Our Essential Overnight Workers

By JON COEN
There's one mug at the popular Chicken or the Egg restaurant in Beach Haven that looks different from the rest, emblazoned with different words taken from the works of William Shakespeare. The mug belongs to Brian Gorman, 27, of 1541gate.
Gorman has worked overnights at the Chicken or the Egg every summer since 2015. Coffee keeps him going. And whereas he was always misplacing his mug, now it's easy to find. It was a gift from his 26-year-old co-worker, Matt Ernst, who also has worked the 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. shift.
"Coffee. I'm always a coffee guy," said Gorman.
The Chegg is famous in New Jersey for two things: its wings and the fact that it stays open 24 hours from Thursday to Sunday each week.
Ernst and Gorman have found that weekend nights at "The Chegg" have a certain flow. On nights that local bars host teen night, there's a massive rush of teens around 11 p.m. By the time that ends, the Chegg fills with the 20-something crowd as the bars let out. And finally, around 3 or 4 a.m. the bartenders and bar security crews come in.
"It's a staple of Beach Haven. During those late-night shifts when you're serving tables, you have to kind of assume a lot when you're taking their order. And then when you bring it out, they don't even remember what they ordered," said Ernst, laughing.
He explains that some of that crowd just forgets to tip, but when the bartenders and servers come in from different restaurants, they tip really well, so things even out. There are late-night regulars like local "Milkshake Mike," who comes in every night around 2 a.m.
"The crowd is a little transfascinated, but we can play different music after the families and dinner crowd are gone. We can play A Tribe Called Quest, The Commodores, The Beatsteaks or NGFX."
Gorman echoes Ernst's sentiments that folks may not always be articulate in ordering.
"Sometimes, after a while, you just say, 'I think you want chicken fingers with hot-sauce sauce,' so they don't order a crazy hot sauce. Or sometimes they just tell me they need food for 10 people to go. I just ask what their budget is and send them out with a bag of food they're probably going to like."
Gorman says his training to stay up all night bleeds into the other days of the week.
"I'm awake until 6 a.m. into the fall," he added.
Emergency Response:
Medical Services Doesn't Sleep
Some 17 1/2 miles from the Chegg, the overnights are quieter. Barnegat Light, once home to the lively Rick's American Cafe, no longer has any bars open late night.
"It's really quiet up in HL. It's so

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Online Breaking News SECOND PLACE

Eric Englund

Barnegat Man Charged in
Murder of Parents



The screenshot shows a news article from 'THE SAND PAPER'. The title is 'Barnegat Man Charged in Murder of Parents' with a 'Free Access' tag. The date is 'November 02, 2023' and the author is 'By Eric Englund'. There are social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, Email, Print, Link, and a plus sign. A photo shows a man and a woman smiling. The article text describes the murder of Eugene and Cheryl Mulgrew and the subsequent arrest of their son, Michael Mulgrew.

Barnegat Man Charged in Murder of Parents Free Access

November 02, 2023

By Eric Englund

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Email](#) [Print](#) [Link](#) [+](#)


Eugene and Cheryl Mulgrew of Barnegat. (Supplied Photo)

A 34-year-old Barnegat Township resident has been charged in the murders of his parents on Nov. 2.

Eugene Mulgrew and his wife, Cheryl, ages 71 and 69, respectively, were found stabbed to death in their home in Barnegat.

Ocean County Prosecutor Bradley D. Billhimer said that at 11 a.m. that day, officers were summoned to a residence on Lincoln Avenue to assist medical personnel with performing a mobile outreach at the residence. As the officers approached the residence, they observed a male walking away. Upon their arrival, officers noticed red staining, which appeared to be blood, on the front door of the residence.

"The officers made entry, and found blood in various areas of the home," he said. "As the officers entered the bedroom, they located the deceased bodies of two victims with apparent stab wounds to their upper torsos. The officers also observed a knife in the vicinity of the bedroom."

Billhimer said the male initially observed walking away from the residence was later observed in the area of West Bay Avenue and Gunning River Road by Barnegat officers. That individual, later identified as Michael Mulgrew, was taken into custody without incident.

An investigation conducted by the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office Major Crime Unit, Barnegat Township Police Department Detective Bureau and Ocean County Sheriff's Office Crime Scene Investigation Unit revealed Mulgrew was responsible for the murders of his mother and father, according to law enforcement. Mulgrew was charged accordingly and transported to the Ocean

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Online Breaking News Sports Story SECOND PLACE

David Biggy

Barnegat Girls Bowling Squad Scores Second Straight Sectional Crown

The screenshot shows a news article from 'The Sandpaper' website. The article title is 'Barnegat Girls Bowling Squad Scores Second Straight Sectional Crown' with a 'Free Access' tag. The author is David Biggy, and the date is February 18, 2023. The article features a photo of the Barnegat girls bowling team holding a trophy. The text describes their victory in the NJSIAA South Jersey Group II tournament, where they scored 2,514 pins to win for a second straight season. The article also includes quotes from coach Jon Gordon and player Summer Burkle.

Barnegat Girls Bowling Squad Scores Second Straight Sectional Crown Free Access

NJSIAA Sectional Bowling
February 18, 2023

By David Biggy

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Email](#) [Print](#) [Link](#) [+](#)

THEY'RE NUMBER ONE: The Barnegat girls bowling team shows off the sectional title trophy after the Bengals scored 2,514 to win NJSIAA South Jersey Group II for a second straight season. (Photo Courtesy Jon Gordon)

The Barnegat High School girls bowling team last winter added a third NJSIAA sectional championship banner to the gymnasium's wall. It hangs right next to the ones captured by the boys swimming and girls volleyball programs.

"On Friday night, I sent the girls a picture of the banners on the wall," coach Jon Gordon said Saturday afternoon. "The message was 'One more makes two out of four' and our team motto: One goal. One dream. Together as a team."

The Bengals went to Maple Shade's Laurel Lanes and brought home another banner, after taking the top position in the South Jersey Group II tournament with a team score of 2,514. Seneca placed second with 2,180 pins, and Deptford finished third at 2,145.

"I'm very excited about it," senior Summer Burkle said of snagging the sectional crown for a second straight season. "I don't think there were too many nerves. We knew if we bowled our averages, we'd be OK. But today, we exceeded the expectations."

As a team, the Bengals tallied the highest pin total in all of South Jersey. Shore Conference South B division rival Lacey managed 2,399 to win Group III, while Kingsway won Group IV with 2,282, with Eastern Regional (2,214) and Cherry Hill East (2,207) not too far behind.

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Best Use of Social Media SECOND PLACE

Sarah Lill

Jen's Links Sale

Best Use of Social Media Entry: The SandPaper, 'Jen's Links' Instagram Post

The SandPaper is a weekly newsmagazine based in Surf City, New Jersey serving its community with news in and around the Long Beach Island/Southern Ocean County area. With over 32,000 followers on our Instagram page, we have successfully extended our print medium's reach to digital audiences.

This year, we shared an Instagram post that directed users to our article, "Jen's Links Mini Golf Course for Sale in Barnegat Light." After the course owner's unexpected passing, the attraction was listed for sale just five months later. The article we published shared the short history of the Barnegat Light golf course as well as information regarding the sale.

As detailed in the screenshots below, the post reached 23,442 accounts, amassed 683 likes, 688 shares and 667 external link taps - driving significant traffic to The SandPaper's website. But the post did more than just increase our website visibility; it spurred the sale of the golf course!



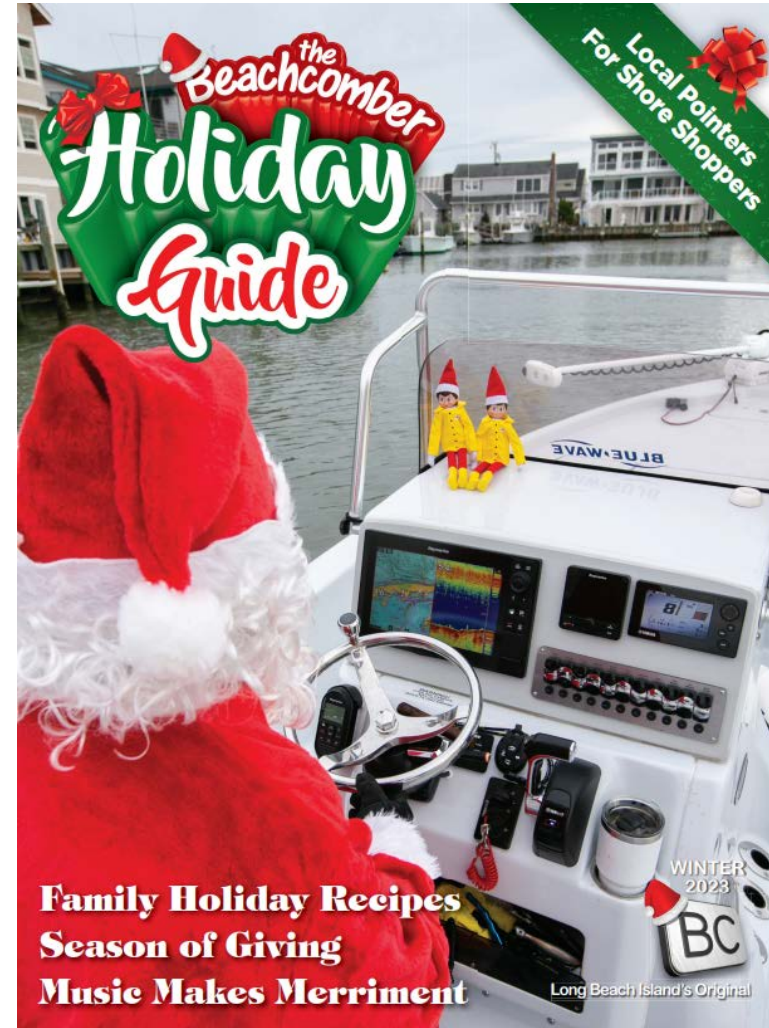
2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Special Issue **SECOND PLACE**

Staff

The Beachcomber
Holiday Guide 2023



Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Editorial Section Layout/Content SECOND PLACE

Pattie McIntyre Gail Travers

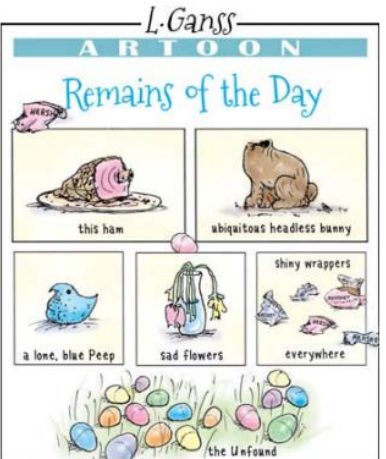
SandPaper Editorial April 12, Aug. 30

SandBox Been There, Done That Today's US Gun Industry Is Like Indian Traders of Yore

By RICK MELLERUP
When the editorial staff of *Time* magazine gets together in December to decide its 2023 Person(s) of the Year surely officers Ron Englebert and Michael Collazo of the Metro Nashville Police Department should be included in the conversation. Englebert and Collazo, of course, are the officers who quickly ran toward the gunfire of Aubrey Hale inside the Covenant School on March 27 and "neutralized" the suspect, limiting the number of victims to six. Their reaction was a far cry from that of the police in Uvalde, Texas, on May 24, 2022, who waited for more than an hour and 14 minutes before breaching the classroom where Salvador Kolanda Ramos, who had already fatally shot 19 students and two teachers, was holding hostages. No doubt about it, Englebert and Collazo were heroes. Still, three educators and three 9-year-olds had already been slaughtered.

Why include Custer in a discussion of modern day gun violence?
Gun advocates urge that more school resource officers (SRO) be assigned to campuses to reduce the threat of future massacres. For example, on April 6 Republican Congressman Jeff Van Drew, who represents all of Southern Ocean County, introduced the Ensuring Safer Schools Act, a bill that would prioritize the hiring of retired law enforcement officers and military veterans as SROs. "We protect our nation's leaders and ourselves with armed security, why not our children?" Van Drew asked when submitting the bill. "There is nobody more qualified to protect our students than dedicated public servants who have spent their lives defending the people of this great nation."

What? Why include Custer in a discussion of modern day gun violence?
Well, in the June 1876 Battle of the Little Bighorn, known to the Lakota Sioux and other Plains Indians as the Battle of the Greasy Grass and by most Americans as Custer's Last Stand, the 7th Cavalry Regiment was hugely outnumbered by Lakota, Dakota, Northern Cheyenne and Arapaho warriors, by a count of 1,100 to 2,500 warriors to approximately 700 cavalrymen and their Indian scouts. Some 268 cavalrymen and Indian scouts were lost at Little Bighorn. It was an especially bad day for the Custer family considering two of his brothers, a nephew and a brother-in-law were also killed. Custer himself had been shot



twice, once in the chest, once in the temple. But the 7th Cavalry hadn't just been outnumbered, it had also been outgunned. Many of the warriors didn't have to rely on bows and arrows, lances and tomahawks but were armed with rifles and carbines. Where did they get them? From whites, much to the dismay of Lt. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman, the Civil War hero (at least in the North) who was now in command of the postwar army of the trans-Mississippi West. Sherman despised "Indian agents."

Continued on Page 8
The small cited concerns of green space and impervious coverage with current flooding issues, safety on congested roads as well as fiscal responsibility when the council approved raising taxes just last month in an attempt to balance the budget with the current amount of bonds out. Jon Coen's April 5 Liquid Lines column stated that I presented a petition "against the kids" as the vice president of the BOE. I would like to clarify that I stated my name and address as a taxpayer and concerned resident, not a member of the school board. In actuality, preserving green space is for all kids, now and future. Jennifer Tomlinson Beach Haven

Speakeasy Special Agent Down: How Coop Ended Up in the Soup

By JIM VERHAGEN
On March 24, an observant kayaker found a peregrine falcon floating helplessly in Barnegat Bay and he skillfully returned it to shore. Thankfully, Ben Wurst, senior wildlife biologist with Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey, was able to get over there quickly and retrieve him. The peregrine was alive and appeared healthy given the circumstances, albeit a little soaked and confused. It turns out we know this bird. The peregrine falcon named Special Agent Dale Cooper was hatched at the Bonnet Island falcon tower south of the carthoused side of Route 72 on L131 in 2020, and was assumed to have fledged successfully. He reappeared in the spring of 2022 on the Surf City water tower. He made a feeble failed courtship attempt and has generally remained there ever since. When you are in Surf City and you see a peregrine on the water tower, it is probably Coop.



Photo by Ben Wurst
Special Agent Dale Cooper air dries after being pulled out of the bay.
Peregrine nests around Barnegat Bay. It's that last point which probably gives us the best clue as to how Special Agent Dale Cooper wound up floating helplessly in the bay. It's the nesting season, and peregrine hormones are running hotter than a high school on prom night. Established pairs are in full courtship right now. Eggs are imminent if not already being laid. Curious young peregrines like Coop are more curious, social and aggressive at exactly the same time nesting peregrines are the most ready to defend their precious nesting spots. Case in point: Coop's own father, named BridgeBoy and a resident of the Bonnet Island tower, was killed almost two years ago to the day when a similarly curious young falcon (Kids On Grass or, for short, GrassBoy) showed up at the tower and, amazingly, won the fight. It doesn't appear Coop was as lucky as GrassBoy, but thankfully he also wasn't as snarky as BridgeBoy. Thanks to Ben's and the kayaker's quick action (and while we're at it, how do you rescue a flailing, wild falcon

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Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Sports Section Layout/Content SECOND PLACE

Pattie McIntyre David Biggy

SandPaper Sports April 19, Oct. 25



HAVING FUN: Southern Regional's Kaedyn Lipowski (center) is swarmed by teammates after she reached on an error that allowed the winning run to cross the plate during the Rams' 6-5 win over Toms River South on April 12.



GOING TO THE TOP: Barnegat junior Yasmeen Muhammad put together an 18-hole round of 84. **BACK IN THE HOUSE:** The Southern Regional girls golf team shows off its trophy after winning the Ocean County Tournament team title with a score of 196 on April 17.

Southern Regional Returns to Team Top Spot

Barnegat's Mubammad Snags Crown

Last year, the difference was a stroke and the Southern Regional girls golf team was on the short side of that result, as Barnegat captured its first Ocean County Tournament team championship. On April 17, the Rams left no doubt which team was the best this time around.

"It was a great day for Ocean County girls golf," said Southern coach Jeff Reilly, who doubles as the tournament director. "We had great weather, the golf course was perfect, and the competition was great. The level of play was really high, and all the girls did a great job. With that said, it was an even greater day for Southern girls golf. I'm enormously proud of my girls."

The tourney was contested at Bay Les Golf Club in Toms River. After grasping one of the

country's top players for several years — that being Reilly's daughter Mary Kate — this year's Southern crew had to find its way back to the top after falling short in defense of the title the Rams won in 2021. With junior Madelyn Beirne leading the way, the Rams had won their first eight matches heading into the tournament, but the question was whether they had enough firepower from the second through fifth slots in the lineup to challenge for the county crown.

While Beirne overcame a seven-stroke deficit at the midway point of the tourney to turn in an 18-hole score of 88 that landed her in second place individually, she had big support from the players behind her, particularly sophomore Samantha Reilly, the coach's youngest daughter, who had a solid front nine and ended with a 90, good enough for fourth on the individual leaderboard.

"Madly was in a high-profile group and really showed us a lot by working her way back to second after being down seven at the turn," the coach said. "But for Sami, to get to where she is now within a year is a testament to how hard she's worked during the off-season. She put in a lot of work this year. Last year, she shot 124 in this tournament, so a 34-stroke turnaround is awesome. From there, all the other girls pitched in to make this a tremendous team victory!"

Sophomore Isabella Compisello

SPORTS

Rams Score in Seventh, Upend Toms River South And Spark Win Streak

Southern Bats Come Alive at Right Time

Gianna DeSanto walked with one out in the bottom of the fourth inning and stole second base to put a runner in scoring position for Kaedyn Lipowski. Seconds later, the barking started.

"Kyle (Roberts) and I have this thing we do, but it sounds more like a 'woo-woo' sound," said a laughing Leah Morrin shortly after Southern Regional scored a 6-5 victory over Shore Conference Class A South rival Toms River South on April 12, the start of a three-game winning streak to close out spring break week. "Somewhere, it turned into a barking sound, and then everybody started hitting."

Softball Roundup

Well, kind of. Lipowski doubled to right-center field to put runners on second and third, but the Indians' outfielders snagged the next two fly balls to end the threat and the Rams still were down, 4-1, heading into the bottom of the fifth.

However, the bats came alive again in the fifth, when Emily Zellman snatched a double to right-center to lead off, advanced to second on a single by Emaly Evans, and Zellman snatched a double to right-center to bring in Lipowski and Kaycee Callahan, who was running for Evans.

"For me, it was just like every other at-bat," said Zellman, who went 2-for-2. "I just had to look for my pitch, not be angry at the plate, and put the ball in play. It's about doing it for the team and not yourself. But getting that hit was so much fun. It felt really good."

Tied 3-5 heading into the bottom of the seventh, Groschel-Klein walked to lead off, stole second base with one out, but was caught off third base following a successful bunt by DeSanto. After DeSanto advanced to second on a wild pitch, Lipowski drove a ball to right field that was hobbled and dropped, allowing DeSanto to score the game-winning run. Sophomore pitcher Kayla Riley went the distance, allowing four earned runs on seven hits and two walks while striking out four.

Earlier in the week, the Rams lost a 3-2 decision to the Indians.

"We're still trying to work some things out, but we're really emotionally connected, and there's no drama on the team," Morrin said. "We really click and get along, and everybody truly wants to be out there. We're improving every game, and it seems like we adjust really well for the next time we play a team. That's been the trend, at least."

Two days later, the Rams (5-2) knocked off division rival Brick Memorial, 2-0, scoring twice in the fifth inning and holding on from there. DeSanto fired the shutout from the circle, giving up four hits while fanning six. Morrin was 3-for-3 with a pair of doubles, while Zellman ended up 2-for-3. Madison Pampalone, Talia Durajek and Groschel-Klein had the rest of the Rams' hits.

"We just need to develop more confidence, or run production, on April 15, when they scored 11 runs during the second inning and went on to beat Manchester, 17-0, in the Ocean County Tournament quarterfinals. Southern had 16 hits, while Evans

Continued on Page 53

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Business/Economic Writing Portfolio FIRST PLACE

Maria Scandale

One More Legendary Season for Mustache Bill's; New Day for Horizon; 'Barnegat's Best Seafood' in as Local Enterprise



**For Sale After 52 Golden Years
One More Legendary Season
For Mustache Bill's Diner**

By MARIA SCANDALE

Mustache Bill, then Bill Smith, was a teenage bookkeeping clerk for sharp-witted diner owner Joe Sprague in Barnegat Light when he heard, "Hey, can you catch an egg?"

"I'd be over my elbows in the dishes, and by the time he said that, the egg was in the air."

Smith not only caught it, he later bought the diner, in 1972. And you, he did carry on the egg-tossing to his own kitchen crew, just a little nervous anecdote.

With his own witty personality and care about customer service, Smith worked Mustache Bill's Diner into an icon that was noticed and noted by the James Beard Foundation and Guy Fieri, among others. Mustache Bill's Diner at Eighth Street and Broadway holds the honor of a James Beard Foundation "America's Classic."

This year, his 52nd summer will be the last, though. As customers are hearing that the center property is for sale for \$3.65 million, they mean the loss of an era.

It's not certain what will happen to the shakam-shak 1955-tintage diner itself, but right now it's included in the real estate listing for the nearly-half-acre plot with 40 parking spaces at 704 Broadway. The zoning on the MLS listing reads that the business type permitted is "General Retail, Restaurant Bar" as well as "Other."

The listing states "potential for subdivision of up to four buildable lots — new homes, new commercial, or a multitude of other uses."

In short, the iconic diner building is included in the sale, but not the business itself. There is no allowance for anyone else to continue as Mustache Bill's Diner.

"It's sad, but it's life," Smith said in a Saturday telephone interview as he was packing in Florida to head back to Long Beach Island for the season. The diner's 2023 summer will start Memorial Day weekend.

"It's been 52 years. I'm getting to the point where it's a physical challenge with the volume we do and the standard we impose on ourselves," he said.

Examples are Smith's way of explaining, "If you say, 'I'd like over-white eggs but don't use any of the white runny,' our wait staff actually knows that and tells us. A lot of places, they don't acknowledge that, or the cook never gets the request."

Breakfast and lunch are in classic style, with signature specialization. Guy Fieri is honored with pancakes in the shape of his face and spiked hair. Smith is an artist in pancakes, and his sister Dottie Brady Brady of OceanSide Realty's Harvey Cedars office, gave up to the diner and is the listing agent for the sale.

After Fieri's visit for a "Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives" episode, food-network.com wrote, "The counter at Mustache Bill's Diner might as well be your family table. Locals pack the chrome stools daily over homemade hot coffee and plates of their 'mussy' chopped beef. One look at the Cyclone — a bluishy pancake with a fried-egg center — and Triple D was sold on Jersey Shore. Irving." The site described food-education, corn calls the diner "truly a gem" and "a colorful experience."

Online, the James Beard Foundation serves this praise: "Those days, the food at diners is all new ideas of pure, unadorned quality. But not at Mustache Bill's — owner Bill

Smith has made everything on the diner's menu from scratch — refusing to buy anything pre-made. It's the homemade, straight-from-the-heart cooking that makes Mustache Bill's a must-stop destination on the Jersey Shore for both the fishing community regulars and the summer-time beachgoers. Fishermen reward their customary diner with doughnut flake and scallops, which Smith prepares with aplomb. But before the lead of the locals and year's soon to be tucked into platters of seafood-that-day turkey, ham, and beef. And legendary pancakes. It is no surprise that the crowds are huge at this seasonal spot.

Mustache Bill's does 1,000 covers on a typical summer day, and that's only the hours of breakfast and lunch.

Of the hours, Smith summed up, "I'm very proud and happy." The James Beard Foundation award was "a pretty big honor." Smith understood, "I had to receive the award at Lincoln Center with a couple thousand people watching. That was a first for me."

Smith, an Abington, Pa. native, said menu preferences have changed over the years. "Twenty years ago I never cooked an egg white omelet, and now we sell one out of six, sometimes one out of five."

Continued on Page 48



Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Interpretive Writing FIRST PLACE

David Biggy

State Aid Cuts Force Stafford Schools Into Corner

30 CURRENTS

State Aid Cuts Force Stafford Into Corner

Superintendent: 'Why This Much?'

The battle rages on. That's kind of the way Stafford Township School District Superintendent George Chladic framed it March 15 at the district's board of education meeting.

"Our goal when preparing the budget, first and foremost, is to make sure our students get what they need with language arts, science, math and social studies, and then build from there," Chladic said during a public presentation regarding the state of the upcoming school year's budget on the heads of the news that Stafford most likely will lose more than \$2.3 million in state aid.

"I'm glad so many parents and people from the community are rallying together with their concerns, and I'm hoping folks are not all on dead ends and somewhere, sometime, whether it's now or next year or a few years from now, at some point, we get our money back and align us where we should be."

Last week, the district circulated a petition asking for support in its fight against the N.J. Department of Education and Gov. Phil Murphy's administration to restore the district's funding to a dollar amount closer to what it was for this year, and on Monday the school board approved a resolution opposing "the 2023-24 proposed state funding levels" for the district.

During his presentation on Monday, Chladic said he hoped to hand over to acting Department of Education Commissioner Angelica Allen-McMillan the binder that includes more than 1,000 signatures on the petition at an upcoming conference. On March 7, the Stafford Township Council also passed a resolution that "opposes the funding cuts imposed by the New Jersey Department of Education and supports our public school district in its fight to continue to provide the essential programs" the district currently has in place.

March for Meals Month Has Older Americans in Mind

This month is the 21st annual March for Meals Month, for which Heather deJong, nutrition specialist with Meals on Wheels of Ocean County, accepted a proclamation from Stafford Township Mayor Greg Myhr on Tuesday, March 7 at the township council meeting.

The proclamation recognizes Meals on Wheels of Ocean County for its heroic contributions and efforts — for example, continuing its service delivery through the pandemic, inclement weather and other emergencies — to address food insecurity and malnutrition, combat social isolation, enable independence and improve health.

Since 1972 the federal government has funded Meals on Wheels for older Americans, but action is needed now to support the program at every level, the proclamation states. March for Meals is a nationwide awareness campaign to generate support for the organization's work.

In 2022, the local organization delivered 240,000 meals to 2,400 county residents, according to deJong.

"We think we'll never end it," but no one knows, deJong said. The call atmosphere stimulates minds, encourages activity and instills a sense of community.



Jack Rosenthal

Each weekday, a different luncheon is served, reservations are required. Menus are approved by a qualified nutritionist and provide a full nutritional value. Meals are delivered daily during the week. The cost of the meal, but payment is not required.

During the governing body meeting, Myhr announced a mental health workshop for seniors will be held March 24 at 10 a.m. at the Bay Avenue Community Center. On hand to provide information will be representatives of the Ocean County Health Department, Ocean County Office of Senior Services, Stafford Police Department's OnPOINT program and local business Yogi Bros.

In recruitment news, Councilman Robert Haskin announced registration is open for spring tennis and running for kids. Tennis takes place at the Mill Creek courts for seven weeks in May and June; the Healthy Kids Running Club meets at Lighthouse Park at 5 p.m. on the Saturdays, April 16 through May 14. Visit the Stafford Recreation

page at staffordnj.gov to register. The festive Bunny Hug OK and Easter Egg hunt are set for Sunday, April 2, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at town hall. To the party, bring a collection bag for eggs and a camera for photos with the Easter Bunny Local Cleanup Department's OnPOINT program and business Yogi Bros.

The spring fireworks sale will be held May 6 and 7, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Register by April 21. A second one will happen the weekend of Sept. 9 and 10. —Victoria Ford vford@staffordnj.gov

BeachBriefs

Pre-season Badges Available in Beach Haven

Beach Haven borough has announced 2023 seasonal beach badges at the pre-season rate of \$30 are now on sale.

For those buying in person, they can be purchased at the borough clerk's office in borough hall with cash, check or credit card. If purchasing by mail with a check, credit card or the VPI3LY app, click on the link for the badge order form, on the Beach Information page of the borough website beachhaven-nj.gov, and follow the directions.

Pre-season rates are in effect through May 31. Beginning on June 1, the seasonal badge fee is \$40. Weekly and daily fees are \$20 and \$10, respectively. The senior lifetime fee is \$10 for those age 65 and over.

Barnegat Township Budget at \$33.1 Million

Last week, the Barnegat Township Council introduced a municipal budget of \$33,150,000, an increase of nearly \$3 million from the 2022 operating budget.

Thomas Lombardi, chief financial officer, said the municipal purpose tax (which does not include schools and county taxes) increased by a penny per \$100 assessed value. As a result, the owner of a home assessed at the township average of \$260,000 will see a \$27 increase in the municipal tax bill for the year.

Lombardi said the budget reflects various increases including 25% for garbage/recycling costs, 22% in health insurance, and 12% for pension costs. Contracted salary raises increased 3% for the water/sewer department, while other employees had raises of 1.5% to 2%.

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

First Amendment FIRST PLACE

Gian G. Scala

Offshore Wind Meeting Falls Short with Public, Comment Period Looms

22 **CURRENTS**
Offshore Wind Meeting Falls Short With Public, Comment Period Looms

The Star-Paper/Wednesday, June 28, 2023

BOEM Sets July 3 Feedback Deadline

Controversy followed a federally mandated and sponsored public meeting for Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind Farm South's draft environmental impact statement last week as the open-house style format was panned by a majority of those who attended the event at the Holiday Inn in Manahawkin.

"It was bullcrap. It's not a meeting," said Ellen Larkin, an Ocean Acres resident, as she left the June 21 event. "No one is up there in front of us telling us (information) and answering our questions so everybody could hear. We're not getting that. There's no back and forth for everyone."

The meeting was hosted by the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and was the first of two in-person events on the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for the Atlantic Shores South project off the coast of Atlantic City. The DEIS was published May 19 with a July 3 deadline for public comment, despite multiple requests for BOEM to extend the time frame.

Court reporters were available for members of the public who attended the meeting and who wished to leave verbal comments on the DEIS. For those who preferred to provide written comments, tables were set up with feedback forms and pens.

In a second room, BOEM poster boards depicting a variety of subject matter, including turbine visibility images, were on display for the public to

view. BOEM subject matter experts, who wore name tags bearing their first names only, were available to answer questions.

David Shanker, who lives in Brant Beach, said one-on-one discussions with BOEM experts didn't allow him to learn what others in the community were thinking, their opinions or learn from questions he didn't think to ask.

The BOEM subject matter experts represented too narrowly defined areas, Shanker added, saying he spoke with a whale expert who when questioned about echolocation referred him to another individual.

"(It was) frustrating to have to bounce around like that. And frequently, the answers given by BOEM SMEs (subject matter experts) were less than satisfying," he said. "It felt like they were prepared to give minimal answers and also prepared that they were going to be talking to a hostile audience."

Shanker called BOEM's refusal to accept opinions, per its feedback document, insulting.

"They only wanted scientific data or information that came from a 'source.' We are all laypeople as it relates to turbines, and we are all doing everything we can to learn as much as possible," he said. "But it is our opinions that do matter — we are voters and taxpayers. Hopefully, the government will listen to us and our opinions."

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Photos by Ryan Morrill

MUTED: Community members who attended the LBI region's only public hearing for the draft environmental impact statement for Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind South project were unhappy with the open-house style format. They wanted a traditional hearing so every question, concern and answer were heard by everyone.

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Education Writing FIRST PLACE

David Biggy

Berardi Says Goodbye After
Pouring Her Heart into
Southern Regional

30
The Sandpaper/Wednesday, June 7, 2023

CURRENTS

Berardi Says Goodbye After Pouring Her Heart Into Southern Regional

37 Years' Worth of Care, Compassion

By DAVID BIGGY

Adele Berardi harkened back to a time when life was simpler, when her main responsibility was to help a little girl in the same classroom.

"We had a special needs girl in my class. Her name was Kim," Berardi started, speaking softly. "The teacher assigned me to be her helper. You know, take her to the bathroom, help her with her letters, lots of different stuff. It was a seminal point in my life, and I'm firmly convinced that's what made me pursue teaching, specifically special education."

She was in kindergarten, all of 5 years old.

Some 10 years later, a visitor to St. Joseph High School in Toms River — now known as Donovan Catholic — talked about working with special needs adults as a vocation, and it caught her attention.

"That's when my focus really narrowed," she said. "Afterward, I was sitting on my parents' porch in Pine Beach, thinking 'I'd really like to do that.' I knew I wanted to go to Providence College, to take the special ed program, which was one of the best at the time, and it was the only college I applied to. I just didn't want to do

anything else. I thought about being a missionary for a brief moment at some point, but I never wavered from wanting to work with special people, in whatever capacity that may be."

At the end of this month, 38 school years after graduating from college, Berardi is going to say goodbye to teaching. Thirty-seven of those years have been at Southern Regional High School.

"I think of it like this: that I'm the kid who climbed up onto the high dive at the town pool, and I've finally inched my way to the edge of the board, while all the other kids are behind me, screaming at me to just jump already," she said, laughing for a moment before her face straightened a bit. "It's time. I'm going to jump."

Short Road to Home

Soon after college, Berardi utilized the help of "a friend of a friend" to land a teaching role with the Alpha School in Lakewood for the 1985-86 school year. According to her retirement letter, she "reluctantly applied" to Southern Regional after family friend Larry Mathias — a Southern faculty member at the time — informed her of a special education English position opening up for 1986-87.

"I did not want to leave the Alpha



David Biggy

SHE'S OUT: Adele Berardi may not be greeted by the big letters on the exterior wall to Southern Regional High School much longer, but her impact within the district will permeate the hallways for many years to come.

School. I could not imagine loving my first job more than I did," the letter states. "Thirty-seven years later, here I sit with tears in my eyes, writing this letter of retirement and realizing how very wrong and naive I was."

A few months shy of 24 years old, Berardi was offered the position, accepted it and found a home for life, never once since then even thinking about leaving, she said.

"Absolutely not," she said of the possibility of going elsewhere. "I never wanted to do anything else but teach, and I never wanted to be

anywhere else once I got here. I fell in love with it. I probably could have made a bazillion dollars doing something else, but I just don't believe it would have been as rewarding to me."

"I absolutely love what I do. I love teenagers, and it's so rewarding to see them learn. I know I sound goofy, but they really buoy my heart every day. They grow up and you get to see them grow up, and you have a hand in that process. Being able to say, 'I love you' to a kid — not in a creepy or inappropriate way, of course — there's nothing better for me. And I tell them I love them because I do. I care so much about them."

Through the years, Berardi has done everything she could to love the students of Southern Regional, many of whom never sat in her classroom for an instructional period. Somewhat influenced by several staff members around her — Suzanne McMahon, Michael Murphy, Kevin Romanowski, to name a few — Berardi dove into the depths of the Southern family and brought with her the attributes she already possessed.

didn't give a student the shirt off her back, but rather her pants.

"This was back in the early '90s, maybe. I had this pair of white Tommy Hilfiger capri pants, and one of my students absolutely loved them," Berardi recalled. "I knew this girl had some rough things going on in her life, so I brought her to the girls' bathroom, and each one of us took to our own stall, and I made her try on those pants. They fit her — I was thinner back then — and so I told her I'd try to get her a pair."

"There was no Amazon or online shopping yet, and I figured I wouldn't be able to find them anywhere. So, the next day I brought them with me to school, and I gave them to her. Years later, when she was well into adult-

See thesandpaper.net to read what others in the community had to share about Berardi.



Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Column Writing FIRST PLACE

Rick Mellerup

Is All Math Education Needed in the Age of Smartphones?; Immigrants Spice Up Life in Many Successful Ways

The SandPaper/Wednesday, November 15, 2023

SandBox

Been There, Done That

Is All Math Education Needed In the Age of Smartphones?

By RICK MELLERUP

Boards of education and administrators in school districts throughout the area, the state and indeed the whole nation are freaking out because of low scores on standardized math tests in all grade levels.

According to a headline for an October 2022 article in *Education Week*, "Two Decades of Progress, Nearly Gone: National Math, Reading Scores Hit Historic Lows."

"In math, the results were especially devastating, representing the steepest declines ever recorded on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), known as the nation's report card, which tests a broad sampling of fourth and eighth graders and dates to the early 1990s," seconded reporters Sarah Mervosh and Ashley Wu in *The New York Times* that same month.

Only 33% of New Jersey's eighth-graders were proficient in math; 39% of the Garden State's fourth-graders were proficient. Frighteningly, the national numbers were even worse. Just 26% of the nation's students tested proficient in eighth grade while the fourth grade average was 35%.

One of the reasons for the decline that has been posited is that during the COVID-19 pandemic, when remote learning was employed, kids were using their phones to determine answers. Then, come test time, they weren't allowed to do so.

The situation begs three questions. One, if answers can be quickly discovered on a phone, why bother to take the time to go through the step-by-step process of working your way through a mathematical problem? Here's a long division example: $5673/42 = 135$, rounded off = 135.071428571 if you want to keep going. It takes maybe 15 seconds

if you type in the numbers on your phone compared to about 45 seconds to a minute if you remember the long division you may have learned decades ago. God knows how long it would take to get to 135.071428571. To tell you the truth, I quickly lost interest; readers can experiment if they wish.

I looked up the problem on a math site called visualfractions.com, a teaching site, where it recommended 16 steps to arrive at just 135. Repeat, 16 steps!

Let's advance to the next level, high school. According to the New Jersey Department of Education, just 32.5% of Garden State juniors met expectations or surpassed them in math tests given in the spring of 2022.

Most readers were probably subjected to Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II in high school while more strenuous branches such as trigonometry and calculus were normally electives at most schools. That continues today. This leads to question two:

Put simply, what percentage of adults have ever had to figure out what the hell X is in real life?

How many students will employ algebra or geometry as adults? Put simply, what percentage of adults have ever had to figure out what the hell X is in real life? Even without studying other math branches such as statistics and probability most people would guess it would be a very low percentage.

Why spend a significant amount of time in high school learning something you're never going to use in your career? Especially when you consider the "use it or lose it" principle. I'll jump to another subject, foreign languages, to provide a personal example. As an elementary and high school student living quite near the border with Quebec, I figured learning French would be important. So I took French from sixth grade through a couple of semesters of college. Then I moved to New



York City and then New Jersey and didn't run into many French speakers. If I tried it today I'd sound like Clark Griswold in "National Lampoon's European Vacation."

The same with math. I didn't have to resort to visualfractions.com to complete the long division example I employed. I remembered enough, although I must admit, barely enough, to get by. But I could never complete a medium-difficult algebra problem today, even though I took it at the college level. Use it or lose it.

Now, I understand that math is critically important for people in certain careers such as meteorology, accounting, computer programming, financial analysis, information security, civil or software engineering and medicine.

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Letters

Small-Town Win

To the Editor:

Barnegat Light voters, you did it! You voted by a decisive number of write-in votes to preserve what you love about your special town. Who won the election? Small-Town America. You voted to keep a charming town that enjoys peaceful, natural surroundings with limited development and a transparent government.

You voted to preserve a town where we admire beautiful sunrises and sunsets, and where we enjoy the sound of silence on the beach except for waves lapping on the shore. As the only island town prohibiting non-authorized

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Sports Writing Portfolio **FIRST PLACE**

David Biggy

Pinelands' Livio Caps Standout
Career; Southern's Madsen
Hangs Up Coach's Hat; Gonzales
Rose to Stardom with Mom as His
'Rock'

44
The SandPaper/Wednesday, March 8, 2023

Pinelands Senior Livio Caps Standout Career Inside Boardwalk Hall

Mason Livio could have had a repeat of last season, when he walked into Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall for the NJSIAA State Championships and left disappointed after losing two straight bouts, bounced out early on the second day.

And after what occurred on the afternoon of March 2, there was a 50-50 chance it would happen again. But following a first-round loss to 17th-seeded Blase Mele of Princeton, the 18-year-old Pinelands Regional senior went into Friday's first session ready to cap his career in style.

"It's hard to focus in this place," Livio said shortly after being eliminated in the third round of wrestlebacks with a 3-2 loss to Phillipsburg's Gavin Hawk. "You're excited to be here, and you see a lot of people you know, a lot of wrestlers you know are good. But today I was zoned in. It was a fresh day. I felt loose and more at peace with myself, not so involved with everything else going on in here. Today was about winning and advancing as far as possible."

With graduation just months away, Livio easily could have thrown in the towel and not cared — heck, plenty of seniors have done just that after losing that first match, knowing they had no shot at a state title and an extremely hard road just to get onto the medals podium.

"This tournament is the most unforgiving thing in all of high school sports," said Pinelands coach Joe Adelizzi. "But Mason's not that kind of kid. He's a high-character

kid. He cares. He's a hard worker. People like me ... we get into coaching for kids like him. He's made me a better coach."

After three straight losses inside Boardwalk Hall, Livio finally scored a victory, a 7-2 triumph over Fair Lawn's Natan Tsyrlin. Several hours later, he won a 7-0 decision against Manalapan's Vincent DePierro — his 39th win of the season.

Against the seventh-seeded State-liners' sophomore, Livio was taken down with 32 seconds left in the first period, but escaped seven seconds later to trail by a point heading into the second. Livio started the next period on defense and escaped rather easily, tying the contest. Still knotted at 2-2 going into the third, Hawk needed just six seconds to escape from Livio's grasp and neither guy mustered much offense from there.

"We had a battle and things didn't go my way, but that's what happens here. Only one guy advances," he said. "I wrestled my best and it is what it is. This is how things go down in this place. It's an unforgiving sport, but that's what I signed up for."

The Wildcats' leader for just about the entirety of his career, Livio finished with a record of 109-23, third on the Pinelands' career wins list.

"I had a great career. It's been long, but it flew by. I started when I was 5, and I've enjoyed every bit of it," he said. "I love what I do. This stuff helps me stay on my game with everything. This sport provides so much value to life. A lot of times, you don't see it, but it really applies to every aspect of life and that's what makes it the greatest sport.



David Biggy

OUT WITH A BANG: Pinelands Regional senior Mason Livio takes down Fair Lawn's Natan Tsyrlin during the first round of wrestlebacks at the NJSIAA State Championships on March 3.

"It's taught me to be a better person overall. I've grown a lot, learned a lot, and to end it here in Atlantic City is awesome. This is the best place to end a wrestling career. I left all out there."

Adelizzi said Livio has been in the spotlight at Pinelands since he entered the program four years ago.

"Mason's been a leader pretty much his entire career, even as 106-pound freshman," he said. "And that's a lot of pressure on a kid, when everybody notices everything you're doing, every little mistake, every aspect of your matches. He needed

to mature through all that, and I believe he's handled it about as well as a kid could. He'll sacrifice anything for the team. Whatever we needed, it was, 'Yes, coach!' If we were running sprints, he didn't question it. He just ran them as hard as he could. We're going to miss him."

The feeling is mutual, Livio said. "I could have gone someplace else," he said. "I had guys on me about transferring to other schools, but I chose to stay at Pinelands with Adelizzi. He was the guy I wanted in my corner for every match and in practice. He really helped me go far."

Of course, Mason's wrestling days aren't over.

"I'm looking at some smaller colleges so I can focus more on my academics, but I'm planning on wrestling," said Livio, who plans to major in finance. "This isn't the end. I'll be wrestling somewhere next year, and I'll enjoy the next four years as I step into a new phase of life. I'm excited about the future. I'm looking to make some money and do some good in the world. I just want to make myself and my family proud."

— David Biggy

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Best Headlines FIRST PLACE

Gina G. Scala

Parking Debate Serves Up
Concessions; New Rendering
Brings Turbine Visibility into Focus;
Officials Talk Trash as
Noncompliance Heaps on Concerns

24
The SandPaper/Wednesday, August 30, 2023



Courtesy Long Beach Township

IT'S CLEAR AS DAY: Beachgoers will have an unobstructed view of windmills if a proposed offshore wind plan moves forward, a 3D model using data points from the developer shows.

New Rendering Brings Turbine Visibility Into Focus

Using a photograph of the Holgate skyline and beach as well as data from the Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind plan, a Maryland-based multimedia company created a three-dimensional model of what wind turbines will look like from the beach, driving home what many say will be the impact of a proposed wind generation farm off Long Beach Township.

Interface Multimedia, an integrated digital marketing company in Silver Spring, Md., produced the model depicting how the turbines will look from the shoreline on a clear summer day. The company was commissioned to do the work on behalf of the township by Warwick Group Consultants, a Washington, D.C.-based lobbying firm the board

of commissioners hired by resolution earlier this year.

Mayor Joseph Mancini said it took Interface Multimedia several days to accurately create the rendering because there were so many data points in the Atlantic Shores construction and operations plan.

"Imagine 200 spinning turbines," Mancini said of what beachgoers can expect to see if the Atlantic Shores project moves forward as planned, adding that the turbines will not be synchronized as he pointed to a photocopy of the rendering that shows the blades rotating at different speeds.

Gordon Perkins, an expert on visibility for Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind, has said data overwhelmingly show that shoreline visibility is going to be a rare occurrence.

Created on Behalf Of LBT Officials To Show Impact

"It's complicated. It's incredibly complicated," Perkins said in an interview last summer with The SandPaper, adding, "Visibility is reflective light, and the opacity of the atmosphere changes the amount of reflective light that your eye sees. The atmosphere in an offshore environment is incredibly variable and there's a lot happening out there that can change minute-to-minute, day-to-day."

Still, Mancini noted the five 380-foot-high turbines of the Jersey-Atlantic Wind Farm, located at the

wastewater treatment plant in Atlantic City can be clearly seen from the parking lot of the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge in Holgate 13.5 miles away.

The proposed Atlantic Shores windmills are "thicker, bigger and closer," he said. Township officials are launching an awareness campaign about the proposed Atlantic Shores project after feedback from residents suggested there wasn't enough public information on the subject.

As planned, the Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind farm would site 1,050-foot-high turbines between 9.5 and 13.5 miles out in the ocean off the entire length of LBI and extending farther eastward. The project is a 50-50 partnership between Shell New Energies US LLC and EDF Renew-

ables North America. It was formed in December 2018 to co-develop nearly 183,353 acres of leased sea area on the Outer Continental Shelf, located within the New Jersey Wind Energy Area.

The project is comprised of three phases, with the first phase expected to be approved later this year. It includes 120 turbines to be placed in the Atlantic Ocean with phase two calling for the placement of 80 turbines; phase three has 157 turbines.

Project 1 is expected to begin construction in 2025, and operations would start in 2028. Its operational period ends in 2048.

"It's the largest industrialization of the ocean this close to shore in the world," Mancini said.

Continued on Page 70

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Best Lede FIRST PLACE

David Biggy

Stafford School Esports Squad Rolls On; Emma June Lives Life to Fullest; Southern's Madsen Hangs Up Coach's Hat After 29 Years

32 CURRENTS
The Sandpaper/Wednesday, March 15, 2023

**Divided Council
In Ship Bottom
Has Questions**

*Hiring Process,
Salaries Contended*

There was nothing routine when the Ship Bottom Borough Council adopted a standard salary resolution for some Ship Bottom employees last month as members traded frustration over the hiring process.

It all began when Councilman Joe Valyo cited concern that a new hire would make more money than a longtime borough employee who he said had more responsibility. He asked for an explanation in writing.

"It's just unbelievable that this could happen," he said.

Councilman Peter Rossi agreed, but Councilman David Hartmann, who chairs the borough's finance committee, wanted to know what two jobs were being compared.

The new position is the tax/utility collector, and the established post is the deputy municipal clerk, Valyo said.

"Well, that's your answer ... different jobs," Hartmann said, prompting an exchange among the council about hiring practices.

For their part, Valyo and Councilman Robert Bulkus said the first time they learned about the hiring of a tax and utility collector, which is a split duty between the finance department and water/sewer, was when they received the meeting folder with the agenda and other documents.

"There is no communication between the hiring committee and anyone else," Valyo said. "The process should be ongoing so (we) know what's going on and we're not just approving."

When a similar issue occurred several years ago, the council agreed the hiring committee would bring in the appropriate council liaison for the department that was hiring.

"I let it go and I shouldn't have," Valyo said. "The deputy tax and utility collector is part of my department, and I didn't know about the hire until the resolution came just a few days prior to the hire meeting."

Bulkus said all he is asking for is for the appropriate council liaison to

First Year of Competition Is a Smash

Stafford School Esports Squad Rolls On

Adults who played popular video games during the 1980s and 1990s may remember some of the iconic characters they used to accomplish the objectives. Pac-Man, Mario, Zelda, Sonic – they were the ones too legit to quit.

Surprisingly, they're all still around. But for Patrick Eby, Parker Wilkinson and Liam MacNaughton, they're not the go-to bunch. Instead, the three Stafford Intermediate School sixth-graders are more apt to utilize Pit, Mr. Game & Watch and Ike. Occasionally, they might go with Ganondorf or Falco. Wait ... who?

"Pit has a very fun play style that suits my way of playing, which most of the time is rushing down the opponent but also having options to retreat, if necessary," said Patrick, who on March 8 all but carried the three-student crew to the finish line in a Garden State Esports Middle School Super Smash Bros. Winter Championship quarterfinals contest against Hoboken Charter School.

"The opponent decided to play incredibly offensive, which left him open to a lot of punish attacks after I blocked his attacks. I was able to counter really well."

With esports on the rise among schools across the country – even at dozens of colleges, some of which offer scholarships for esports competitors – Stafford Intermediate started its own program this school year and joined the fray of the competitive esports world, specifically with Garden State Esports, a nonprofit group that acts as the organizing body of scholastic esports in New Jersey.

The mission is simple: to create high-quality, student-centered experiences through scholastic esports so all students can use esports as a platform to grow socially, emotionally and academically.

"Kids like competition, and esports give them a different form of competition," said Intermediate Esports adviser Shannon Mastrogiovanni. "It's growing and becoming more competitive. It's starting to become a huge community. It's a lot of fun, but it's intense."

Playing for the first time in the championship tournament, the Stafford Intermediate squad – which also included Noah Petterson and Dean Donato as alternates – was given the



Photos by David Biggy

FORGING AHEAD: Flanked by esports advisers Matt Bleichner and Shannon Mastrogiovanni, the Stafford Intermediate School crew of Dean Donato, Noah Petterson, Patrick Eby, Parker Wilkinson and Liam MacNaughton celebrate their Garden States Esports Middle School Super Smash Bros. championship tournament victory.



STANDING ROOM: Stafford Intermediate sixth-grader Patrick Eby has an audience during the first round of Super Smash Bros. championship tournament action. The team is headed to Kean University for the semifinals.

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Online Breaking News FIRST PLACE

Monique M.
Demopoulos

Little Egg Harbor Mourns
Loss of Preteen After
Tragic Dirt Bike Accident

The screenshot shows a news article from 'The SandPaper' website. The article title is 'Little Egg Harbor Mourns Loss of Preteen After Tragic Dirt Bike Accident'. It includes a 'Free Access' badge, a sub-headline 'Incident Under Investigation; Browne Honored by Frog Pond Elementary', the date 'April 03, 2023', and the author 'By MONIQUE M. DEMOPOULOS'. There are social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, Email, Print, Link, and a plus sign. A photograph shows a young boy in a helmet and gear sitting on a dirt bike. Below the photo is a caption: 'FINE YOUNG MAN': Michael 'Mikey' Browne was known as a happy kid who loved riding his dirt bike, fishing and being in school with his friends. (Supplied Photos)'. The main text of the article describes how Frog Pond students and teachers honored Michael 'Mikey' Browne Jr. with pink shirts on Monday, April 3, following his tragic dirt bike accident on Sunday, April 2. It also mentions that the accident occurred on an unimproved road and that the incident remains under investigation.

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Best Use of Social Media FIRST PLACE

Sarah Lill

Hands Across the Beaches
Reel Strategy

Best Use of Social Media Entry: The SandPaper Instagram Reel Strategy

The SandPaper is a weekly newsmagazine based in Surf City, New Jersey serving its community with news in and around the Long Beach Island/southern Ocean County area. We are proud to be a top source of news in our region and ever prouder to have extended this influence and reach through our social media platforms, namely Instagram.

With over 32,000 followers on Instagram, we have learned to adapt our reach digitally whilst remaining relevant as a traditional, print medium.

This past year, we took advantage of the "Reels" format to disseminate news stories more effectively online. Our hope was to reach a wider audience on Instagram, drive traffic to our profile and website, and deliver relevant news in a more timely, efficient manner. The results of our video-focused strategy were successful! Our top three Instagram posts from 2023 were all reels, reaching over 219,000 accounts collectively.

Our top-performing reel was a video of "Hands Across the Beaches," an event created to slow the development of wind turbines along the east coast. The 15-second reel shows participants linking hands along the shoreline in Ship Bottom, LI. The video reached 129,437 accounts (of this number, 165,765 were non-followers) and garnered 4,825 likes, 833 shares, 580 comments and 51 saves. See screenshots below for insight!



Top performing reel from 2023

The second-highest performing reel of 2023 for The SandPaper was a video of a deer sighting in Surf City. On April 28th, a handful of deer were spotted on Long Beach Island (a rare occurrence on our barrier island). A user was able to send us a video of one of the aforementioned deer picking its way through a yard in Surf City. The resulting reel on our Instagram page reached 57,127 accounts (35,852 of these accounts were non-followers), garnered 4,555 likes, 1,829 shares and 167 comments. See screenshots below for insight!

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Best Video
FIRST PLACE

David Biggy

SRHS Field of Flags



Southern Regional Operation Field of Flags 2023

TheSandPaper LBI
93 subscribers

[Analytics](#) [Edit video](#)

1 Like [Share](#) [Save](#) [More](#)

All Politics News For you Recently uploaded
Southern Regional High School

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Online Breaking News Sports Story FIRST PLACE

David Biggy

Jayla Hahn Becomes Southern Regional's First Female Wrestling State Champ

The screenshot shows a news article from 'The Sandpaper' website. The article title is 'Jayla Hahn Becomes Southern Regional's First Female Wrestling State Champ'. It includes a 'Free Access' badge, the category 'NJSIAA Girls Wrestling Championships', the date 'March 04, 2023', and the author 'By David Biggy'. There are social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, Email, Print, Link, and a plus sign. The article features a photo of Jayla Hahn in a wrestling match, with a caption: 'DONE: Southern Regional senior Jayla Hahn looks to her coaches for further instruction as she squeezes a headlock on Jackson Memorial's Kamila Bieszczad during the 138-pound girls wrestling state championship on March 4. (Photos by David Biggy)'. The main text of the article describes Hahn's victory and her previous experience.

This season at Southern, Hahn discovered a whole new level of preparation and conditioning – most of the season, she practiced with Southern's boys team, which had its best season in the program's history – and became a better wrestler because of it.

**PRIZE
TIME!!!**

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

NJPA
NEW JERSEY PRESS ASSOCIATION

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

The Two River Times

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Best Headlines THIRD PLACE

Sunayana Prabhu

May the Fizz Be With You; Holmdel Residents Feel Gaslit By NJNG; Amid Water Concerns, Development Still in Pipeline

May the Fizz Be With You: Basie Center Cinemas To Get Liquor License

By Sunayana Prabhu



Basie Center Cinemas, formerly Bow Tie Cinemas, will soon be able to serve alcohol now that Gov. Phil Murphy has signed a new law permitting nonprofit movie theaters with a license to sell adult beverages.

RED BANK—If not being able to sip your favorite alcoholic concoction or brew kept you from enjoying that cinematic gem showing at Basie Center Cinemas, it's time to buy your tickets. Gov. Phil Murphy signed a new law July 7 allowing nonprofit movie theaters focused on the arts to sell alcoholic beverages with a plenary retail license. "Nonprofit theaters provide a world of good to our communities," said Murphy in a statement July 8. "Treating them the same as nonprofit corporations conducting musicals or theatrical performances and allowing them to serve alcohol will enhance the entertainment experience for theater-goers while ensuring their bottom line to ensure they remain afloat and con-

tinue to benefit our communities," he added. According to the governor's office, the legislation will expand an existing law that already allows municipalities to issue plenary licenses to nonprofit theatrical arts organizations. "Nonprofit arts groups and venues, like other nonprofit entities, took a tough hit during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Sen. Vin Gopal (D-11), who sponsored the legislation with Sen. Shirley K. Turner (D-15) and Assemblyman Sterley S. Stanley (D-18). According to Gopal, the law is "one way to help" art-house movie theaters recover and boost the entertainment value for patrons. According to the bill, the holder of this special license, known as a "theater license," may serve alcohol-

ic beverages for consumption on the premises during the performance, as well as two hours before and after the performance, with the exception of certain smaller theaters where the amount of times they can serve al-

cohol during the two-hour post-show window is limited to 15 events per year. Additionally, theater licenses residents in a municipality. One of the state's leading entertainment hubs located in Red Bank, the nonprofit Count Basie Center for the Arts might be able to turn Basie Center Cinemas at 36 White St. into a profitable venture, the only movie theater on the Jersey Shore to offer alcohol with the passage of this law. Jonathan Vena, chief marketing officer for Count Basie Center for the Arts, confirmed that the organization initiated the process to acquire a liquor license last week through the borough in conjunction with the state's Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control, the department that regulates the manufacture, distribution, sale and transportation of all alcoholic beverages in New Jersey.

Count Basie purchased the former Bow Tie Cinemas in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, as part of its continuing mission to bring the arts to Monmouth County, ensuring inclusion and access to the performing arts. "This legislation is critical to the survival of our independent cinema here in Red Bank, which we took over during the pandemic to ensure this venue could continue to operate and promote the art of film," said Adam Philipson, president and CEO of Count Basie Center for the Arts in a release. "Along with the appreciation our audience will have in enjoying a glass of wine with their film, the revenue this new law will generate is critical to our mission."

"Treating them the same as nonprofit corporations... and allowing them to serve alcohol will enhance the entertainment experience for theater-goers while enhancing their bottom line to ensure they remain afloat and continue to benefit our communities."

Gov. Phil Murphy

are not subject to the same population restriction as bars and restaurants that limit one license for every 3,000

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Health/Science Writing THIRD PLACE

Elizabeth Wulfhorst

Two Teachers Now
United for Life

THE TWO RIVER TIMES
tworivertimes.com

TWO TEACHERS NOW UNITED FOR LIFE

By Elizabeth Wulfhorst

INCRUST – How far would you go to help a colleague? You might lend them a few bucks for lunch, share a cookie or even help them jump-start their car in a pinch, right? But in today's stressful, cynical world, most people leave work and head home, giving no thought to how they spend many waking hours with each other.

Not Mike Immanuel, a technology teacher for the past eight years at St. Leo the Great School in Lincoln. On June 1 he gave his seventh-grade language arts teacher Jason Crisp, a kidney.

Crisp, who lives in Lincoln with her husband and two children, has a rare genetic kidney disease. Her mother was diagnosed in her 40s and had a cadaver kidney transplant in 2009 when Crisp was in middle school, Crisp's sister Melissa, who also has the disease, was 29 when she received a live transplant from her husband, Crisp's brother-in-law.

"From then, my primary care doctor said, obviously, there's something genetic," Crisp explained. "We didn't know what it was called. We didn't know what it was because there just wasn't enough information on it."

She had routine blood work which showed elevated creatinine levels and has been routinely checked for over a decade. Even with monitoring every six months or so, Crisp said she was still "blissfully" when her nephrologist told her late last year that she needed to start looking for a donor immediately. "By this time next year you'll be on dialysis," he told her in December.

"Regardless of the fact that I've known for so long, it still crept up," Crisp said.

Crisp initially tried to get on a transplant list but there were too many tests and criteria she had to meet just to get on a waiting list that it had to be years long.

Crisp's husband immediately turned to Facebook,

Continued on Page 22

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Coverage of Government SECOND PLACE

Stephen Appezato

Monmouth Park Proposes Development to Address Financial Uncertainty; Proposed Development Gallops On

Page 17

THE TWO RIVER TIMES

tworivertimes.com

VOLUME 33 NUMBER 39 THE WEEK OF JULY 27 - AUGUST 2, 2023 ONE DOLLAR



Ominous clouds over Fort Hancock portended the storms that raged across the Two River area Tuesday, bringing drenching rain, gusting winds and flash flooding. Some towns received more than 2 inches of rain in an hour. (STAFF PHOTOGRAPHY)

Fair Haven Bolts the Door on Short-Term Rentals

By Stephen Appezato

FAIR HAVEN – The door on short-term rentals in Fair Haven has now been closed and locked; the borough council banned rental terms shorter than 95 days in all residential districts at its July 24 meeting.

According to council member Tracy Cole, short-term rentals have become an issue for many residents in the borough who have voiced their concerns through emails and phone calls.

“The overwhelming majority of our community is vastly in approval of this ordinance,” said Mayor Josh Halpern.

But, as resident Gerrin Prevoti asked, “What are the facts that are driving this decision?”

On the night of the council’s vote there were just five rentals listed in Fair Haven on Airbnb, one of the leading short-term rental websites.

Continued on Page 11

Monmouth Park Proposes Development to Address Financial Uncertainty

By Stephen Appezato

OCEANPORT – Regardless of community concern, an eight-story hotel and 388-unit age-restricted development may eventually bloom over Monmouth Park.

The project is the racetrack’s solution for securing a reliable, year-round cash flow. During a presentation to the borough July 20, Dennis Drasin, CEO of the park’s operating company Darby Development, explained the racetrack’s financial situation which led to the proposed development.

Under former Gov. Chris Christie, the state halted subsidies for horse racing tracks. When Gov. Phil Murphy took office, he reinstated temporary racing subsidies. Under the agreement, Monmouth Park received \$10 million a year for five years. With 2023 being the final year of a guaranteed subsidy, park leadership recognized the need to generate a new form of income.

According to Drasin, the racetrack finally makes “a small profit” and is able to pay its bills and maintain competitive purses. This is largely due to the 2018 le-



An eight-story hotel is part of a proposed development project at Monmouth Park to help secure year-round cash flow. (COURTESY NUSICA)

galization of sports wagering in New Jersey.

If the racetrack loses the \$10 million subsidy and doesn’t find another revenue source, Drasin said it would “probably mean we have to cut the days in half that we race.”

While hopeful, Drasin was unsure if state legislators would include the subsidy in next year’s state budget.

The proposed development, while the hotel and

mixed-use entertainment area would be built adjacent to the track.

The housing development would offer one-, two- and three-bedroom units. One-fifth of the units would be designated affordable housing.

The project is a joint effort between the New Jersey Sports and Exposition

Continued on Page 2

Middletown Planning Board Reviews Potential Route 36 Redevelopment Areas

By Sunayana Prabhu

MIDDLETOWN – The redevelopment study undertaken by the township is for “non-condemnation redevelopment,” which means no property would be acquired through eminent domain.

The study area includes a total of 505 properties spanning nearly 321 acres. “For the most part the properties that front on Route 36 are in non-residential zoned areas,” said Slachetka. Section A covers the westernmost part of the area being studied, beginning at Palmer Avenue and ending at Main Street in Port Monmouth. Section B falls between Main Street in Port Monmouth and 12th Street in Bellford. Section C, the easternmost section of the corridor, runs from Broadway Avenue to Chamone Avenue in the Leonardo section

meeting will focus on one section.

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Continued on Page 11

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

New Writing **SECOND PLACE**

Sunayana Prabhu

Residents Launch Petition; Colts Neck Residents Raise Storm About Potential Threat; Colts Neck Development Still in Pipeline

THE TWO RIVER TIMES

tworivertimes.com

VOLUME 33 NUMBER 23

THE WEEK OF APRIL 6 - 12, 2023

ONE DOLLAR



Residents Launch Petition Against Colts Neck Development

By Sunayana Prabhu

COLTS NECK – The developer of Colts Neck Manor is persistent but so are those opposing the project.

Several organizations, including Sierra Club, the League of Women Voters and a citizens group from Colts Neck have launched an online petition against the proposed development by a company owned by Jared Kushner on a nearly 40-acre vacant parcel along Route 537.

The proposed project is a high-density apartment complex with an on-site wastewater management plant, which several petitioners have said would cause “catastrophic” and “irreversible” water contamination throughout the county.

The petition – which has 1,800 signatures as of April 4 – was launched after the

Continued on Page 4

Two happy participants at the Red Bank Spring Egg Hunt were ready to celebrate after finding some of the hundreds of candy-filled eggs on Count Basie Fields Sunday, March 26. For more photos and information about the event, see pages 12 and 13.

PATRICK OLIVERO

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Education Writing SECOND PLACE

Stephen Appezato

Towns Pushing Transgender Policy Revisions; Partisan Pushback Over Changes; Policy Ignites Battle; More Schools Reconsider Policies

THE TWO RIVER TIMES

tworivertimes.com

VOLUME 33 NUMBER 34

THE WEEK OF JUNE 22 - 28, 2023

ONE DOLLAR



Hackensack Meridian Riverview Medical Center Foundation will once again bring fireworks to the Navesink River July 3, lighting up Red Bank's night sky.

RMC Foundation Fireworks to Light Up the Night

By Stephen Appezato

RED BANK - The Hackensack Meridian Riverview Medical Center Foundation (HMRMF) Board of Trustees will host a fireworks display on the Navesink, lighting up the night sky over Red Bank Monday, July 3. The fundraiser will benefit Hackensack Meridian Riverview Medical Center. An annual tradition, the fireworks display in Red Bank goes back more than a decade, according to Riverview Medical Center's chief hospital execu-

tive Tim Hogan. Many Two River residents gather along the Navesink River to witness a dazzling light show and commemorate the Fourth of July with a bang. "I've been seeing the fireworks since I was a kid," said Steve Schindler of Carner's Barber Shop, reflecting on fond childhood memories of gathering with friends along the riverbank. "We enjoyed it (the fireworks), it was a

Continued on Page 10

Holmdel Makes First Move to Secure Legendary Horn Antenna

By Sunayana Prabhu

HOLMDEL - Hailed by some residents as the "greatest" first move, the township committee voted unanimously to authorize the appraisal of the legendary Horn Antenna property atop Crawford Hill at 791 Holmdel Road, as a first step in potentially acquiring it by eminent domain.

Eminent domain is a right granted to municipalities under the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution to acquire qualifying properties for public use in exchange for fair market value, determined by the town's appraiser.

The committee's unanimous vote at the June 13 meeting has now authorized township appraisers Gagliano & Company to submit a report for the Horn Antenna property that would enable Holmdel to begin formal negotiations toward legally securing the legendary antenna at its existing location.

"After many conversations, I believe it now makes sense for the township committee to move forward with seeking an appraisal of the Crawford Hill property, so it



These lots encompassing nearly 42 acres make up the Crawford Hill property. The Holmdel committee has authorized an appraisal of lots 6 and 6.01, about 34 acres shown outlined in red, which include the Horn Antenna and are being considered for open space or a park. Lot 7, which currently houses the Nokia building, would remain under redevelopment consideration.

the potential use of eminent domain lightly, but I believe it makes sense for the township to use this power - that it has under state law - to condemn for open space, recreation and historic preservation purposes."

A second resolution authorized by the committee at the Tuesday meeting rescheduled the redevelopment investigation of the Crawford Hill property, separating the three lots that make up the site's 42 total acres.

Lots 6 and 6.01 are authorized for appraisal and include the Horn Antenna and 34 acres of green space which will be considered for a potential park. Lot 7, which currently houses the vacant, 50,000-square-foot Nokia building, will not be included in the eminent domain process and stay under continued redevelopment consideration.

Residents applauded the governing body's strategy in dividing the parcel to preserve Lots 6 and 6.01, 34 acres of prairie parkland with the Horn Antenna un-

acquisitions under the eminent domain act," Mayor DJ Lacorelli said at the Tuesday meeting. "I do not take

Continued on Page 10

Towns Pushing Controversial Transgender Student Policy Revisions

By Stephen Appezato

COLTS NECK - The Colts Neck Board of Education is considering revising its transgender student policy. If approved, school staff must inform parents of a child's wish to be addressed by a different name, pronoun or gender identity.

The school district's current policy, known as a "student-centered approach," operates in accordance with New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) guidelines. In 2018, the NJDOE directed public schools to adopt this policy, which holds that schools should honor students' desired gender identities regardless of parental direction. Additionally, schools are not obligated to disclose changes to students' identities with their parents.

Colts Neck has operated with its current student-centered approach (Policy 5756) since 2019. Revisions

to this policy were introduced earlier this year following the election of new board of education members in November.

In February, the first iteration of this policy change was introduced. John Camera, a member of the school board who was elected last year and ran under the "Colts Kids First" slate, explained his support for the policy revisions in an email to The Two River Times, speaking as an individual, not as a board member. Camera said he was "very concerned and upset about many aspects" of the district's current transgender student policy.

"The idea that if a 6- or 7-year-old tells a school staff member that they identify as something other than their biological gender that we would not immediately share that with her parents is con-

Continued on Page 8

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Fresh Approach to Routine Reporting FIRST PLACE

Sunayana Prabhu

Oceanport's Got Gobble Trouble

THE TWO RIVER TIMES

tworivertimes.com

VOLUME 33 NUMBER 30 THE WEEK OF MAY 25 - 31, 2023 ONE DOLLAR



The Red Bank Rotary Club, in partnership with the Red Bank Elks, planted a field of heroes in Riverside Gardens Park in the run-up to Memorial Day. Each of the 100 flags was sponsored by someone to honor a fallen service member, active duty military, a first responder, health care worker or other "hero." The flags will remain in the park through Monday, May 29.

Voters Will Decide School Regionalization

By JF Grodeska

ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS - After several years of negotiations and discussions, the Atlantic Highlands, Highlands and Sea Bright borough councils held a joint special public meeting May 18 at the Horse Parish Center about regionalizing their school districts. Under the proposal, the Henry Hudson School District would expand to include pre-kindergarten through 12th grade and incorporate students from Sea Bright. Those students cur-

rently attend schools in the Oceanport and Shore Regional High School districts. The plan would allow for a minimum five-year transition period, so as to not abruptly remove students from their current classes. Bob Benecke, of Benecke Economics in Riverdale, is the financial expert hired by the Borough of Atlantic Highlands to review regionalization costs. He is the author of four textbooks

Continued on Page 8

Oceanport's Got Gobble Trouble

By Sunayana Prabhu

OCEANPORT - Wild turkeys have sent some residents on a wild goose chase. To help the birds pecking around Port-Au-Peck borough officials recently installed two wild turkey signs, notifying residents about the free birds that are causing quite a stir in the neighborhood. Mayor John Jay Coffey Jr. made residents aware of the birds' presence in a social media post May 11. "Wild turkeys taking up residence in Oceanport," he wrote. "There are about five of them."

Unlike the "Five Little Turkeys" waddling away on by one in William Bonnar's read-aloud book, the five wild turkeys of Oceanport have been charging at humans lately and they appear to be "here to stay," Coffey said, noting that the birds had been "peaceably" merrily through out Oceanport for several months, but recently began taking a bit more of an aggressive stance with our human residents, especially those humans driving slow-ly in motor vehicles. Shannon Vivas said she was in her car at the traffic light at Port-Au-Peck Ave-



Wild turkeys in Oceanport have become aggressive to drivers-moving cars. The borough's Department of Public Works recently installed two signs in the Port-Au-Peck neighborhood to warn drivers and residents to watch out for the birds.

use and Monmouth Boulevard when "all of a sudden this wild turkey came charging at my car from the lawn of the neighbor and came out into the road and started aggressively go-

"I've lived here for 37 years and I've never seen turkeys until this year," Tom Murphy said. This year he's seen them in "packs" of "at least five to 10." The aggressive behavior of the wild turkeys is now being viewed as gender specific by some residents. "I think there's a male that keeps attacking everybody's vehicle at the end of Comanche (Drive)," said Miguel Toro. He has found the birds on his front yard the last few nights on Wardsville Circle. According to Toro, "Only the male does this," noting the tom "would stand in front of cars and you have to get out, show it away, and get back in the car and take off. But yeah, he'll block your car."

Coffey said several videos and photos of cars being pecked at or charged by the birds can be found on social media. The wild birds have apparently been attacking their own reflection on the side of a car, Coffey believes the turkeys "think it is another turkey," because wild turkeys don't seem to have "touch" experience with how mirrors or reflections

Continued on Page 7

Red Bank Planning Board Approves Cannabis Dispensary

By Sunayana Prabhu

RED BANK - After months of debating it and where cannabis businesses can operate in the borough, the planning board approved the application of Canopy Crossroads, LLC to open a marijuana retail shop on West Street, next to Red Bank Lagers. Middletown-based couple Andrew Zeffin and Caryn Cohen, who own Canopy Crossroads, LLC, received conditional land use variance approval from the board 8-1 at its May 15 meeting. Board member Juanita Lewis voted against the application.

Zeffin and Cohen was conditional use approval to open a retail cannabis sales and delivery shop in what is currently a vacant storefront at 9 West St. According to borough documents, there will be no changes to the existing footprint or structure. At the Monday meeting, Zeffin's attorney Rick Brodsky and architect Stephen Raich returned to testify before the board. Some

residents have opposed the application because of the location's proximity to the Red Bank Charter School. The site is located in the business and residential, B-R 1 zone. According to the borough's recently revised ordinance on cannabis zoning, cannabis retailers should not be located within 1,000 feet of public or private schools or playgrounds. Canopy Crossroads would be located 800 feet from the school. Although marijuana is legal in New Jersey, it is still illegal under federal law.

Peter Weinger, an attorney representing the Red Bank Corporate Plaza, a 4-story commercial building that includes Pazzo restaurant at 141 West Front St., said, "The issue is simply one of proximity," asserting that the proposed location is "not the right fit."

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2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Weekly Online/Editorial Awards

Editorial Section Layout/Content FIRST PLACE

Judy O’Gorman Alvarez
Elizabeth Wulfhorst
Editors

Eduardo Pinzon
Production Editor

April 14; Nov. 2, 2023

COMMENTARY

Celebrate Earth Day With Some Changes

April 22 is Earth Day, a time to focus on our planet and reflect on its future. It is also a call to action both individually and collectively. Each of us can make a difference and collectively we can make significant positive changes. In the last fifty years we took action on critical health issues such as air and water quality and the preservation of species and open space. However the issue which has emerged as central to our survival on this planet is our dependency on fossil fuels which scientists have identified as the most critical factor driving global warming and causing extreme weather patterns everywhere.

We are no longer debating the reality of an environmental emergency but rather how to motivate effective change in individual and societal behaviors. Author James Clear in his popular book Atomic Habits, comments, "The more global, intangible, vague, and delayed the consequence, the less likely it is to influence individual behavior." That is the primary issue around getting individual and collective action.

Clear lays out his four laws of behavioral change. Make it obvious. Make it attractive. Make it easy. And make it satisfying. Two obvious paths to reducing the use of fossil fuels are to increase the use of clean energy and to hold producers of carbon pollution accountable. The Inflation Reduction Act gives incentives to electrify our homes and switch to electric vehicles. These actions are relatively easy and definitely satisfying. Putting a price on carbon and distributing any resulting funds to families is a way that many countries including Canada are trying to reduce carbon emissions.

This Earth Day educate yourself on the benefits of electrifying your home and making your next car electric. (Check out rewiringamerica.org) Find out what scientists think would cut global warming. (See yaleclimateconnections.org) Contact your local, state and federal law makers and identify yourself as an advocate for our planet. Tell them to get busy now!

*Stephanie Morrow
Red Bank*

Parades Generate Community Enthusiasm

I would like to first congratulate the Runson St. Patrick Parade Committee on celebrating their 10th anniversary of the very festive and well attended parade in our community March 12. It is nice to see how this annual parade generates so much enthusiasm within the town residents and businesses alike with their decorating and participation.

I am reaching out in hopes that we can generate as much enthusiasm from our residents and businesses to show a display of American flags and red, white and blue for the Runson Annual Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony on Monday, May 29. It is important to show respect and appreciation, especially on this day, to those who fought and died for our country and their families. It is because of their courage and sacrifices that we are able to enjoy the benefits of our freedoms and living in this great country.

*Sarah H. Pumphrey
Runson Councilwoman*

Fighting for Solutions to the Teen Suicide Crisis

Behavioral health is an issue that affects the future of

the COVID-19 pandemic. It's not hard to imagine why a survey of high school students found that 20% had seriously considered attempting suicide within the last year. These numbers highlight that suicide is a crisis in need of attention and resources to support our students, families, teachers, coaches, and other adults who can make a difference in the life of a teen or any family facing mental health issues. Yet, as Senator Gopal noted in his recent article, the current caseload per school counselor is double the average at 500 students per counselor, indicating the existing resources are insufficient. This must change.

Senator Gopal has secured \$25 Million for Monmouth County which now allows the county to provide early intervention programs, expansion of the School-Linked Services, and funding for the suicide crisis hotline. This is a great start to getting our families and communities the help they need, but it is time we take further steps to address this. I am running for Assembly because I know we need to find solutions, not temporary measures, to fix this crisis. It requires experience with making big decisions and the understanding that we must be looking out for everyone. My past work as a lawyer means I know how the system works, and how to ensure bills with substance pass. My work on the antibullying legislation proves I have experience working with both Democrats and Republicans to get critical work done. It is only through working together that countless lives will be saved.

*Lawrence Peterpaul, Esq.
LD11 Democratic trainee*

How Many Italians Are There? A look at the Italian Diaspora

It's spring and I am preparing a global outreach for my Foundation's WorldCast 23 Environmental Studies broadcast for high school students. These include students in Italian Studies classes as well as in environmental science. In doing my global search, I pondered the vast settlement of Italians worldwide, the Italian Diaspora.

Americans, particularly Italian Americans, are barely aware of the dimensions of the Italian Diaspora. People of Italian heritage have played major roles and have significant presence in a number of countries outside Europe. A brief listing shows that:

1. For reference, Italy has 60 million people
2. Brazil has 32 million of Italian heritage, or 15% of its total population
3. Argentina has 25 million, a whopping 62.5% of its total population
4. The United States has an estimated 17 million, about 6%. But the National Italian American Foundation claims the number could be as high as 25 million, since the census department stopped asking about Italian ethnicity in this century
5. Venezuela, 1.7 million or 6%
6. Canada, 1.5 million, or 4.5%
- 7 and 8. Australia, 1 million or 4.4% and Uruguay 1 million, BUT 4%

If you are wondering, U.S. cities with the most Italian Americans are: New York City, 1 million, followed by Philadelphia, Chicago and Boston with about 1/2 million. The biggest concentration of Italian Americans is in the Northeast with New York and New Jersey (17% Italian ancestry) leading the way.

New Jersey is replete with municipalities that rank in the top 10 in percentage of Italian Americans. Fairfield leads the nation with 50.3. In terms of sheer numbers, our shore communities lead the state. Toms River with 27.5 thousand, Middletown with 26 thousand and Brick with 23 thousand. In Monmouth County, some 23% of

residents claim Italian ancestry. East Freehold and Lincolnville have over 33% population of Italian background.

It would appear that for all these communities, the two uppermost issues for Italian Americans concern 1) the Columbus controversy and 2) Italian Studies in public schools. Intrigued, I decided to ask two individuals associated with the work of my Foundation about issues facing their Italian communities abroad, one from Brazil, the other from Australia.

First, I inquired of Bill Macina to give us the lay of the land in Brazil. The peak Italian migration to Brazil occurred at about the same time as that to the US, 1970-1975, with a smaller flow occurring after World War II. Atypically, Bill is a triple mover. His grandparents came to the US from Italy. As a student, Bill lived in Paramus, NJ, and after wards in Washington Township, but in later adulthood, he moved to Brazil to establish his successful Business, ITAMBRAS.

With regard to the two issues of importance to Italian Americans, Bill states that Columbus is a non-issue. There are very, very few monuments to him in Brazil, which, after all, was discovered by the Portuguese navigator Pedro Cabral. October 12 is celebrated as a quasi-religious "Children's Day"

On the second matter, about the maintenance and expansion of Italian language and cultural studies: unlike here, it is the younger generation which is very concerned with this matter. They lobby for more Italian Studies in the curriculum and display a strong interest in obtaining dual Italian-Brazilian citizenship. These trends are particularly evident in Bill's home town of Serra Negra, which has 90% Italian heritage, and in the San Paulo area in general.

My second contact is Italian Australian Zack Facione. He is an amazingly accomplished world class scholar-athlete, a 7 time All-American track star who is finishing up a Master's degree at Wake Forest University, North Carolina. Interestingly, in the heart of that state, Zack is identified by peers and associates as Australian, rather than a person of Italian heritage!

Regarding the Columbus controversy, in Australia, as in Brazil, there are very few markers and no fuss about the Great Navigator. Of course, Australia was "discovered" by the Dutch in 1606 and re-discovered by British Captain Cook in 1770, long after the Columbian voyages to the New World.

As for Italian Studies, as we saw in Brazil, there is a growing interest among young Italian Australians to learn more about their heritage, perhaps as tourism to Italy is rising. But in schools and universities, Italian language is being cut out. Indeed, one university has ceased teaching any languages, stating that this study is not compatible with its mission (?) whatever that may be! No wonder why Australia is called the "graveyard of languages."

Zack lives in a suburb of Sydney, a major city which features its own "Little Italy." But he has no such place in his American home of Winston-Salem-NC. The best he can do is visit Diol's Italian Market for some Italian specialties!

I conclude by urging all readers to delve more deeply into the topics raised in this essay and to learn more about the geography and politics in your hometowns.

Silvio Laccetti, Ph.D. is a retired professor of history and has been a national columnist for 20 years. His self-named Foundation promotes Italian heritage and culture in the U.S. and abroad reach him at laccetti@stetson.edu.

For information on how to help Ukraine, visit Red Bank Regional High School Honor Society's foundation at stetsonerth.org or facebook.com/stetsonerth.org. Donations of post-worn adult polar fleece jackets and thick sweatshirts to keep Ukrainians warm can be dropped off through Nov. 10 at 1st Cpt, 96 First Ave., Atlantic Highlands.

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Editorial Comment SECOND PLACE

Lauren S. Barr

Government Policies Should Not Interfere; It's Time to Resign

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Garwood Lanes Thanks Firefighters, Community

For those who don't yet know, we had a small fire at Garwood Lanes yesterday. Everyone is safe and we are still standing but will be closed for a short time while we make the appropriate repairs.

Garwood Lanes is a family business. It always has been and always will be. But we had an unfortunate fire that came out of the woods right in the middle of the store. We had to close our operations for some time. We were very, very, sorry.

Just by a play on fate the Westfield Fire Department was sleeping for lunch across the street at Al's Deli when one of our loyal patrons recognized a fire on the outside of our building. Without any pleading or jurisdiction they sprung into action simply because it's what they were trained to do. They were later joined by our beloved Garwood Fire Department and Cranford Fire Department for a successful control of the situation.

The entire Garwood community came together to help us from the outset Mayor to all of the first responders to each and every one of our neighbors. Neighbors who were nothing short of a support system that we knew was there but were concerned of over-egging. We held the Garwood name proudly and thanks to the entire community we look forward to opening our doors as soon as we can to welcome you all home.

Thank you from the Garwood area family to all of our extended Garwood Lanes family for your support and well wishes. See you soon!

Garwood Lanes
 Garwood

Garwood PILOT Money Distribution To School District Inadequate

In the Garwood council meeting of July 27, 2023 in a consent report, it was stated they are in negotiations with the board of education on forming up the PILOT distribution at 10 percent from the Verenna property. From 2016 on, I wrote initial letters to the governing body that there should be an irrevocable agreement that the PILOT distribution to the school district should be the same as normal assessed taxation, that distribution would be around 40 percent. There really is no reason to vary from normal taxation percentages found with any other building or home in town. We even find that the land on demarc these complex are taxed the normal way. The governing bodies simply discounted the premise.

When the PILOT revenue stream started back in 2021, the distribution to the municipality gave the school district only 25 percent (0.158) which was a reasonable "chunk" but not close to my suggested 40 percent figure. The second year (2022) they decreased the distribution to only 10 percent (0.063) of revenue by annualized. I agreed they want to do a solid 10 percent revenue stream.

When the two Verenna projects became reality and started the annual PILOT revenue stream, the 10 percent agreement could generate around \$100 to \$125 to the school district which really isn't that much. The second year (2022) they decreased the distribution to only 10 percent (0.063) of revenue by annualized. I agreed they want to do a solid 10 percent revenue stream.

Looking at conservative numbers Verenna agrees that both Verenna when fully occupied will impact the school district. A gross out of the total 480 new residents there could be a student cohort generated of up to 200 students. At a 15 to 18 students already with just one building partially occupied, that's what the impact could be to the school district.

From district members, per pupil costs are at \$1,600, but with efficiencies and dissemination within existing classes, we can see only an impact of \$8 to \$10,000 per student per school district. In that same district, we can see only an impact of \$8 to \$10,000 per student per school district. In that same district, we can see only an impact of \$8 to \$10,000 per student per school district.

And that's not including students in your special programs that can cost over \$100,000 each to educate a year.

Policy on Political Endorsements
 We publish letters to the editor in the printed newspaper on issues of importance to our readers at the discretion of the editors. Those who would like their political endorsements published in the printed newspaper can do so by using the word "verve" at www.golider.com/advertiser.

Candidates for elected office are invited to submit an ad column for the printed newspaper each week at no charge. Columns should be between 250 and 500 words, and be more based on no personal attacks on opponents. Columns should be emailed to editor@golider.com by Monday at 9 a.m. for print in Thursday's newspapers.

Westfield Green Team Thanks Sustainable Jersey for Bike Oasis Funding

In June 2023, the Town of Westfield announced the opening of two newly installed bike oases located on Prospect Street in Municipal Lot 1 behind Borealis Pastry, Shopye, and the other located on Elmer Street near the entrance to the Banana Republic parking lot. These new spaces offer residents who bike downtown a convenient and safe place to park their bikes close to their destination.

The Westfield Green Team would like to express appreciation to Sustainable Jersey for funding the bike oases in Municipal Lot 1 Westfield. We received one of seven Sustainable Jersey \$20,000 grants, funded by the PJSEA Foundation, for the town's application to install a bike oasis as part of its sustainability platform and to further encourage biking to and from the downtown area. The Elmer Street location was primarily funded by a separate grant received by the Downtown Westfield Corporation (DWC), as well as by revenue from the Green Team's Community Solar program.

Location that these bike oases on the periphery of the downtown makes it easier to bike close to your destination and walk the rest of the way, avoiding the more popular, crowded sidewalks which is prohibited in the Central Business District.

A few years ago, we were not as concerned that roughly 40 percent of our town's greenhouse gas emissions are due to transportation, but we are seeing the worsening impacts of climate change. It adds a certain urgency to this work. And now, with e-bike sales soaring and showing no signs of slowing down, bike technology has gotten ahead of the infrastructure available to use them safely.

The bike oasis on the Prospect Street site is a good example of what we envision for and a step towards a quieter, calmer, and cleaner future. With its cool shady seating, its perfect motion phone, offering convenient and safe bike parking, a water refill station (even hot), and some useful bike tools. And it's all close to many popular downtown destinations, stores, cafes, pizza, and restaurants. The Elmer Street site also features a canopy to shield bikes from the elements.

However, if biking downtown is not for you, please remember that just one car parking spot can hold up to twelve bikes and that for every person opting to bike downtown, there is one less car in front of your store, and one less potential parking spot for your car.

Many thanks to members of the Westfield Green Team for their help in preparing this Sustainable Jersey bike oasis grant application, Sustainable Jersey, the DWC, the Bicycle Advisory Board, and the Town of Westfield, including our Department of Public Works for their efforts in installing the oases. We hope you get a chance to enjoy them either by biking downtown or meeting someone there who did.

Karrie Hauman

BL'S & PIECES

Westfield Lumber mill to close at the end of the month. Owner Donna Seveler has decided to retire.

perment issued to evacuation residents from the building. Fire Department personnel located a fire on the

Letters to the Editor

Diction Deception

Below are four arcane words, each with four definitions – only one is correct. The others are made up. Are you sharp enough to discern the correct definition?

If you can guess one correctly – good guess. If you get two – well-edged individual. If you get three – word expert. If you get all four – You must have a lot of brain power!

All words and correct definitions come from the board game Diction Deception.

Answers that work better than words:

1. Tail - To take away
2. Excuse - Having yellow dish-like (swallow)
3. Canopy - Carry someone about and used as hat!
4. Canopy - To make or become chocolate.

TAIPE

1. A duck, a brownish gull
2. Really, really, really
3. Tapping or scribble
4. Rubricated writing

TACHYDROMIAN

1. Of or like a sea slug or shell-less snail
2. A water wheel, consisting of two turning shafts, one within the other
3. Any of a family of wading birds related to the grebe
4. The single-banded camel

BARBIBRICK

1. A lodging or inn
2. A dry or town located adjacent to an ocean, but is largely below sea level
3. A town government building city hall
4. A hump

PLANON

1. A planet
2. A hump
3. A male noun which refers to the human male
4. A male American Indian who is married

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Coverage of Government FIRST PLACE

Katie Moen

Aziz Could Lose Seat; Fellow
BOE Member Files Ethics
Complaint



Sahar Aziz Could Lose Seat Over Consecutive Absences

By KATIE MOEN

WESTFIELD — A member of the Westfield Board of Education (BOE) who missed the organization's last three consecutive advertised meetings could be removed from office next month for violating the board's established attendance policy.

Sahar Aziz, last year's board vice president, will have the opportunity to plead her case at the next regular meeting of the board, which is scheduled to be held in mid-September. The board will then make its final determination in accordance with state law.

A motion to add the vote to the next agenda was made by board member Brendan Galligan on Tuesday during the board's first regular meeting of the new school year.

According to board bylaw 145, read into the record by Mr. Galligan on Tuesday, "a member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the board without good cause may be removed from office with an affirmative vote by the majority remaining members" as long as the member's removal is proposed at the public meeting directly preceding the vote. The district's bylaws also state that the board will be required to give Ms. Aziz at least 48 hours notice before they can discuss her position on Tuesday, September 19.

Board President Sonal Patel, Vice President Robert Benacchio and members Mary Wickens, Kent Diamond and Kristen Somsek-Schmelz voted in favor of Mr. Galligan's motion.

The board's newest member, Charles Gelinas, voted against the

motion and member Leila Morrelli opted to abstain.

"I didn't know anything about this," Ms. Morrelli said. "I would have liked the chance to do a little research."

According to district records, of the 20 meetings that the board held between July 25, 2022 and June 13, 2023, Ms. Aziz was absent from eight and marked late to five others. The district has not yet posted the minutes from the regular meeting held on June 27.

Ms. Aziz came under public scrutiny last year for using her personal social-media accounts to share content that some local residents viewed as anti-Semitic. Several district parents called for her removal from office during a heated meeting of the board held in February of last year. In April, Westfield resident Stephanie Siegel filed an official complaint against Ms. Aziz with the state School Ethics Commission.

The commission has not yet returned its decision.

In other district news, students, staff, parents and visitors should prepare themselves for some new policies and procedures when school re-opens next.

Governor Murphy signed a law at the end of 2022 that requires all school districts to establish a Behavior Threat Assessment Management Team to assess potential crises and identify students who may present a threat to themselves or others," Superintendent Raymond Gonzalez, Ed.D., said Tuesday. All members of the new team, Dr. Gonzalez said, have been trained by the New Jersey Department of Education.

"This is new for us. It's new for the

entire state, so I expect to continue to engage in conversations both in district and around the state to ensure that we are providing as much support and investigative fidelity to the process as possible," Dr. Gonzalez said.

Changes also have been made to the district's online policy, which has been upgraded to include a new webtracking platform called Gaggie. The software, Dr. Gonzalez said, will enable the district to more carefully monitor student Google accounts to check for signs of "self harm, cyber bullying and other potentially harmful behavior."

The next meeting of the Westfield Board of Education will be held at 7 p.m. on September 19 in the cafeteria of Westfield High School, located at 550 Doran Road.

By KATIE MOEN

AREA — Last week, Senator Jon Bramnick of the 21st Legislative District joined several representatives from the law enforcement community for a frank discussion about public safety and crime prevention in and around Union County.

The senator was joined by Bob Weck, the former chief of the Summit Police Department; Anthony Ambrose, the former director of public safety for the City of Newark; and former New Jersey Attorney General Chris Porrino at the Summit Elks Lodge for a two-hour panel discussion that covered everything from bail reform to the recent regional upswing in property crime.

The event, sponsored by the Summit Republicans and held on Thurs-

Local Leaders, Elected Officials Talk Public Safety

day evening, was attended by numerous representatives and elected officials, including several current and past members of the Summit Council, Assemblywoman Michele Matakoudis, and Ruthi Hyne, whose husband, Brendan Byrne, served as the governor of New Jersey from 1974 to 1982.

"The point of this discussion is to put party politics aside so we can focus on the issues," said Nick Curiale, chair of the Summit Republicans. "Every town in the state is dealing with the same challenges when it comes to crime and public safety."

Property crimes like car thefts, burglaries and home invasions have been on the rise in the region for some time. And while there may be no one right way forward, Mr. Ambrose said Thursday, strong communication between public officials, police departments and elected representatives will always play an essential role.

"Chief Weck and I always had a good working relationship. We knew that the cars that were getting lifted from Summit were turning up down in Newark, so we made it a point to keep each other in the loop," he said. "You have to know what's going on in your own community. If you're just sitting around in the station all day waiting for the phone to ring, you're just not going to be that productive."

According to information provided by the state Attorney General, 11,989 cars were stolen in New Jersey in 2019. By 2022, that number had risen to 15,650.

And while car thefts and burglaries are nothing new, the "game," Mr. Ambrose continued, has changed in recent years.

"The majority of car thefts in this state are happening because people are leaving their key fobs in their cars and not taking simple precautions to protect themselves," Mr. Ambrose said, adding that car thieves have now started to seek out certain high-end models based on market demand. Many criminal organizations also are relying on juveniles to carry out the thefts since they are less likely than adult offenders to be severely penalized.

Affluent communities like Westfield, Summit and Berkeley Heights have been hit especially hard in recent months by car thefts, home break-ins and burglaries.

"A visible police department is more important now than it ever has been," Chief Weck said. "If criminals are driving around in a community to scope it out ahead of time, they're less likely to come back if they see an active police force."

Community relationships, the chief continued, also play a major role in deterring would-be criminals.

"One of the things that we hear all the time from residents is, 'I would have called, but I didn't want to bother you.' We have to do something to change that," he said. "If you have a concern, or if you see something strange, don't hesitate. Just call us. A community that trusts the police department and actively wants to cooperate with them gives us a lot of extra eyes and ears on the street, and that's incredibly important."

Earlier this year, Governor Phil Murphy signed off on a package of bills intended to curtail car thefts by, among other actions, making it ille-

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

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Lewis Portfolio

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**Government
Writing Portfolio
SECOND PLACE**

Alexander Lewis

Lewis Portfolio

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**Scholastic Sports
Writing Portfolio
THIRD PLACE**

Tom McGurk

McGurk Portfolio

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

**Enterprise
Reporting
THIRD PLACE**

Staff

Portfolio

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Best Video
FIRST PLACE

Chris LaChall

Artist Mike Bell Brings New Life
to Thrift Store Paintings in
Tuckahoe Brewing Co. Exhibit

NJPA

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Portfolio
FIRST PLACE**

Jane Havsy

Havsy Portfolio

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Testa Portfolio

Arts & Entertainment

Rupert Holmes: From pop star to Broadway to mystery novelist

BY JIM TESTA FOR THE JERSEY JOURNAL

You're forgiven if the name Rupert Holmes conjures nothing but memories of his earwig 1979 hit about pina colodas. But the man has a resume that goes on for weeks, which he'll discuss at Hoboken's Little City Books on Sunday.

Holmes' appearance is tied to his third novel, "The McMasters Guide to Homicide, Vol. 1: Murder Your Employer" (Avid Reader Press; \$28 list price), which reached No. 6 on the New York Times bestseller list. Some of his other many accomplishments include over a dozen award-winning Broadway plays (among them several musicals), 16 albums (including cast recordings of his musicals and numerous greatest hits collections), a long list of television and film credits, and hit songs written for stars like Barbra Streisand, Barry Manilow, Dolly Parton, Dionne Warwick and Britney Spears, to name just a few.

To call him a renaissance man is putting it lightly, and yet he remains charmingly down to earth. Erudite and witty, he's well-informed about contemporary pop culture.

"I used to hate him for that cheesy pina colada song," opined a musician friend recently. "Then I saw him do a long interview with Howard Stern and by the end of it, I was ready to stand and fight for that man."

It might be a mystery why Holmes is primarily remembered for one song, but he sincerely doesn't mind—especially since mystery has always loomed large in life. He's written quite a few—and won two Edgars, publishing's highest award for the genre—including novels and plays.

Mysteries have always been his passion.

"I can actually determine to the second when I started getting keenly interested in detective stories because there was a TV series in the '50s, years before Jim Hutton played Ellery Queen on TV, there was a TV series called 'The New Adventures of Ellery Queen' starring George Nader," Holmes recalled. "I had just recently been told I would have to wear glasses and that depressed me greatly because when I was a kid, if you had to wear glasses, you didn't



"MURDER YOUR EMPLOYER" is the first volume in Rupert Holmes' planned "McMasters Guide to Homicide" series.

get to be an actor, you didn't get to be a football hero, you were going to be either a teacher or a librarian."

One Sunday night, on an episode of "The Steve Allen Show" devoted to TV detectives, Holmes saw Nader put on a pair of eyeglasses.

"Wow, I thought, you get to be the star of a series and wear glasses!" Holmes said. "So that caused me to go and buy my first Ellery Queen novel, and I started reading Agatha Christie and other mystery authors. It was quite a meaningful day in my life when I had my photograph on the cover of Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine as the author of a Broadway comedy thriller called 'Accomplice.'"

Holmes began his professional life as a studio musician in the late '60s but signed to MCA as a solo artist in 1974 and had a good run as a pop artist into the early '80s. "Escape (The Pina Colada Song)" appeared on his fifth album, "Partners in Crime," by



RUPERT HOLMES will perform and discuss his latest murder mystery, "Murder Your Employer," at 6 p.m. Sunday at Little City Books in Hoboken.

which point he was already well-established in the industry as both a performer and songwriter.

When his career started to cool down, Holmes took to performing in comedy clubs and cabarets, telling stories about his life interspersed with his songs. Joe Papp enjoyed the act so much that he entreated Holmes to write a musical, which led to "The Mystery of Edwin Drood," Holmes' first Broadway show, based loosely on an unfinished murder mystery by Edgar Allan Poe.

Holmes' evolution from singer-songwriter to mystery novelist inspired the show he'll be doing at Little City Books.

"I suggested that it might be fun to show how I went from mysteries in song form to mysteries in novel form," he explained. "And so I agreed to sing a song or two that would show how I evolved from someone who, in the '70s and '80s, was a storyteller in song. And then in the '80s, I became a storyteller on the Broadway stage. And then

starting in the new millennium, I became a teller of stories via surprise novels and short stories.

"So I'll be singing a few songs and my guess is that some version of 'Escape (The Pina Colada Song)' will end up in there because, God forbid, any day of my life would go by without me singing some portion of that song, it's inevitable," he continued. "I accept it veritasium and I like the fact that people some 44 years after I recorded it still want to hear it and even still know it."

Holmes will appear at Little City Books, 100 Bloomfield St., Hoboken, on Sunday at 6 p.m.

Tickets are available at littlecitybooks.com. A copy of Holmes' novel "Murder Your Employer" is included with ticket purchase.

Jim Testa is on Facebook at facebook.com/Constant-Listener-Jim-Testa-On-Hudson-Music-108591017138628. He can also be reached at jim@jerseybeat.com.

music

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Government Writing Portfolio THIRD PLACE

Joshua Rosario

Rosario Portfolio



One year after hit-and-run crash, DeGise forges a path to redemption

BEENA ROSE SIBAYAN JOURNAL PHOTOS

THE INTERSECTION OF MLK Drive and Forrest Street in Jersey City on Monday, where Councilmember Amy DeGise hit bicyclist Andrew Black with her SUV and kept going a year ago.

BY JOSHUA ROSARIO
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Though Jersey City Councilwoman Amy DeGise's hit-and-run collision with a cyclist is becoming a speck in her rearview mirror, how she navigates the road to redemption may go a long way in determining her political future.

A year ago today, the freshman legislator struck a 29-year-old man with her black SUV as he drove his bike through a red light at the intersection of Martin Luther King Drive and Forrest Street. But the shocking news of the early-morning incident wasn't just the jarring crash, but more so DeGise's split-second decision to flee the scene and not report the incident to police for six hours. Video posted to social media

showing that DeGise never slowed down after hitting Andrew Black, a 29-year-old Jersey City man making a delivery for Uber Eats, went viral. Hundreds of Jersey City residents, including two other council members, called for her resignation, and a change.org petition demanding her departure collected more than 7,500 signatures.

A year later, life for DeGise, the 37-year-old daughter of retiring Hudson County Executive Tom DeGise, has somewhat returned to normal. After staying mostly out of sight for several months, she is once again making public appearances, speaking up during council meetings and frequently posting on social media. It's still too early to tell if the one-time mayoral contender's political career is irreparably harmed from

the backlash. In a written statement released through a spokesman, DeGise said the past year has been a time of "soul searching" as she's been on a personal journey "to make amends with the public and to forgive myself."

"I still remain incredibly sorry and remorseful, and I would be lying if I said this experience hasn't taken a toll on me and my loved ones," she said. "I'm committed to understanding, improving and engaging actively in street safety campaigns, and I want to make a positive impact and show that I genuinely care about healing and making things right."

"Rebuilding trust is something that takes time and consistent effort, and I'm fully committed to that." Some Democrats close to the

rough year, insiders question whether the at-large councilwoman will want to run for reelection. Either way, other Democrats said the next 12 months are critical.

"If she wants to run again, she has to kind of say 'The storm has passed, I am back and I want to show you I am a good elected official,'" one insider said. "Be visible. Work with nonprofits. Go to stuff. Try to sponsor some good legislation. Sponsor some good programs. Become an activist. Speak on issues at the council meetings."

"Right now, she is more like a boxer in training, and a year from now we will see if she is ready to make a comeback."

While some in the HCDO see a glimmer of hope for her political future, progressives who rallied for her resignation believe the voters will show her the door if she seeks reelection.

Former progressive candidates Hector Oseguera and Kevin Bing led protests calling for DeGise's resignation and once threatened a recall effort of the councilwoman, but that never came to fruition.

"The fact of the matter is she embarrassed herself. She embarrassed Jersey City," said Bing, who unsuccessfully sought the Ward C council seat in 2021.

"In terms of being a fighter and getting back in the ring, that's cute, but she hasn't done that work."

Oseguera, who ran for congress in 2020, noted DeGise hasn't had to face voters (unlike ward councilmembers, she represents the entire city) since the incident. "That is going to be the real test as to how much this has staying power," he said.

Some insiders close to the



AMY DEGISE

county organization say DeGise has no chance of jumping into the race to replace Mayor Steve Fulop when he steps down in 2025, though she has staunch allies who still hope she can win a second term on the council.

After going through such a

SEE DEGISE, PAGE 4

WEATHER TODAY

85°/71°
Humid with a blend of sun and clouds. For the full forecast, see Page 22.

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Daily Online/Editorial Awards

News Column THIRD PLACE Alexander Santora

Santora Columns

■ IN THEIR OPINION

Behind pope's words: Courageous push for human dignity

Pope Francis' comments on LGBTQ people in an exclusive sit-down interview with the Associated Press on Tuesday is not only rocking the Catholic church but the entire world. And that is exactly what he intended to do.

In the interview, Francis called laws that criminalize homosexuality "unjust," saying "God loves all his children just as they are."

He acknowledged that homosexuality is "a human condition" and said LGBTQ people, like all people, "have strength to fight for our dignity." He especially called out Catholic bishops who fail to stand up for gay people and do not challenge civil

leaders on their draconian measures of vilification, arrest, torture and even death.

Francis also touched on topics like guns in the U.S. and assured everyone that he is in good health, despite some mobility problems, and expects to continue as long as he can.

Saying the use of guns in America has become "habit," he warned: "Instead of making the effort to help us live, we make the effort to help us kill."



POPE FRANCIS is interviewed at the Vatican by Associated Press correspondent Nicole Winfield on Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2023.

What a timely admonition for us; I hope his words resonate with the Supreme Court and congressional leaders.

As a priest, I am heartened by Pope Francis' thinking and courage. He knows what's going on in the world and is unafraid to move the Catholic church so it remains relevant and, most importantly, reflects the love of Jesus Christ. He knows he has critics, even in the College of Cardinals, but remains undeterred.

His Jesuit brilliance also shows. There are no notes or teleprompter guiding him during the interview, and that shows how genuine he is.

What most resonated in media coverage, though, was his comments on gays. While he said being homosexual "isn't a crime," he still called homosexual actions, "sinful," which is traditional church teaching. At the same time, he noted that "it's a

sin to lack charity with one another."

About the sin comment, Gary Stavella of Hoboken said, "I don't really care." A mature, active Catholic gay man (who heads the Gay @ Grace church at Our Lady of Grace Church) is more excited about the rest of what Francis said.

"Any help we can get from a pope for an American gay person is fabulous," he said, noting that Francis is planning to visit the Congo and South Sudan, which have some of the strongest anti-gay laws in Africa.

"Condemning anti-gay laws from a world view is all good," Stavella said.

Stavella noted that it's not just other countries that criminalize homosexuality. In America, more than a dozen states still have anti-sodomy laws on the books, despite a 2003 Supreme Court ruling declaring them

unconstitutional.

Francis believes Catholic teaching is diluted when bishops in any country give cover to tyrants and elected leaders who fail to respect the dignity of LGBTQ.

"The Pontiff is exhorting his leadership to work toward the abolition of laws that criminalize homosexuality," Joyce and Eugene Flinn of Weehawken wrote me in a joint e-mail statement. Their older child identifies as gender queer. "Some of these laws have a penalty of death! It's encouraging progress!"

A national Catholic advocacy group also praised Francis.

"Most important, the pope highlights that being LGBTQ+ is not sinful and criminal, but harming one's neighbor is most certainly both. That simple principle is a bedrock of Catholic teaching," said Francis DeBernardo, executive director of New Ways Ministry, based in Maryland.

The pope's speaking out, DeBernardo went on to say, is a significant step.

"The hierarchy's silence has helped to perpetuate a culture of draconian laws, rampant disrespect, violent rhetoric, and brutal and often fatal physical attacks against LGBTQ+ people," he said.

For Lorrie Garcia, 61, of Hoboken, though, until "there is a change in church teaching" on the sinfulness of homosexual actions, religious bias against the gay community will continue.

"The feeling for me personally

is anticlimactic," said Nicholas St. George, 70, a Jersey City native now living in Asbury Park. "Coming out isn't a struggle now that the church takes a stand."

Growing up, going to church every Sunday, he said, "I had to do it all alone with tears in my eyes."

Back then, he recalled, the church taught you "to not be who you are." He was married to a woman for 25 years and has two children. He divorced, came out and is now married to his partner.

Since St. George first realized he was gay, he would pray: "You brought me down this path so walk me through this because it wasn't my choice."

Pope Francis recognizes that self-discovery and struggle and seems determined to lift the stigma and suffering for millions around the world. In their statement, the Flinns reflected, "It's a very positive step towards making all Catholics feel welcome in their church. Jesus never turned anyone away."

As the Vicar of Christ, Pope Francis articulates an inclusive, compassionate, pastoral tone that gives hope to many persecuted people instead of putting them down. But it's not enough for him to just say it; he wants all Catholics and the world to do it.

The Rev. Alexander Santora is the pastor of Our Lady of Grace and St. Joseph, 400 Willow Ave., Hoboken, NJ 07030. Email: padrealx@yahoo.com; Twitter: @padrehoboken

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

News Writing Portfolio THIRD PLACE

Mark Koosau

Koosau Portfolio

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HOBOKEN'S TRENDY FAÇADE

Devastating fires killed dozens and ushered in new era of gentrification

BY MARK KOOSAU
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Janet Ayala was just in her teens when she and her family moved into Hoboken in the late 1970s. At the time, the city was more known for its factories, waterfront docks, delis and mom and pop shops, and its working class neighborhoods.

Her mother wanted to raise her family in the Mile Square City and Ayala recalled numerous families who lived there, going to school, celebrating the holidays, and hanging out with her friends. Being Puerto Rican, she appreciated the big Hispanic community there.

But she is also scarred by the memories of those years, traumatized by what is arguably one of the darkest periods in Hoboken's modern history.

The April 30, 1982, blaze at the Pinter Hotel, where Ayala and her family lived, was dubbed "HELL ON 14th ST." in a Hudson

"The sad part is that the people who probably live in Hoboken don't even know the history of it."

Janet Ayala
Survivor of 1982 Hoboken fire



REENA ROSE SHAYAN JOURNAL PHOTOS

Janet Ayala, interviewed on Jan. 26, is a survivor of the arson fires which killed dozens of people in Hoboken from 1978-1982, including four of her family members. At left, Ayala displays an image of her mother, who died in the fire at Pinter Hotel, where her family lived.



me down."

"After that that when I looked up, my apartment just went up in smoke completely."

Her husband jumped through the window of the fire escape, landed on his back, and made it out safely. But he was the last one. The death toll included her mother, her stepfather, her 15-year-old brother, and her 3-year-old nephew.

"This fire altered my entire life," said Ayala. "Everything we have — I was planning on all my goals that I had set — were gone. Gone with my family, with my belongings. Everything was gone."

The tragedy that night was just one in a series of spectacular fires that consumed Hoboken between 1979 to 1982. In total, an estimated 56 people were killed and thousands were displaced. Many, like Ayala, never returned to the city.

Nearly every one of those fires were determined to be arson, and it's believed that the fires were the catalyst for the already rapid gentrification of Hoboken.

ARSON FOR PROFIT
Hoboken's transformation from the blue-collar community to a luxury waterfront city began during the 1970s, when the shipping and industrial economies of the city began to die out. It was at that time, local historians say, that city leaders saw a future of luxury high-rises that would co-exist with million-dollar brownstones. Everything else, save for public housing, was expendable.

"At that point, people started saying 'hey, you could see the best views of lower Manhattan right here (in Hoboken)," said Bill Bayer, a former Hudson Dispatch photographer who raced to the scenes of many of the fires. "That's when money and real estate started coming into play in a community with deep pockets of poverty."

The carrot on the stick for outsiders included turning public funds into subsidies for low-interest mortgages for brownstone purchases, using federal money to rehabilitate buildings, and a public relations campaign to lure young, urban professionals, aka "yuppies," to the city.

The intensity of the changes in Hoboken continued into the 1980s, with the deregulation of the banking industry leading to an increase in financial sector employment. The "yuppy" population

Dispatch newspaper headline the following day.

"The fire was so intense," recalled Ayala in an interview with *The Jersey Journal*. "It was from the bottom of the staircase to the top. There were rugs, so the staircase and all the halls were consumed (by fire)."

The flames soon engulfed the door to her apartment, leaving the kitchen window and fire escape as the only way out. With her baby in her arms, Ayala escaped.

"I started down the stairs (of the fire escape) and I heard a woman screaming in Spanish that she was burning and needed help," said Ayala. "I went to turn right back around, and whoever was helping us in the fire escape, they took the baby out of my arms and forced

COURTESY OF THE HUDSON DISPATCH

FRONT PAGE of the Hudson Dispatch's May 1, 1982, edition. A fire at the Pinter Hotel killed a dozen residents.

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Enterprise Reporting SECOND PLACE

John Gomez

Gomez Portfolio

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www.nj.com/hudson

■ BLACK HISTORY MONTH

CORNER OF HISTORY

Looking back on Frederick Douglass' rousing 1888 speech in Jersey City

Editor's note: This is the first article in "Passages," a special Jersey Journal series that seeks to piece together fragments and faces from Jersey City's rich Black cultural and architectural heritage.

I know this corner. I know it well. Many an early morning and afternoon, I have charted the intersectional graph of Bergen and Fairmount avenues — the epicentrum of Jersey City's McGinley Square commercial district — on my way to or from work or on a regular architecture-analyzing walk through the adjacent Victorian-era West Bergen neighborhood. Familiar legacy businesses — Lee Sims Chocolates, Hudson Farmer Market, H. Schoenberg Pawnbrokers — are, as always, magnetically active, and the narrow sidewalks of Bergen Avenue buzz with constant foot traffic.

But I find myself pausing this day, specifically at the southeast corner where a four-story tenement storefront building has stood since 1902 on a long municipal lot, upon which, previous to that now-distant year, only a primitive wooden structure had existed. The early-20th-century building, with its long-missing ornamental cornice and

stuccoed ground floor, appears vacant on every level, which adds to the remoteness and solitude of the spot.

How is it, I wonder, that an almost invisible location could be, at its spiritual core, a luminist page in the cultural chronicles of local Black history?

DOUGLASS ELECTRIFIED

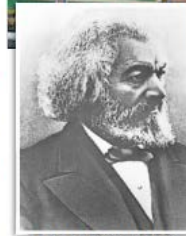
Standing at the curving cusp of the sidewalk, I size up the architectural sight a few moments more, then begin, with a sense of astonishment, the process of optically dismantling the actual building before me so as to raise, from municipal dust, the ancient image of the earlier wooden structure where, in 1888, the famed abolitionist and orator Frederick Douglass, who had escaped enslavement a half-century earlier, spoke before a standing-room-only Jersey City crowd.

Amid the commotion of Bergen Avenue, my mind lifts this small edifice from the lot's foundation. It rises, slowly reassembling itself, yellow pine board and plank after yellow pine board and plank, along the slender Fairmount Avenue lane. A single-story, 36-foot-wide, 72-foot-long meeting space — a "temporary" building built in less than two weeks by the Fifth District Republican League and prompted by the November elections of that year — appears in a pincer of ground dirt and lumber dust dropping to the blacktop pavement, with particles sizzling as they scatter. The hall becomes fully



REENA ROSE SIBAYAN/JOURNAL PHOTO

THE BUILDING at the southeast corner of Bergen and Fairmount avenues in Jersey City. Frederick Douglass appeared in a pop-up structure on the site in 1888. At the time it was an empty lot.



FREDERICK DOUGLASS

manifested in my architectural mind, pristine and reeking of freshly sawed wood. Bunting, streamers and signs — Benjamin Harrison for the Republican Party, Grover Cleveland for the Democrats — are strung over clapboarded walls and the main double doors facing Fairmount. It is an evening in late October. Cast-iron streetlamps — some still powered by gas and others lit with whale oil despite the advancement of electrified poles — are being turned on by the city's crews of lamp lighters. Horse-steered commuter cars, coaches, and omnibuses clog atop cut-stone streets and brownstone-channeled alleys, their longitudinal cacophony merging with the conversations and chants of the

—Fred Douglass, the great orator of anti-slavery days, the friend of Lincoln and Grant, will certainly speak in the Fifth District Wigwam this evening. He was prevented from appearing last night by a prior engagement, but he will be there sure to-night.

THE EVENING JOURNAL, Oct. 30, 1888: A newspaper posting about the scheduled appearance of Douglass at the newly erected wooden "wigwam" assembly hall at the southeast intersection of Bergen and Fairmount avenues. Political district meeting spaces in that period were often embossed with this derogatory term. — John Gomez, M.S. Historic Preservation, Columbia University

scheduled political event's clamoring crowds. The Jersey City of 1888 is just becoming the modern city — hence the runaway efflorescence of mammoth passenger railroad and ferry terminals, steel-reinforced "skyscrapers," sprawling factory campuses, church spires four to a neighborhood — and shedding its 19th-century skin. Post-Civil War urban-centric building sprees, immigration-fueled population surges, and the emergence of political

machineries are convexing and adding to the city's magnetism. A giant of an American like Frederick Douglass would want to stomp at this cultural crossroads and connect with influential citizens and vast urban voting blocs with the hope that changes beneficial to the civil and human rights of the country's long-persecuted Black and Indigenous peoples, as well as support for women's suffrage movements, would be won. Having him accept an invitation to preach and

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Specialty Writing Portfolio SECOND PLACE

Alexander Santora

Santora Portfolio

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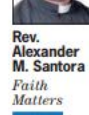
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Life Faith

Providing a home away from home for asylees

As Usman (a pseudonym) was describing his harrowing 10-week journey from Ghana through 10 countries to get to the U.S., Mama Jill was kindly asking the Spanish-speaking children running around the living room to calm down en español. It worked for a few minutes. A Guatemalan mother brought me some tea and a snack from the kitchen. It felt like being in a home where there is a lot of love shared by grateful people.

This is the Lighthouse in Union City run, indirectly, by the Newark diocese of the Episcopal Church. It's the brainchild of



Rev. Alexander M. Santora
Faith Matters

Mama Jill, a.k.a. the Rev. Deacon Jill Singleton, the Lighthouse's founder and director. "At the Lighthouse, we welcome our brothers and sisters from around the world who have been forced to flee their countries due to persecution and violence of all sorts," said Singleton, a Hoboken resident who stepped down last year as the head of All Saints Episcopal Day School. For a petite woman, she is a dynamo. She cares for the 15 residents as if they are her own. And it was not difficult for Usman, 29, who arrived the night before I met him after flying in from California. His cousin had just left the Lighthouse after 15 months and so he was able to provide Usman with an address for immigration services to give him a date for his asylum hearing. The Lighthouse paid his airfare. Usman became active with other young adults in Ghana to protest corrupt government activities and was jailed three times for several days each. The first time he was tortured by



LIGHTHOUSE FOUNDER and director the Rev. Deacon Jill Singleton and social worker Jacob Pirogovsky pose outside the home for migrants seeking asylum in the United States.

"roasting" his lower leg over an open flame so that when released he needed plastic surgery by grafting flesh from his thigh. He rolled up his pants and lifted his leg to show me. The third time his family was threatened and he showed up where he was told to report only to be blindfolded and driven to an unknown location. He was so sick he could not eat. Good thing. Two days later a cat wandered in, ate the food and became paralyzed. He was able to escape. Determined to flee the country, he brought his family to a neighboring country and took the \$5,000 American dollars he had saved by farming and selling used electronics. He traveled through several African countries before stowing away on a freighter with his own life raft to land on shore in South America. He then walked, took buses, taxis and occasionally waded or took speedboats through Central America, Mexico and into the U.S. through San Diego. Though he entered unofficially, he then presented himself to immigration authorities and asked for asylum.

HOW YOU CAN HELP ...
Donations to help the Lighthouse and its mission can be made by going to St. Paul's Church in Bergen, stpaulsjc.org, the online giving page of the website for the Episcopal Church of St. Paul & Incarnation in Jersey City.

"A significant challenge," Singleton said, "is getting people to understand that asylum seekers are here in this country legally." The Lighthouse only houses people who are here legally. Singleton enumerated the other challenges. It can take months or years for asylum seekers to obtain working papers, so finding sustaining work is difficult and that's what Usman and many others simply want. In addition, it's hard to find legal support that is pro- or low-bono. And there is little affordable housing in this area. Even with work, salary cannot cover rent alone. The migrant crisis has been poisoned so that "many Americans do not understand the severity of their (the migrants') economic and social vulnerability," Singleton said. For example, Juanita and Jose



BURNS ON the body of Usman (not his real name), an asylee at the Lighthouse in Union City who was tortured in Ghana.

their son, Juan, was born here. They had no work in Colombia and simply wanted a better life. The tipping point was when a gang attacked Jose to steal his motorcycle and he was in a coma for three days. He eventually lost hearing in one ear. He lost a job he had in our area because he could not keep up with all the restaurant orders. "At the Lighthouse, we are able to provide hospitality and a space for much-needed healing, an active acknowledgement that God did not intend for borders to be created between his people," Singleton said. But they need help with monthly financial sponsorship of a migrant or family, possible paid work for them and space for people to rent affordably. Singleton and a social worker are both part-time. They also provide English instruction, access to laptops, financial literacy education, technology assistance, social programs and cultural field trips, she said. They have housed more than 110 asylum-seekers from 30 different countries since they started the Lighthouse in Jersey City back in 2017. Singleton oversees one big, relatively happy family and celebrates Christmas, birthdays and other special holidays. She recalled celebrating a child's 10th birthday when he gushed, "This is the best day of my life. I have never had a birthday party before." Mama Jill provides the migrants with the love they have heard about the U.S. and also as a Christian. The Rev. Alexander Santora is the pastor of Our Lady of Grace and St. Joseph, 400 Willow Ave., Hoboken, NJ 07030. Email: padrealex@yahoo.com; Twitter: [@padreahoboken](https://twitter.com/padreahoboken).

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

News Writing Portfolio SECOND PLACE

Joshua Rosario

Rosario Portfolio

4 | NEWS The JERSEY JOURNAL Tuesday, February 21, 2023 www.nj.com/hudson

Fast-growing JC charter schools not necessarily at odds with traditional ones

BY JOSHUA ROSARIO
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Geannina Murrieta remembers the musty scent of mildew filling the air of Jersey City's School 22, the sight of broken chairs, aged classrooms and buckets strategically placed across the auditorium floor to catch rainwater leaking from the roof.

When she arrived at Empowerment Academy—a charter school in the city 1.6 miles away—the building was old, but it looked well kept with freshly painted classrooms, a clean smell and freshly buffed floors.

"It is pretty sad when your son comes home from school and says 'Oh yeah! We had to move to another classroom and our roof was leaking,'" said Murrieta, whose son is 7 year old. "I am like 'That is just normal to you, that is not OK.'"

"There was no budgeting, no nothing that I felt was put into the school system, especially in my area."

Facilities were one of the reasons some parents told The Jersey Journal they decided to move their kids from public schools to charter schools. Of the roughly 33,000 public school students in Jersey City, 20% attend charter schools.

Gloria Bonilla Hernandez's 13-year-old son, who started at School 27, wasn't getting the extra attention he needed due to his diagnoses of depression and oppositional defiant disorder. Communication with the school became a big issue for her, she said.

"They are more attentive to the student, they are more attentive to listening," Hernandez said of Empowerment Academy, where her son now attends.

"After everything I dealt with at the public school, I feel like when the teacher wants to help and everybody wants to help, so everyone is invested in the student's education. He is not treated like a number or just another kid."

As charter schools have increased in size, public school officials don't look at them as competition. In Jersey City, charter schools are seen as a solution to overcrowding in an ever-growing city.

Empowerment Academy and Beloved Community Charter school will expand after being approved by the Jersey City Planning Board to build a six-acre charter school campus for 2,000 students. The campus will include state-of-the-art high schools for each school, as well as a new middle school and elementary school.

With the feel of a private school, charter schools are tuition-free public schools, often operated by nonprofit organizations. They are open to all students, and if more students apply than there are seats, students are accepted by lottery.

While they are funded by state and local taxes, charter schools have a little more flexibility in

"There are some parts of the country where charter schools have been very helpful for school districts because often the cost of creating additional school buildings is higher for a district than a charter."

Katrina Bulkley
Montclair University acting dean of college of education and human services

MORE FRIEND THAN FOE

KIDS ARE picked up from Empowerment Academy Charter School at 240 Edge Ave. in Jersey City at dismissal on Friday.

MUSIC/MOVEMENT TEACHER Meera Jaffrey and her class sing the "Algonquin Water Song" in her class at the Learning Community Charter School in 2021.

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

News Column SECOND PLACE

Joan Quigley

Quigley Columns

■ IN THEIR OPINION

Hudson County Sheriff's K-9 unit has a starstuck fan

The Hudson County Sheriff's Office gets about 2,500 calls a week for help — from county buildings, local municipalities, other counties, state police, federal agencies and, of course, from citizens in any sort of danger.

They answer those calls by deploying some combination of 300 sworn officers, one mental health worker, a 30-officer SWAT team, two Bloodhounds, four German Shepherds, and three Belgian Malinois.

During recent visits to Sheriff Frank Schillari's office on the ground floor of the county administration building, I met three dogs and talked with their handlers. While doing that, I was intensely sniffed by a Blood-



Joan Quigley

hound named Hope, nuzzled by a ferocious-looking Shepherd named Tyson, and amazed by the tenacity of a Malinois named Bill.

Capt. Luigi DeCecco explained they are members of the K-9 unit, all highly trained and almost always busy. Each morning the dogs routinely sweep county offices and schools, then go on standby for that day's emergencies.

The dogs can sniff out bombs, drugs, and weapons, and the



SHERIFF'S OFFICER JEFFREY NEILAN demonstrates some of a K-9's skills. The office has nine K-9s trained to do various tasks like sniffing out danger, finding lost people and subduing a suspect.



DETECTIVE JACK CALDERONE/HUDSON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE PHOTOS

Bloodhounds are especially good at locating people. If they're seeking a lost child with autism or an elderly wanderer with Alzheimer's, they usually work only with their handlers. But if they're searching for a fugitive, they're usually accompanied by either a Shepherd or a Malinois trained to take down a fleeing suspect.

The dogs live with their handlers, who assured me they are responsible pets at home. But when the animals see the officers donning their uniforms, they know it's time to work and play.

DeCecco said when the dogs are working, they think they're playing.

"It's all a game to them," he said, "and they love it because when they succeed at doing what they're expected to do, they get a reward. That's why they do

it." Each dog is partially trained when the Sheriff's Office acquires them at less than a year old, but then each dog is assigned to an officer who participates with it in much more intensive training. Each must learn to "read" the other and work in coordination.

Few police forces in New Jersey have K-9 units and others have only a few dogs, so Hudson is frequently called to assist elsewhere. At home they also participate in major events, like in stadiums, at concerts and in other large outdoor gatherings.

During one visit I watched a Malinois practicing his skill. An officer put on a special arm pad and invited the animal to attack. The 75-pound dog leaped into the air, sunk his teeth into the arm pad, and wouldn't let go

even when his handler spun around, swinging him side to side.

Yes, the officers are sometimes bitten, DeCecco said, and they're often bruised, but it's all part of the job.

Sometimes the mere sight of a dog persuades a suspect to surrender, the captain said. When that doesn't happen, "Well, the dogs do what they're trained to do."

Asked whether the Bloodhounds are likely to lose a scent if a person wades or swims through water, DeCecco said that doesn't happen. The scent floats on top of the water and actually makes it easier for dogs to follow.

So the dogs will probably be useful in a new program Schillari is developing, a Swift Water Rescue Team, made necessary by

increasing numbers of sudden floods, especially in a county with rivers on both sides.

Seventeen officers have been assigned to the team, all good swimmers, and they are now training to become even better swimmers.

They will have boats and other rescue equipment to assist people stranded in their cars or homes during high water. They won't be divers but will practice working with State Police water rescue teams to work in deep water, as well.

When I was a kid, I loved Lassie movies, so when I met the K-9s, I was just another starstruck fan.

A former assemblywoman from Jersey City, Joan Quigley is the president and CEO of North Hudson Community Action Corp.

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Critical Writing SECOND PLACE

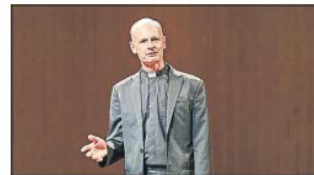
Alexander Santora

Santora Portfolio

10 | LIFE The JERSEY JOURNAL Thursday, August 10, 2023

www.nj.com/hudson

Life Faith



JOHN MACKAY as "Father" in "The Doctor."



JULIET STEVENSON, left, as Dr. Wolff and Juliet Garicks as Charlie.



STEVENSON AND MELINDA TUCKER as Sami.

Play nails it: The doctor isn't always right

En route to seeing the play "The Doctor" at the New York Armory on the Upper East Side, I passed the massive St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic parish on Lexington Avenue. It was surreal to encounter no fewer than six Dominican friars — including one smoking a cigarette — in their medieval white habits milling amid modern-day Manhattanites on after-dinner strolls.

Little did I know that sight foreshadowed the crux of the play: a Catholic priest would drive the storyline.

As "The Doctor" begins, Dr. Ruth Wolff, a neurosurgeon played by Juliet Stevenson, comes to the edge of the massive stage to introduce herself and, bam, the audience sees the powerful protagonist of this show loosely adapted from an early 20th-century play. Wolff is a force of nature barking — no yelling — at her colleagues at the Elizabeth Institute hospital.

As chair of the board, she is almost single-handedly the reason for this hospital's success. She is addressed as "Professor" but also referred to derisively as "BB." An intern inquires what this means and she's told, "Big Bad," as in Wolff.



JULIET STEVENSON stars as Dr. Ruth Wolff in "The Doctor" at the Park Avenue Armory in New York through Aug. 19.

Yet another character, a young trans woman named Sami (Matilda Tucker), visits Wolff at her home and raises the prospect that Wolff could be a witch. These scenes interspersed throughout are the most humanizing of the play: You see Wolff's almost maternal side. At one point, Sami calls her "mom" and Wolff recoils from the tenderness.

But there's little tender in the way Wolff carries out her duties, and it's evident that this is the heart of the play. A 14-year-old girl is "oddlily" admitted to this Alzheimer's hospital in critical condition after trying an at-home abortion while her parents are vacationing. A Catholic priest (John Mackay) shows up at the request of her parents to anoint their daughter or, as the hospital still clings to using an old-fashioned term, for "Last Rites." Now my blood pressure is rising as

the priest is rebuffed by Wolff, resurrecting some recent personal experiences I and other priests have had trying to minister in some local hospitals. I would have said and done everything the priest did in an effort to convince Wolff to let him see the patient. Wolff knows the patient may not survive but declines him admittance because she claims the girl did not request his presence.

Wolff is loath to admit and asks out loud, "Does the healing profession need a profession of religious faith?" We learn the girl is wearing a cross chain around her neck, but that means nothing to Wolff, who will not be moved, until the priest and Wolff come to blows — though it's more imagined than seen in the play. The first 90 minutes of this too-long play is what can be called damage control. A

IF YOU GO ...

The North American premiere of "The Doctor," directed by Robert Icke and adapted from Arthur Schnitzler's "Professor Bernhard," continues through Aug. 19 at the Park Avenue Armory, 643 Park Ave. (at 67th Street), New York. Performances are Monday-Thursday at 7 p.m., Friday at 8 p.m., and Saturday at 2 and 8 p.m. For information, call 212-616-3930, email info@armoryonpark.org or go to armoryonpark.org.

medical team of doctors who are of mixed feelings about Wolff's style begins to dissect why she rebuffed the priest.

One doctor says, "It's the candle versus electricity," alluding to the classic debate between spirituality and science. An online petition begins slowly but becomes massive by the fifth day covered in the first act. But in the course of the discussion including the hospital's pr person, different layers of conflict are raised.

Does Wolff's Jewish faith — she claims she is cultural — come into play? One doctor asks sarcastically, "Do Christian patients need Christian doctors?" And we are dragged into contemporary identity politics playing out in social media and cable news minute by minute. Wolff may also be a lesbian in a relationship with Charlie (Juliet Garicks) whose stage presence has little definition. A disturbing thread of the play is that some of the characters do not seem to be who they are. The Father, who also doubles as the girl's father, is clearly white but then revealed as being "Black." So, is this a racial issue? And the

one doctor who stands up to Wolff, Dr. Hardiman (Naomi Wirthner) is referred to as "he." It confuses the story, which declines after the intermission. Wolff appears on a British TV show grilled by critics as her actions have become a national scandal. It was hokey.

I would have ended with the dialogue between Wolff and the priest, which soon follows. They find common ground: contempt for those who call out bad behavior via social media. "Jesus didn't live in the digital age," the priest says, and Wolff responds, "We crucify them differently now."

The two reveal their personal motivations without surrendering their individual dignities. The power of this play is seeing Wolff's dedication to her craft as a doctor cause her demise. It's sad to watch but Stevenson does it superbly and you feel for her as she just hides behind her white coat.

The Rev. Alexander Santora is the pastor of Our Lady of Grace and St. Joseph, 400 Willow Ave., Hoboken, NJ 07030. Email: padrealex@yahoo.com; Twitter: @padrehoboken.

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

News Writing Portfolio **FIRST PLACE**

Teri West

West Portfolio

4 NEWS **The JERSEY JOURNAL** Monday, August 28, 2023 www.nj.com/hudson



Jersey City the making

BY TERI WEST
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

The room feels immense and sacred already, and it isn't even complete.

Scaffolding supports the dome two stories overhead. Flimsy orange fencing is fastened where glass walls are yet to be installed around the balcony where women will come to pray.

Dr. Arshad Chatha and Syed Abbasi stand inside the mosque in progress — a moment 40 years in the making — dwarfed by the scale of the space that will soon host thousands on the holiest days in Islam.

They speak humbly, Chatha more subdued and Syed more animated, about the achievement a house of worship built from the ground up in the Pakistani Muslim community that they helped found and nourish in Jersey City for four decades. A community that for years prayed in a converted Chinese restaurant and bar now has a three-story mosque with a green dome glinting in the sun on that very site.

"I think that is to have a community's dream come true," Chatha said.

The new building on Montgomery Street is now the third in Hudson County that was specifically



BEENA ROSE SHABAN JOURNAL PHOTOS

JERSEY CITY held a flag-raising ceremony to celebrate the 76th anniversary of the Independence of Pakistan on Aug. 15 at City Hall.



MOSQUE UNDER CONSTRUCTION at 530 Montgomery St. in Jersey City, as seen earlier this month. At left, the large prayer room in the new mosque with the dome overhead.

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Scholastic Sports Writing Portfolio FIRST PLACE

Jason Bernstein

Bernstein Portfolio

16 | SPORTS *The JERSEY JOURNAL* Monday, February 13, 2023 www.nj.com/hudson

HUDSON SPORTS EXTRA

Back in action

With key players healthy again, Secaucus & St. Dominic are enjoying big seasons

H.S. GIRLS BASKETBALL

BY JASON BERNSTEIN
FOR THE JERSEY JOURNAL



A quick glance at the bulky brace on Daniela Peschetti's right knee, the scar running down Mia Cruz's left knee or the stabilizers on both of Maddie Branigan's ankles may serve as a reminder of what they missed a season ago. But neither they, nor their teams, need to be reminded of what they lost.

"It was very difficult to sit there and watch my team play," said Peschetti, who is back as Secaucus' starting point guard after missing her entire junior season with a torn ACL. "But I had to be there and support my team throughout, push them as a leader, and just support them the whole way."

With the Hudson County Tournament heating up and the state tournament looming in less than two weeks, all three players are thankful to be back on the court. And with their teams back whole again, they all have visions of deep postseason runs.

Secaucus enters today's Hudson County Tournament quarterfinal against St. Dominic with a 22-1 record and is a strong contender to win its league, county and state section tournaments thanks in large part to Peschetti and Cruz (also a torn ACL), back as starting guards.

Meanwhile, St. Dominic (15-9) has already won nine more games than a season ago with Branigan, its leading post presence, back after a pair of severe ankle injuries.

"It was horrible. I would be at the games and we were losing," Branigan said. "I don't think we won our first game until halfway through the season and I wasn't used to that."

The Blue Devils won 18 games in Branigan's freshman year and were 7-4 in 2021 before a kneecap injury sidelined her for the last few games of the Covid-shortened season. So hopes were high going into last season, but that optimism was dashed when, in the second preseason practice, Branigan came down on a layup and "heard everything crunch," in her right ankle.

Diagnosed with a Grade 3 sprain of the ankle, Branigan was set to be sidelined for two months. However, late in the rehab, Branigan suffered the same injury to her left ankle, this time



REENA ROSE SHAYAN JOURNAL PHOTOS

ST. DOMINIC'S Maddie Branigan looks for an open teammate during a game in Secaucus on Jan. 26.

a Grade 2 sprain that sidelined her for the rest of the winter as well as the spring AAU season.

"I think a lot of self-doubt creeps in and you wonder if you're really meant to play basketball," St. Dominic coach John Hester said. "So you have to remember where you were before all of this stuff happened."

"When she isn't available it lets the air out of the balloon because she is so valuable and the kids look up to her."

While there was a hope that Branigan could recover in time, there was no such thought in Secaucus when Peschetti and Cruz each went down roughly a week apart with their injuries late in the 2021 soccer season. A grueling, eight-month rehab awaited both of them. But if there was one silver lining to the situation, it was that they could push each other through the hard times.

"It was very disappointing to see my best friend go through it as well, but it definitely helped the journey," said Peschetti. "Me and Mia worked together, we worked out, we went to the field, we made sure we were staying in shape together. It was much easier knowing that my best friend was going through the same thing as me."

Without their projected starting backcourt, the Patriots' talented underclassmen rose to the moment, going 20-6 last season and reaching the North 2, Group 1 final with Peschetti and Cruz serving as unofficial assistant coaches.

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Enterprise Reporting FIRST PLACE

Joshua Rosario

Rosario Portfolio



School also hopes land sales will fill gap

BY JOSHUA ROSARIO
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

The financially-stressed New Jersey City University is still banking on state support and the sale of assets to climb out of its multimillion-dollar hole before the end of the school year.

The school projects to end the 2022-23 school year with a nearly \$11 million deficit.

After declaring a financial emergency in June, the university instituted a series of austerity measures to eliminate a \$22 million deficit, including the elimination of academic and sports programs, managerial positions, teachers and student jobs, as well as a crackdown on school credit card spending and catered events.

The belt-tightening trimmed the deficit and in September the board approved a \$148.1 million budget that was underfunded by \$12.67 million. At its first board of trustees meeting of 2023 Tuesday, university officials projected the university will still have a \$10.94 million deficit at the end of the fiscal year June 30.

Declining student enrollment, failed investments in real estate

expansion, the cost of expanding its sports programs and declining state aid have been blamed for the school's financial crisis.

"We are making progress and we are going in the right direction," NJCU Chief Financial Officer Ben Durant said at Tuesday's meeting. "Between now and the end of the fiscal year we are not going to eliminate the remaining \$10.9 million deficit."

"However, we are relying on support from the state, we are relying on the potential sale of assets; and we are relying on you to be very frugal with your expenses and be very creative in how you're managing your budgets and we are going to turn this thing around."

Durant said the school will have \$8,087,055 in total cash and short-term investments, or just

"What we need to fill the hole is the state support. Land sales, we need that to reinvest in our campus, reinvest in our facilities, reinvest in our infrastructure."

Ben Durant
NJCU chief financial officer

slightly more than 21 days of cash on hand, by the end of the year. While it is better than the \$5 million originally projected, he said "that is still a very low amount."

"Ideally, we should have about \$16 million that would roughly give us 30 days cash on hand, which would be in compliance with some of our bond covenants," Durant said.

Organizations try to maintain at least 90 days of cash on hand to support their operations.

In September, the school hired the commercial real estate firm CBRE to market two parcels of land at its West Side campus, the university's largest expansion project.

"We have land we own in the west campus area and other parts of the city and we are looking at monetizing some of those leases and possibly selling some land," Durant told The Jersey Journal after the meeting. "But we don't specifically know what we are going to sell and what we are going to keep, but that is something we are looking at."

"What we need to fill the hole is the state support. Land sales, we need that to reinvest in our campus, reinvest in our facilities, reinvest in our infrastructure."

The school has lobbied state legislators for a \$30 million in state aid and asked for the \$30 million allotted to NJCU in last year's state budget to be expedited. Additionally, university officials are seeking \$35 million from the state's American Rescue Plan funds to address infrastructure needs.

According to budget numbers shared at Tuesday's meeting, the university (as of December) is projecting \$128.5 million in revenue and \$139.4 million in expenses. There are currently 4,357 undergraduate students and 1,605 graduate students, but an official tally for spring enrollment has yet to take place, officials said.

Durant told The Jersey Journal after Tuesday's meeting that if assets don't sell and the state doesn't come through with support, it will have to "absorb" the deficit into next year's budget. "We will have to address that the closer we get to the end of the year, but we are not anticipating

ending the year with \$8 million in cash," Durant said. "We are anticipating getting some support from the state."

The university has started to develop its budget for 2024, and a draft will be presented May 4.

The university began a campaign Tuesday encouraging the NJCU community to submit letters to their elected representatives and the governor, pleading for additional financial support. The campaign comes just days before Gov. Phil Murphy unveils his state budget, which will possibly include more funds for the school.

A spokesperson for Murphy's office could not be reached for comment.

"Countless elected officials and business leaders have already affirmed that NJCU is indispensable," Interim President Andres Acebo said in an email to the NJCU community. "But your voice matters most. We've created an online platform to make it easier for members of the NJCU community like you to share your voices with our state legislators."



ANDRES ACEBO was approved as NJCU's interim president by the board on Tuesday.

Acebo was officially approved Tuesday as the school's interim president for at least two years, with a salary of \$300,000, which will be bumped to \$310,000 starting July 1, 2023, until the end of his term. He replaced Sue Henderson, who resigned the same day the financial emergency was declared in June.

Assemblyman Raj Mukherji (D-Jersey City) and state Sen. Brian Stack (D-Union City) have been working to get the school more funding.

"The legislative delegation continues to zealously advocate for a state appropriation that would save this critical minority-serving institution," Mukherji said Wednesday. "But I have no further update at this time."

Stack could not be reached for comment.

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Public Service FIRST PLACE

Joshua Rosario

Rosario Portfolio

www.nj.com/hudson

Friday, January 20, 2023 **The JERSEY JOURNAL** NEWS | 5



REENA ROSE SIBAYAN JOURNAL PHOTO

BY JOSHUA ROSARIO
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Calling it a "nightmare" and a morale "low point," Jersey City employees victimized by the city's new payroll system two weeks ago are bracing for more problems when their paychecks are issued today.

In fact, one employee who asked to remain anonymous, said the paystubs "are still incorrect. People are missing hours. ... Overtime is all over the place. People are missing hours of overtime."

Unicorn HRO, based in Floram Park, officially took over the payroll at the start of the new

year, but the transition went awry when a segment of city employees, mostly those in the public safety departments, were either not paid or underpaid on Jan. 6.

"This whole payroll situation has been a nightmare," the public safety employee said. "I still have to go in and verify the amount of hours I am supposed to be paid for ... just based on what I am hearing a lot of people are still having issues."

"But I still notice that mine is still wrong, I just don't know to what capacity that it's wrong."

City officials have not blamed Unicorn HRO, which was awarded a three-year, \$1.35 million

contract in March 2021, for the problems. They say the city's payroll is complicated and noted that the errors occurred for people who work non-traditional shifts, like police officers and firefighters.

A second city employee, who also asked to remain anonymous, said their paystub shows errors in their paycheck today as well.

Both employees who spoke with The Jersey Journal said it took the city at least a week after the Jan. 6 payday before they were paid the correct amount.

Jersey City spokeswoman Kimberly Wallace-Scalcione did not respond to questions about the

accuracy of today's paychecks. She noted that the city just hired a director for the payroll division in December.

City workers get paid every two weeks. Multiple city employees said the city's lack of communication over the payroll issues compounded the problem.

At the Jan. 9 caucus meeting, city Business Administrator John Metro told the council supplemental checks were distributed, but "there are still some pending issues."

"The bigger issue with police was we were dealing with over 25 schedules due to specialized units and different technicalities," Metro said. "We have a 'finger punch' system. Then (employees) went to a separate assignment and punched out somewhere else and it wasn't recognized properly."

Councilman Richard Boggiano, a former police detective, said yesterday the city told him every employee's Jan. 6 paycheck had been rectified.

While he hasn't heard about any issues going regarding today's checks, he said the city already has the lowest starting pay for police, who are asked "to work nights, weekends and holidays. You have to take care of them."

City Council President Joyce Watterman is keeping said she hasn't heard anything about a second round of pay discrepancies, but "I really have to see (today) what happens ... but they do know the council has their

concern about the system and if the system can't deliver what is necessary for the employees then we have to find a better system."

In a stinging email to the administration obtained by The Jersey Journal, another employee said they "have never seen morale so low here."

They pointed out the new payroll system is not built for shift workers and noted some firefighters were paid for 72 hours, not 80.

"We sacrifice weekends and holidays with our families just to try and make ends meet," the employee said. "In the past week, I have never seen morale so low here."

"We are being ignored as if we don't exist. In the past when Unicorn was still in the training phase, I brought up all these issues and all I was ever told was that we would have to grieve any issues and now that comes at our expense."

Joe Cossolini, president of the police officers' union, said this week's checks will be 95% accurate "because of our hands-on efforts to help the city fix the current crisis. ... We will not rest until the checks are 100% accurate and everyone has been paid accurately."

He told The Jersey Journal yesterday that months ago the union filed for arbitration due to a multiplicity of payroll errors, long before the flawed implementation of the new system.

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Critical Writing FIRST PLACE

Jim Testa

Testa Portfolio

www.nj.com/hudson

Friday, February 17, 2023 **The JERSEY JOURNAL** ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT | 9

Arts & Entertainment

Yo La Tengo's latest may be best of the decade

BY JIM TESTA
FOR THE JERSEY JOURNAL

Yo La Tengo always had a knack for getting to the point, and what could possibly sum up our nation's current state of affairs better than the title of the long-lived trio's new album, "This Stupid World"?

The band's founding core, the married couple of Ira Kaplan and Georgia Hubley, formed Yo La Tengo nearly 40 years ago in a Hoboken that was in the process of being reinvented—a decaying post-industrial ghost town whose Bohemian sub-culture (with the now-gone Maxwell's at its epicenter) would soon ignite a wave of gentrification and redevelopment that hasn't eased nearly four decades later. Bassist James McNew came aboard 30 years ago, and Yo La Tengo has since become something of an indie-rock institution: implacable, unwavering and impervious to changing styles and trends.

Kaplan and Hubley themselves left Hoboken after twin calamities—Hurricane Sandy in 2012 and the sale of Maxwell's a year later—but Yo La Tengo still rehearses in the Neumann Leathers building and remains the sine qua non of what has come to be known as "the Hoboken sound." Which couldn't be more ironic, given that over some 38 years and 17 albums, Yo La Tengo has rarely repeated itself; the only predictable thing about this band is that they'll always find new ways to surprise you.

In the summer of 2020, in an America locked down and terrified of leaving home, YLT recorded and quickly released a socially distanced and largely improvisatory collection of beautiful but edgy tracks

dubbed "We Have A m e s s i a Sometimes."

Three years later, they've remembered what made them legends in the first place. This is the most electrifying music that Yo La Tengo has produced in years, and arguably the best rock record of the still-young decade.

Fans who cherish Yo La Tengo's louder side will joyfully embrace "This Stupid World," which begins with Kaplan wringing metallic discord from his guitar on "Sinatra Drive Breakdown." Hubley's motoric drumming and McNew's pulsing bass guide the track into a surprisingly gentle, reflective verse, sung/whispered by Kaplan. The "solo" that erupts mid-song recalls Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore torturing the neck of his guitar with a screwdriver.

Yo La Tengo has been such ageless (or perhaps unaging) icons for so long that it's easy to forget Hubley and Kaplan are well into their 60s, but "This Stupid World" reminds us often by returning to thoughts of mortality and the passing of time.

If there's a Rosetta Stone that decodes "the Hoboken sound"—from the Bongos to the Feelies to YLT—it's the Velvet Underground, an influence that permeates "Tonight's Episode," nearly five minutes of guitar feedback with stream-of-consciousness lyrics ("Sure the sun's in my eyes, but it feels fine/ my brain's ripped to shreds"). The quiet, reflective ballad "Aselestine," with a lovely Hubley vocal, follows, again ruminating about time: "One day walking/ walking upon leaves/ and then snow."

McNew gets a vocal turn on the



CHEYL DUNN PHOTO

YO LA TENGO—James McNew, standing; Ira Kaplan, seated left; and Georgia Hubley—have released their latest masterpiece, "This Stupid World."

sad, regretful "Apology Letter," with its heart-breaking final line, and the album concludes with three noisy, churning, Velvet-y rockers, including the playful "Brain Capers," with Alice Cooper, Ray Davies and Rick Moranis all whispering "still a long way from home" into the protagonist's brain.

The title track delivers a truism gleaned from the pandemic—"this stupid world is killing me/ this stupid world is all we have"—and "Miles Away" ends the album with the elegy, "You feel alone/ friends are all gone/ keep wiping the dust from your eyes."

Speaking as someone who was there when it started, no one expected Yo La Tengo would still be around 38 years later, and certainly no one could have anticipated an album this good so late in a career. These guys, they always find new ways to surprise you.

"This Stupid World" is available now from Matador Records.

CONCERT CALENDAR

On Wednesday, Garden State Warriors, June & The Pushas, Randy Hayes, and special guests Crazy & The Brains will perform at Serendipity Loft, 121 Newark Ave., Jersey City. Promoted by Society Needs Culture, Ill Repute digital magazine, and Co-Creators, the event will also feature food by Simple Done Productions. Admission is \$10 at the door.

Jim Testa is on Facebook at facebook.com/Constant-Listener-Jim-Testa-On-Hudson-Music-108591071738628. He can also be reached at jim@jerseybest.com.

Special by Mulligan's James Mac is now a comedy album

BY DAVID MOSCA
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

James Mac isn't just bringing comedy to Mulligan's, but from it as well. He performed his comedy special, "Whiskey and Chem Lights," at the Hoboken pub on Jan. 15. The special was recorded and has now been released as an album.

"I've been looking at how comedy was being done on Comedy Central and Netflix and realized that I wanted to give what I was doing a wider berth," says Mac. "One of the ways to do that is by doing a comedy special."

Mac, who has been doing comedy for the past eight years, is originally from Texas. The album serves as an introduction to his comedy. During the special, it touches on the comparisons between living in New Jersey and living in the South, as well as some of the misconceptions people have about those from the South.

An Army veteran, some of Mac's comedy touches on PTSD from combat experience. "I try to inform people that PTSD is different for everyone," he says. "It's different than what you see portrayed on screen. I'm just trying to get people to understand it through the comedy I do."

Mac served in U.S. Army from February 1995 to June 2010. He has been stationed at Fort Bragg in North Carolina and Fort Benning in Georgia, and has had tours of duty in Germany, South America, Iraq, Afghanistan and Poland.

When writing for his routine, Mac usually starts with an idea he has, whether it's a story or a funny thought. From there, he has large Post-it notes on his wall, where the ideas evolve into spider webs, all with topics relating to the subject they go with. "I have a joke that pokes fun at my accent when it comes to getting a date, which probably took me about five minutes to write," he says. "Other jokes, like ones I make about being raised Irish Catholic, were a bit harder for me to write."

Another topic, which goes into stereotypes about being from the South, is against the Confederate flag. "One thing people often think is that everyone from the South loves the Confederate flag," says Mac. "I can say that's not true. I was raised knowing that was an enemy flag. You can show your pride with where you're from, but that shouldn't be one of the ways to do it."

Comedy at Mulligan's continues every first and third Wednesday of the month, but each month of the year that has a fifth Wednesday will feature the recording of another special that will take place by an up-and-coming comic with a half-hour set. "Whiskey and Chem Lights" can be seen on YouTube, iTunes, and Spotify. Mulligan's Pub is located at 159 First St., Hoboken.



JAMES MAC'S "Whiskey and Chem Lights," recorded live at Mulligan's Pub in Hoboken, can now be seen and heard on YouTube, iTunes, and Spotify.

2023 Better Newspaper Contest

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Business Writing Portfolio FIRST PLACE

Teri West

West Portfolio



IRON MONKEY BAR and restaurant in Jersey City.

BY TERI WEST
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

When three Jersey City siblings began whipping up seafood in Downtown Jersey City in 2015, their restaurant grew so popular that people would wait two hours for a table, one of them recalled.

But the coronavirus struck in 2020, and business was never that good again.

Like many restaurants that stuck it out through COVID-19's months of shuttered indoor dining and the inflation that followed, the restaurant, Just Belclaws, has struggled with fewer customers and higher costs ever since.

So with their 10-year lease ending as 2024 arrives, the siblings will be closing the eatery at 280 First St. for good.

News of popular restaurants and bars closing — Jersey City's Just Belclaws, Iron Monkey and Corgi Spirits are among the latest — have circled Jersey City in the past weeks, disappointing loyal customers, but not surprising members of the service industry.

Restaurants have always been one of the toughest entrepreneurial ventures, but three years after COVID-19 altered society as we knew it, the industry remains shaken, say local restaurant owners and insiders, whittling down an industry already made up of the most gritty, passionate entrepreneurs to only those willing to continue toughing out the years' long storm.

"No one has money to go out anymore," said Stephen McIntyre, owner of the Iron Monkey, at 99 Greene St. "It's just like, why am I doing this? That's what I keep saying to myself every day, and I don't think I'm the only restaur-

ant owner that thinks this way." Changes in customers' habits have been one of the most significant lasting effects of the pandemic, restaurant owners say. People simply eat out less often now, likely because of the challenging economy and homebody and penny-saving habits that developed during periods of quarantine and have stuck, they said.

Then there are the office employees who would frequent happy hour but now sometimes, or always, work from home. McIntyre said.

And when younger adults do choose to eat out, they target new places each time, drawn by social media marketing rather than loyalty to a favorite establishment, said Melanie Rudin of the Jersey

City Restaurant Owners Coalition.

"The places that are spending money to bring people there may not be doing great food or great dining, but they're doing great with the marketing," Rudin said.

The prices restaurant and bar owners find themselves charging customers because of rising costs of food make eating out feel like a more consequential decision for customers.

"Consumers are saying, 'You know what, it's cheaper for me to make it at home,'" Rudin said.

Restaurateur Tory Aunsbach was a partner in three Jersey City establishments two years ago: Hooked JC, JSQ Lounge and Cafe Alyce.

Today, just the café remains, but Aunsbach describes the closures as practical decisions rather than defeat; his goal is to have 76 more restaurants. Yes, he said 76.

"I feel like if I get halfway there, I'm doing all right," he said.

He closed Hooked JC a year ago, in large part due to its seafood shack aesthetic not matching the typical post-COVID customer's

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Government Writing Portfolio FIRST PLACE

Teri West

West Portfolio

4 | NEWS The JERSEY JOURNAL Monday, May 22, 2023 www.nj.com/hudson

VENUS WAS HERE

Jersey City pays tribute to trans icon by marking childhood home a historic landmark

"This will make trans women know that they matter."

Michael Roberson
Ballroom scholar

BY TERI WEST
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Relaxed on a bed before a window overlooking her overgrown Jersey City backyard, Venus Pelligatti Xtravaganza shared stories of the community she had found in New York City's underground ballroom scene and dreams of a glamorous future.

It was through those moments captured in the 1990 documentary "Paris is Burning" that the world fell in love with Venus. The transgender woman in her early 20s became an inspiration for trans and queer individuals settling into their identities and discovering the ballroom culture, and now, more than 30 years later, is considered a legend in the underground ballroom community.

The house where she filmed interviews for the documentary and lived with her grandmother is nestled in Jersey City's Hamilton Park neighborhood where the Pelligatti family resided on multiple homes on Eighth Street, their Italian relatives on one side of the street and the Puerto Rican family members on the other.

More than 30 years later, the home is in the process of being designated a historic landmark by the city, an intentional effort to preserve and amplify the life of a transgender individual in a country where states are actively stripping the rights of transgender youth and limiting LGBTQ history taught in schools.

"Not only for my family, but for



VENUS PELLIGATTI XTRAVAGANZA in 1986 at a ball in Brooklyn.

COURTESY OF JANIS FILMS

the transgender community, the LGBTQ community, that's historic," said Venus' older brother John Pelligatti Jr., who still lives in Hudson County. "It's just a wonderful feeling. We spent so many years there as a family."

Much of Venus' legacy stems from the tenacity and grace that radiated in her interviews for "Paris is Burning."

"Paris is Burning" director Jennie Livingston. "Her wit, her

intelligence, her beauty and her confidence in her female identity are by now the stuff of legend."

Venus' depiction in "Paris is Burning" was a widely viewed representation of a young, trans woman simply living her life authentically. In the three decades since the film's release, many in the trans community have cited her as an inspiration because of her relatability.

"I don't think there was more of an image that had more of an

impact on me than seeing Venus Xtravaganza sitting on that pier smoking a cigarette," Janet Mock, a Hollywood transgender activist, told TV Guide in 2018. "You can't write and make up characters like that. They're all so real about the little humble goals that they wanted, and I think that is what the lasting impact of that film is."

Though she was a figure in the local ballroom scene — Venus was a member of the House of Xtravaganza — she never found

fame in her lifetime. She was murdered at the age of 23, a fact that is only revealed at the end of "Paris is Burning," a film that otherwise brims with life.

No one was ever arrested for her murder.

Now, after generations have seen Venus' impact, members of the New York ballroom scene and her family are finding new ways to honor her. In addition to the historical landmark, there is a documentary in the works,

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Asbury Park Press

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

**First Amendment
THIRD PLACE**

Joe Strupp
Juan Carlos Castillo

Lakewood Schools Troubling
Financial Future

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Best Video THIRD PLACE

Brian Johnston

WHTG Documentary: Modern Rock Radio and the House on Hope Road

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying a news article. The address bar shows the URL: app.com/videos/entertainment/2023/02/08/whtg-106-3-documentary-alternative-music-radio-nj-jersey-shore-house/11107420002/. The website header includes the 'app.' logo and navigation links for News, Sports, Monmouth, Ocean, Advertise, Obituaries, eNewspaper, Legals, Crossword, and a user profile for 'Hi, Magdeline'. The main content area features a video player with a dark image of a house at night. Below the video player, the title 'WHTG Documentary: Modern Rock Radio and the House on Hope Road' is displayed, followed by a short description: 'What happened on the air at WHTG, an alternative rock station based in a tiny house in N.J., changed the sound of radio in the U.S. for decades.' To the right of the video player, there is a 'Watch Next' section with a video thumbnail and a text box that reads: 'We're always working to improve your experience. Let us know what you think.' Below this is an advertisement for AMEX featuring two women in a restaurant setting.

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

**Government
Writing Portfolio
FIRST PLACE**

Mike Davis

Jackson NJ Battling
with Antisemitism

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

**Best Video
Portfolio
FIRST PLACE**

Thomas Costello

News that Shaped Our World

app.

[News] Sports Monmouth Ocean Advertise Obituaries eNewspaper Legals 43°F Crossword Hi_Magdeline

Wine chiller killer sentenced in wife's murder in Brick

Defendant was to leave the victim's home, which the defendant,

A State Superior Court Judge in Ocean County sentences Mayra Gavilanez-Alectus for the murder of her wife, Rebecca Gavilanez-Alectus.

Thomas P. Costello Thomas P. Costello, Asbury Park Press
Published 10:40 p.m. ET Jan. 12, 2023

Watch Next

- Men sentenced for Neptune double murder NEWS
- Father of murdered son, talks about his son's death and gang violence on the West side of Asbury Park NEWS
- Resident from the west side of Asbury Park talks about the fear of living amongst gang violence NEWS

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First Year Journalist **THIRD PLACE**

Hannah Gross

Transgender Students: How
Controversy Over NJ School
Policy is Taking a Toll



October 31, 2023 | [Hannah Gross, Education and Child Welfare Writer](#)

In January, Jay'la Cooper was struggling to see during math class in her junior year at Neptune High School. She left class to go to the nurse, hoping to receive help with her vision so she could pass the class.

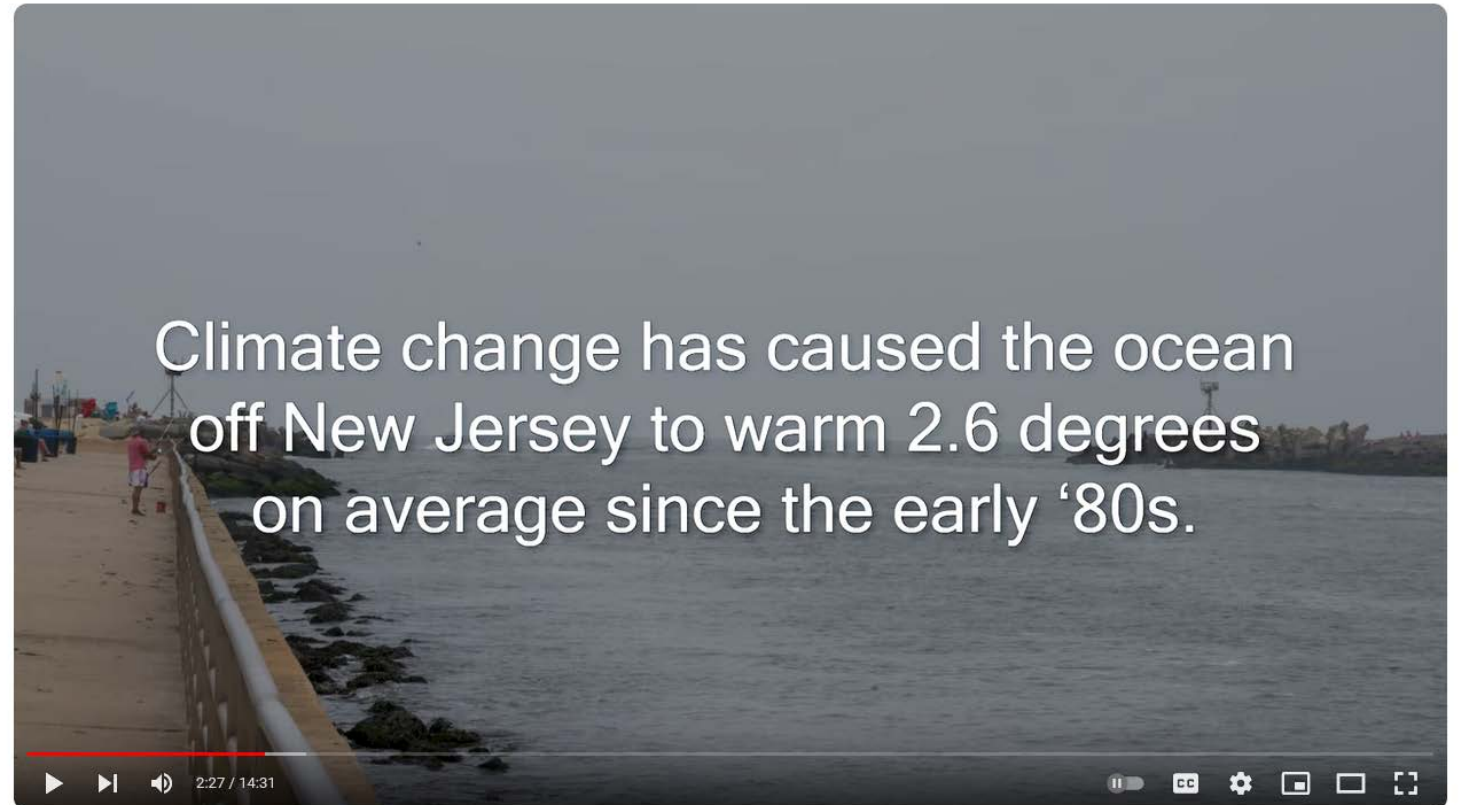
When the nurse picked up the phone to call Cooper's home, Cooper says she misread the school paperwork and referred to Cooper as Jay'la, the name she was using at school but not at home. Cooper, who is transgender, was out at school but not to her family.

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Best Video **SECOND PLACE**

Michael Sol Warren,
Courtney Baynes,
James Kraft

Clam Fishing is Big Money in
NJ; Climate Change is
Threatening the Industry's
Future



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NEW JERSEY PRESS ASSOCIATION

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Feature, Entertainment,
Lifestyle Portfolio
THIRD PLACE

Al Lubrano

New Jersey Narratives

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

**Specialty Writing
Portfolio
SECOND PLACE**

Staff

What's the Fastest Way to
Get to the Shore?

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

The Record (Bergen)

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Best Headlines THIRD PLACE

Joe Farrell

Putting on the Jersey; Taking It to the House; Around the Horn

The Record | MONDAY, JUNE 26, 2023 | 11

LOCAL

Former theater to become restaurant

Bergenfield's Meat Palace to serve Korean barbecue

Philip DeVenentis
NJPA.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

BERGENFIELD — The local movie theater that was a mainstay of the downtown for the past century will be redeveloped into a Korean barbecue and hot pot restaurant.

The proposal was approved last week by the Planning Board. The 260-seat restaurant, to be called Meat Palace —

an homage to the original name of the theater — will be open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily, said Mayor Arvin Amatorio.

The restaurant will add yet another option to an eclectic dining scene on South Washington Avenue.

"It's a place where we can experience the authentic and delicious flavors of Korean cuisine, cooked right at the table," the mayor said, announcing the news in a Facebook post on Thursday.

The owner of the restaurant will renovate the two-story building, Amatorio said, while preserving some of its features — including at least one of its five projection screens. He said part of it will

be used as a dinner theater.

Amatorio said it was disappointing that the theater went out of business at the end of last year. But he said, its future use as a restaurant is important for the viability of the business corridor, which stretches for 15 miles between the Dumont and Teaneck borders.

Amatorio said he and the previous property owner hunted for a cinema operator to take over the theater.

"I tried to look for potential buyers," the mayor said, "but I couldn't find any."

See THEATER, Page 4L



This Washington Avenue movie theater closed last year. FILE PHOTO



Scott Freier of Montclair — known as the longtime "Trumpet Guy" for the New Jersey Jackals, plays during a recent home game at Hochlife Stadium in Paterson. PHOTOS BY DARREN TOBIAS/NEWJERSEY PRESS

Around the horn

Giant Farmers Market hit with penalty

3 North Jersey sites owe workers \$1.8M in OT

Caitlin Brannigan
NJPA.com

Three North Jersey supermarkets owe approximately \$1.8 million in overtime pay to 226 employees, the U.S. Department of Labor announced on Thursday. The department recovered \$917,455 in back wages and an equal amount in liquidated damages from the Giant Farmers Markets in Hackensack, Oakland and Waldwick.

The Labor Department also assessed \$90,428 in civil money penalties due to the willful nature of the violations.

"The U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division found the pay practices of D & J Enterprises LLC, J & V Giant LLC and Waldwick Farmers Market LLC, operating as Giant Farmers Market and operated by John Lee and Diana Lee, violated provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act," the department wrote in a release.

The FLSA requires that most U.S.

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

**Specialty Writing
Portfolio
THIRD PLACE**

Hannan Adely

‘Palestinians Have Not Lost Hope’; A Community is United in Grief; Hollywood has Stereotyped Arabs for Decades

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Editorial Comment
THIRD PLACE

Ed Forbes

Underserved Communities
Deserve Better

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

**Enterprise
Reporting
THIRD PLACE**

Katie Sobko, Ashley
Balcerszak, Jean Rimbach,
Kristie Cattafi

Investigation of
Sen. Robert Menendez

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Best Audio Portfolio THIRD PLACE

Art Stapleton,
Paul Wood

All in with Art Stapleton:
A NY Giants Podcast



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Critical Writing
SECOND PLACE

Jim Beckerman

Immersive 'Great Gatsby' Review;
Why are Moviegoers so Excited?;
'The Last of Us:' Another Reason
We Loved Ep's 3 Story

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

**Government
Writing Portfolio
SECOND PLACE**

Kristie Cattafi

Cataffi Portfolio

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

News Column
SECOND PLACE

Mike Kelly

Kelly Columns

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Sports Column
SECOND PLACE

Darren Cooper

Athlete's Story Proves Loving
Someone with Autism Worth
Heartache; McGill Scholarship
Winner Has Spirit; B.C. Football
Coach Embraces What's Hard

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Editorial Comment
SECOND PLACE

Ed Forbes

Public Transparency

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Public Service
SECOND PLACE

Staff

Hazards Next Door

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Best Video Portfolio **SECOND PLACE**

Anne-Marie Caruso

Caruso Portfolio

New documentary follows the volunteers who shield patients from anti-abortion protesters

2-minute read

Megan Burrow and Anne-Marie Caruso

Published 4:28 a.m. ET Aug. 17, 2023 | Updated 3:37 p.m. ET Aug. 18, 2023



No One Walks Alone: Clinic escorts shield patients from taunts of anti-abortion protesters

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

**Best Web
Project
SECOND PLACE**

Staff

Hazards Next Door

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Critical Writing
FIRST PLACE

Kara VanDooijeweert

We Got Into 17-course Sushi
Dinner; North Jersey's Top 10
Restaurants; Fiorentini Brings
Sophisticated Tasting Menu

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

**First Year
Journalist
FIRST PLACE**

Amanda Wallace

Wallace Portfolio

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Best Headlines FIRST PLACE

Scott Muller

Defusing the Situation; Details are Hazy; Point of Snow Return

The Record | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2023 | 1E

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LOCAL

Driving mad
Cars brought the most consumer complaints in New Jersey last year. **4L**

Bus firms' manager admits using risky drivers
Pleads guilty in state's ongoing Paterson cases

Joe Malinconico and Colleen Wilson
Paterson Press and North Jersey.com
USA TODAY NETWORKS — NEW JERSEY

PATERSON — Henry Rhodes, the manager of two city school transportation companies, pleaded guilty Monday to charges that he put children's safety at risk by hiring unqualified bus drivers, including some with criminal records.

Rhodes, 59, of Paterson, also admitted getting lucrative student housing contracts for the companies by giving school districts bogus information about the company's drivers' credentials.

"He's relieved that the cases are behind him," said Howard Lesnik, Rhodes' attorney, adding that it's been "a long time with this hanging over his head, so he's glad to be able to move forward."

See PLEA, Page 2L

Defusing the situation
Haledon quarry to use text alerts to help warn neighbors of blasts

Philip DeVenetis
North Jersey.com
USA TODAY NETWORKS — NEW JERSEY

HALEDON — The local quarry will now give notifications one hour before it detonates explosives to try to make peace with a neighborhood that deals with the blasting on a regular basis.

Residents have been instructed to text the word "blast" to a five-digit number for alerts from the Braen Stone Co. quarry.

In the past, they were startled by the noises and shaking without any warning.

Mayor Michael Johnson, meanwhile, said he will form a citizens' panel to serve as a liaison between the borough and the quarry, a 10-year-old business on Central Avenue.

"We can't put them out of business, and we don't want to," Johnson said. "We have to work together."

The new methods of communication were announced at a town hall-style meeting where quarry representatives listened to residents' complaints about blasting sounds, ground vibrations and plumes of dust.

Dina Kuntogiannina, a retired school principal who lives at the Gatherings at Haledon, a condo complex off Southside Avenue, said she has heard the detonations and seen her personal possessions crash to the floor.

"I honestly thought it was an earthquake," she said of a recent blast.

Another woman said her family spent \$80,000 to repair cracks to the concrete foundation of her home and that she suspected the damage was caused by the quarry.

PHOTOS BY TRAVIS SHAW AND DANIELLE PARRAKARAN/NORTH JERSEY.COM

See QUARRY, Page 4L

Suspect joins three others charged in Hackensack man's death

Nicholas Katzban
North Jersey.com
USA TODAY NETWORKS — NEW JERSEY

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

**Business Writing
Portfolio
FIRST PLACE**

Daniel Munoz

How Tipping Culture is
Changing; After Menendez,
Answers to Your Gold
Questions; Is \$500k the New
\$300k?

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

**News Column
FIRST PLACE**

Jim Beckerman

Beckerman Columns

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

**News Writing
Portfolio
FIRST PLACE**

Megan Burrow

Burrow Portfolio

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Best Web Project FIRST PLACE

Tariq Zehawi,
Scott Fallon

The Passaic: A River
Of Contradictions



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

**Online
Breaking News
FIRST PLACE**

Staff

Severe Flooding in North Jersey

NJPA

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

**Best Video
FIRST PLACE**

Anne-Marie Caruso

Ending the Stigma

northjersey.com

Our first North Jersey Student of the Week poll resu

[News] Bergen Passaic Sports HS Sports Advertise Obituaries eNewspaper Legals

Documentary: Ending the stigma in the Black community surrounding mental health

Jamesetta Miller Walker and Anne-Marie Caruso USA TODAY NETWORK

Published 4:31 a.m. ET Dec. 27, 2023 | Updated 4:31 a.m. ET Dec. 27, 2023



Documentary: Ending the Stigma, Mental health in the Black community

Mental health and suicide prevention in the Black community are explored in the new NorthJersey.com documentary, "Ending the Stigma."

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The Star-Ledger

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Scholastic Sports Writing Portfolio **THIRD PLACE**

Steve Politi

Hahn Wouldn't Let Bullies Keep Her From Making History; Teen Could Become Youngest Cup Player in History; 415-2?!

415-2?! A dominant Newark HS football team is chasing history and changing lives

Updated: Jan. 15, 2024, 9:52 a.m. | Published: Oct. 19, 2023, 7:05 a.m.



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Sports Column THIRD PLACE

Bob Klapisch

Why Judge and Friends Sing
God Bless America; Volpe's
Remarkable Journey; Davey
Johnson Weighs in on MLB
2023

Why Yankees' Aaron Judge and friends sing God Bless America, today and every day | Klapisch

Updated: Jul. 09, 2023, 12:26 p.m. | Published: Jul. 04, 2023, 6:31 a.m.



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Sports Writing Portfolio THIRD PLACE

Darryl Slater

Where Did Roseman Get His Fearlessness?; How Williams Unloaded Haunting Past; Who Does Thibodeaux Think He Is?

Where did Eagles' Howie Roseman — the NFL's cockiest GM — get his fearlessness? Why, New Jersey, of course

Updated: Feb. 10, 2023, 8:20 a.m. | Published: Feb. 10, 2023, 7:30 a.m.



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Critical Writing THIRD PLACE

Jeremy Schneider

New Restaurant is Italian-Japanese Sensation; Chef Just Opened New Restaurant; Best New Burger Challenging Local Legends

N.J.'s hottest new restaurant is an Italian-Japanese sensation. Carbonara ramen, anyone? Review

Updated: Apr. 20, 2023, 1:16 p.m. | Published: Feb. 09, 2023, 12:00 p.m.

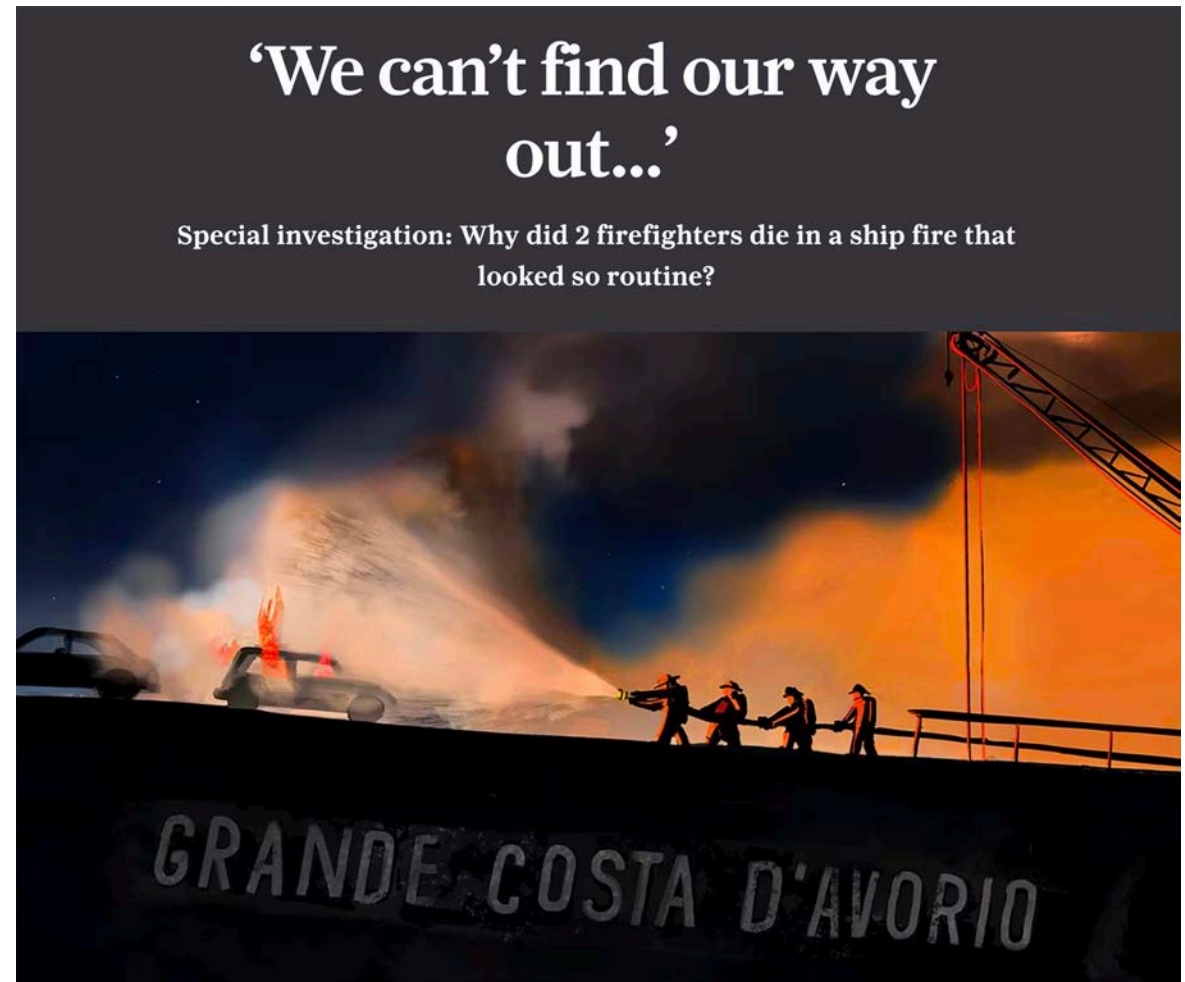


Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Public Service **THIRD PLACE**

Ted Sherman

Death at Berth 18: Why Did 2
Firefighters Die in Ship Fire that
Looked So Routine?



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Business Writing Portfolio THIRD PLACE

Jelani Gibson

Inside First Black Woman-Owned
Legal Weed Store; Is Democratic
Chair Influencing Who Can Sell
Weed?; Corruption, Backroom
Deals, Politics Mire Weed Rollout

Corruption, backroom
deals, local politics mire
N.J.'s legal weed rollout,
businesses say



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

News Column **THIRD PLACE**

Paul Mulshine

Republicans Should Have Listened to Buffett; Murphy has Member of Liquor Lobby Crying in Beer; Traffic in London is Hell on Wheels

Governor Murphy has the members of the liquor lobby crying in their beer | Mulshine

Updated: Sep. 14, 2023, 6:51 a.m. | Published: Sep. 14, 2023, 6:50 a.m.



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Government Writing Portfolio **THIRD PLACE**

S.P. Sullivan

Parole Officer Fled Cops at 100 mph; Federal Officer Going Back to Work Behind Bars; Facebook Fighting Requests by Police

She was a federal officer wrongfully in prison on a gun charge. Now she is going back to work behind bars.

Updated: Mar. 06, 2023, 7:54 p.m. | Published: Mar. 06, 2023, 7:30 a.m.



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

News Writing Portfolio **THIRD PLACE**

Keith Sargeant

Sick Puppies, Healthy Profits;
A Culture of Silence;
The Day I Died



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

First Year Journalist **SECOND PLACE**

Corey Annan

Meet new Brunswick's Blind
Sprinter; Fighting to Make Women's
Football Succeed; Young
Carpenters Can Help Build Future

Meet New Brunswick's blind sprinter, who is now an astounding 2-sport athlete

Updated: Oct. 07, 2023, 1:53 a.m. | Published: Jun. 01, 2023, 7:30 p.m.



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Best Headlines SECOND PLACE

Phil Cornell

Odor in Court; SAT Tests are ...;
Mural's Condition Improving
After Hospital Performs Art
Transplant

A14 THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 2023 THE STAR-LEDGER, AFFILIATED WITH NJ.COM

U.S. OPEN

Odor in the court: Pot aroma wafts over tennis tourney site

Players, spectators say outpost bordering Corona Park "smells like Snoop Dogg's living room."

James Martinez Associated Press

It's become a stink at the U.S. Open: a pungent marijuana smell that wafted over an outer court, clouded the concentration of one of the world's top players and left the impression there's no place left to escape the unofficial scent of the city.

While the exact source of the smell remained a mystery Tuesday, one thing was clear: Court 17, where eighth-seeded Maria Sakkari complained about an overwhelming whiff of pot during her first-round loss, has become notorious among players in recent years for its distinctive, unmistakable odor.

"Court 17 definitely smells like Snoop Dogg's living room," said Alexander Zverev, the tournament's 12th-seeded man who won his opening match on the court Tuesday. "Oh my God, it's everywhere. The whole court smells like weed."

Stung by stories in the wake of Sakkari's match Monday that made it appear the U.S. Open's stands are the sporting equivalent of a Phish concert, the United States Tennis Association conducted its own



Aleksandar Vukic, of Australia, returns a shot to Alexander Zverev, of Germany, at the U.S. Open Tuesday. John Minchillo, Associated Press

investigation, of sorts, to weed out the source of the smell.

Spokesman Chris Widmaier said the USTA questioned officials and reviewed video of the midday match and found "no evidence" anyone was smoking pot in the stands of Court 17, leading to speculation it may have come from Corona Park just outside the gates of the intimate stadium court.

He may not be just blowing smoke. Sakkari herself suggested just that when she complained to the chair umpire while up 4-1 in the first set: "The smell, oh my

gosh. I think it's from the park."

After her 6-4, 6-4 loss to Rebeka Masarova, Sakkari told reporters: "Sometimes you smell food, sometimes you smell cigarettes, sometimes you smell weed. I mean, it's something we cannot control, because we're in an open space. There's a park behind. People can do whatever they want."

Flushing Meadows security staffer Ricardo Rojas, who was working the gate outside Court 17 on Monday, said he took a break in the park around the time of Sakkari's match and "there was definitely a pot smell going on." But he noted that while he enforces a strict no-smoking

Other players in past years have complained about the pot smells emanating from Court 17, a 2,500-seat arena that opened in 2011 in the extreme southwest corner of the complex with little buffer to the park.

Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova, who easily won her match on Court 17 on Tuesday, told a similar story: "I smelled it actually today also. You smell it a lot. I think it's just Court 17. That court is so far away, it's almost in the park. I think it's coming from the park."

Sakkari, a semifinalist at the U.S. Open two years ago, said the smell didn't affect

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Business Writing Portfolio **SECOND PLACE**

Derek Hall

The Long Pour; Corporate
Giants in Line for Big Tac
Breaks; N.J. has More Remote
Workers Than Most States

The Long Pour

Inside the controversial booze battle shaping the future of N.J.'s
dining scene



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

News Writing Portfolio **SECOND PLACE**

Spencer Kent

The Stranger in the Mirror;
Keeping Mike Alive; Falling
Through the Cracks

Falling through the cracks

A single mother and her young son are losing their N.J. home. No one seems to care.



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Scholastic Sports Writing Portfolio **SECOND PLACE**

Joe Zedalis

Shocking Study Shows HS Team Wrestling in Trouble; Girls Flag Football Exploding; Pitching Injuries on the Rise

As tournament opens, our shocking study shows N.J. HS team wrestling is in trouble

Updated: Dec. 06, 2023, 10:49 a.m. | Published: Feb. 06, 2023, 10:37 a.m.



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Sports Writing Portfolio **SECOND PLACE**

Steve Politi

Livvy Inc.; 'Nobody Expected Him to Live this Long'; The Wild Story of a Yankees Legend's Long-Forgotten Country Song

Livvy, Inc.

N.J. gymnast Olivia Dunne is leading a revolution in college athletics, one viral TikTok video at a time

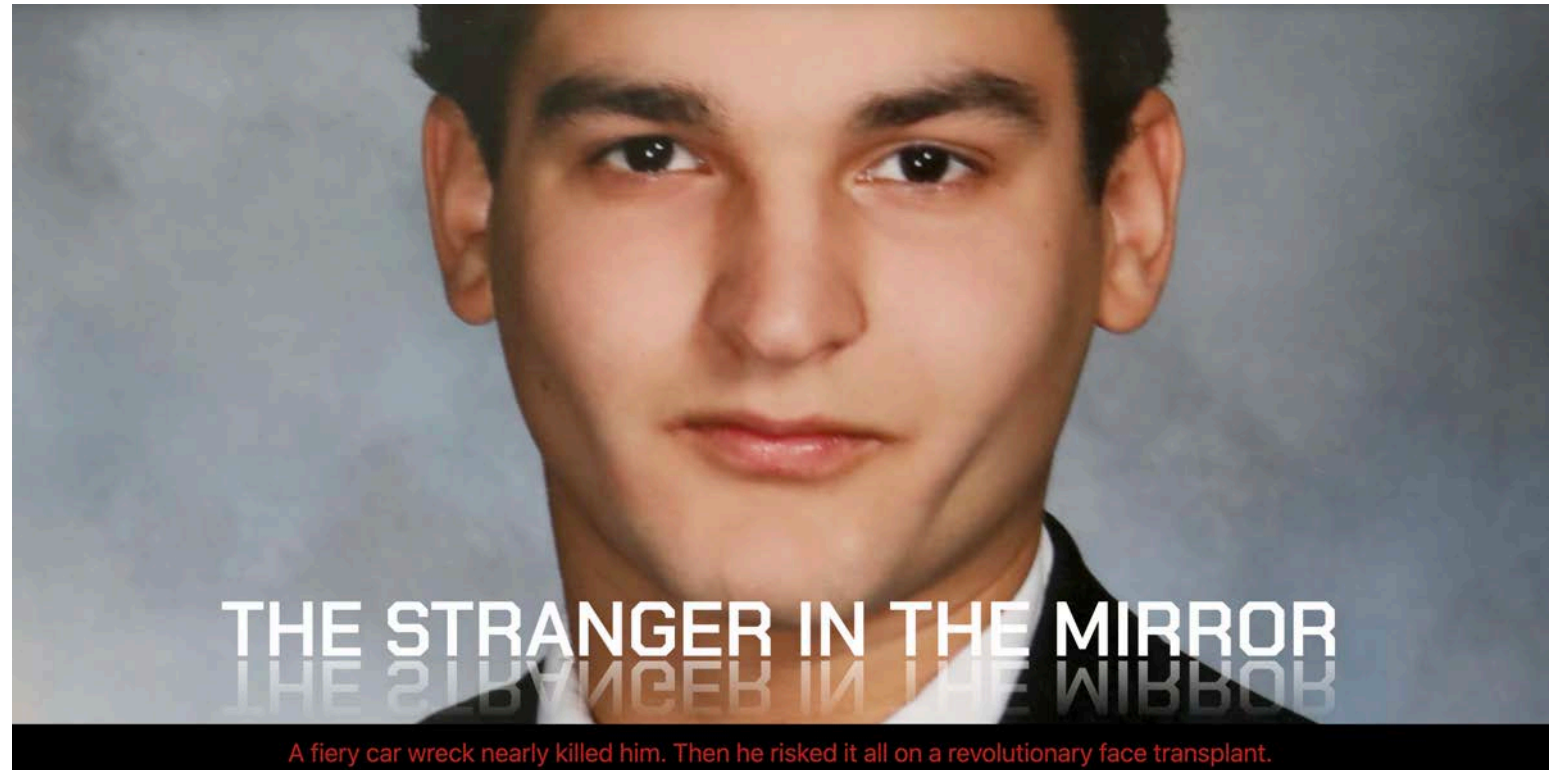


Daily Online/Editorial Awards

**Enterprise
Reporting
SECOND PLACE**

Spencer Kent

The Stranger in the Mirror



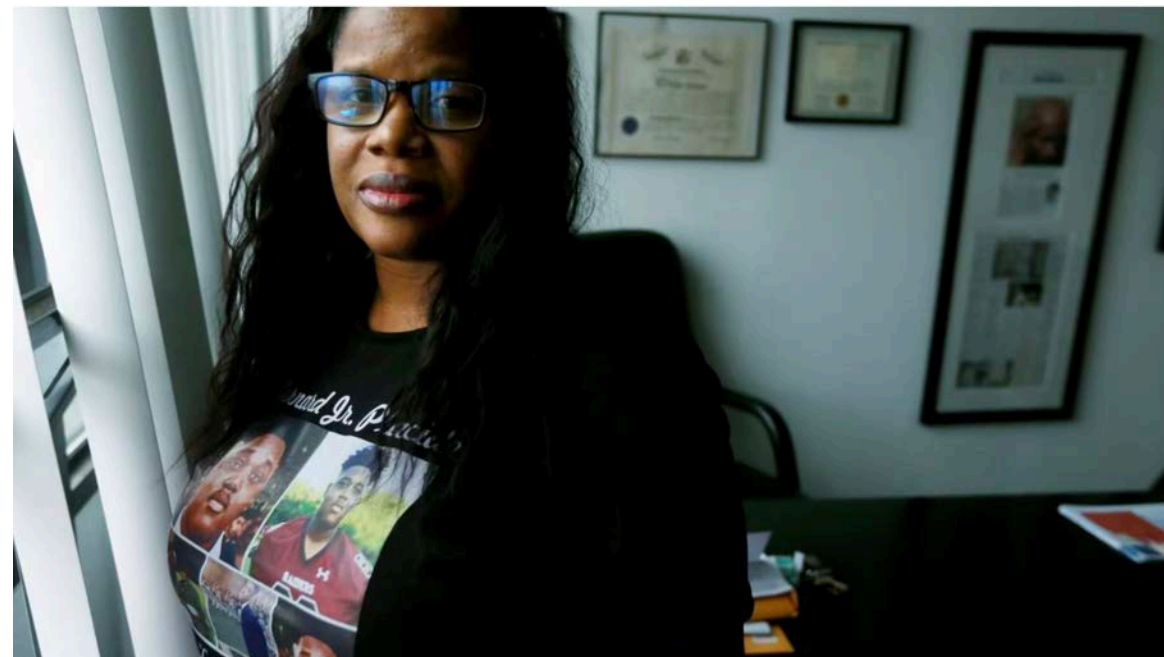
Daily Online/Editorial Awards

First Amendment **SECOND PLACE**

Riley Yates, S.P. Sullivan,
Kevin Shea, Deion Johnson

N.J. Promised to Change How it
Probes Police Shootings –
Critics Say it isn't Working

N.J. promised to change
how it probes police
shootings. Critics say it
isn't working.



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Feature, Entertainment, Lifestyle Portfolio **SECOND PLACE**

Karim Shamsi-Basha

My First Baseball Game After 40
Years in America; Father's
Ancient Pocket Watch and
Secret to Life; Dishes to Dreams

Dishes and dreams

For Arab American families living in N.J., home cooking means so much more



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

**Public Service
FIRST PLACE**

Adam Clark

Portraits of a Crisis

Portraits of a Crisis

A cry for help

A N.J. teen needed a therapist. He had to jump off a bridge to get one.



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Editorial Comment FIRST PLACE

Dave D'Alessandro

Your Secretive Government Keeps Breaking the Law; Strategy for Mentally Ill Should Not Involve Shooting Them; Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to be Cowboys

03 SUNDAY, AUGUST 6, 2023 THE STAR LEDGER, AFFILIATED WITH N.J.COM

OPINION

SHENKMAN BY THE STAR LEDGER



EDITORIAL

Your secretive government keeps breaking the law

There can be no faith in government if it is spared from scrutiny, but in the laboratory of democracy known as New Jersey, government transparency is often reduced to something voluntary.

The assault on transparency has been relentless since Gov. Phil Murphy's second term began — just count the ways. Access to public records is weakly enforced. Police accountability bills have stalled. ELEC and campaign finance oversight have been demolished. The budget negotiation is a clandestine affair. Throwing horns probes never left the starting gate. Dark money poisons the agenda. And the list goes on.

Now we are reminded of other significant ways in which the window has been slammed shut on public access to information, through a litany of laws that are never enforced by the administration, and it should make the rest of us ask what it will take to get our democracy back.

Under the law, the Department of Health is required to report on childhood lead exposure. The Monitor found that DEH is in compliance with a law that took effect more than a year ago. The report hasn't been written.

Another law requires the Civil Service Commission to post annual reports on workplace discrimination and harassment reported by employees on its website. They do not exist, the Monitor discovered.

And so it goes. Not surprisingly, the administration and its departments never responded to questions from the news website.

And the worst thing is that when people try to OPR the information, they're told no such documents exist, or that it's beyond purview of what OPR requires.

Perhaps worst of all, the 2024 budget signed by Murphy last month included \$1 billion in pet projects that Republicans say were never justified by Democratic lawmakers, as required by law.

But in New Jersey, "Agriculture violates clearly written laws, as if what the Legislature has instructed them to do is optional," Griffin says. "The public does not have that luxury: We have to follow the law or face consequences, some of which are enforced or prosecuted by the very agencies ignoring these reporting requirements."

Tom Moran's opening and closing paragraphs in his column "Sheila Oliver and a Life Well Lived," reflecting on Lt. Gov. Sheila Oliver's life and career say it all.

"You can honor the memory of Sheila Oliver by noting that she was the highest-ranking Black woman in the state government for more than a decade, the first Black woman to be elected as our lieutenant governor, and the first Black woman to serve as speaker of the Assembly."

Sheila Oliver's life and career say it all. "You can honor the memory of Sheila Oliver by noting that she was the highest-ranking Black woman in the state government for more than a decade, the first Black woman to be elected as our lieutenant governor, and the first Black woman to serve as speaker of the Assembly."

FEEDBACK

Treat LGBTQ students as children of God

Concerning the NJ Advance Media article "State school board... passes resolution of equity, sex ed policies," published after the board's Aug. 2 meeting:

While by law, decisions regarding our state's public education policies must not be made on religious grounds, as a person of Christian faith, and a physician, I disagree with those who object to the accommodation of transgender students in classes of their choosing, on the basis that anyone would be discriminated against thereby.

Nancy T. Black Berkeley Heights

Remembering a trailblazer

Tom Moran's opening and closing paragraphs in his column "Sheila Oliver and a Life Well Lived," reflecting on Lt. Gov. Sheila Oliver's life and career say it all.

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Stop labeling people

My daughter is the granddaughter of a Pennsylvanian coal miner. My father worked from the age of 14 to support two families. He worked alongside his four brothers.

Peter Leone Bloomfield

Daily Online/Editorial Awards

**Enterprise
Reporting
FIRST PLACE**

Rebecca Everett

When Tasers Fail

When Tasers fail

The stun guns are failing N.J. cops. The cost? Lives, futures, careers.



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

First Amendment FIRST PLACE

Riley Yates,
Steve Strunsky

Big Retirement Payouts Cost \$76M; Parti-time Officials, Full-time Perks; Towns Quietly Paid \$78M to Settle Suits Against Cops

Part-time officials, full-time perks

Some N.J. towns skirt the law and taxpayers foot the bill.



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Feature, Entertainment, Lifestyle Portfolio **FIRST PLACE**

Peter Genovese

Trailer Park Heaven; Welcome
to Paradise; Luncheonette
Celebrates 100th Anniversary



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Scholastic Sports Writing Portfolio FIRST PLACE

Jake Aferiat

Inside East Side Wrestling's Fight to be Taken Seriously; Davenport Makes History; North Hunterdon's Next Wrestling Coach: Inside Look

Inside Newark East Side wrestling's fight to be taken seriously

Updated: Feb. 24, 2023, 5:32 p.m. | Published: Feb. 24, 2023, 5:30 p.m.



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Specialty Writing Portfolio **FIRST PLACE**

Karin Price Mueller

We Made 150 Calls to Helplines;
'They're Just Predators'; Here's
How I Saved \$360 a Year

'They're just predators.' How brokers make big money off people seeking addiction treatment.

Updated: Dec. 08, 2023, 8:00 a.m. | Published: Dec. 06, 2023, 8:04 a.m.



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

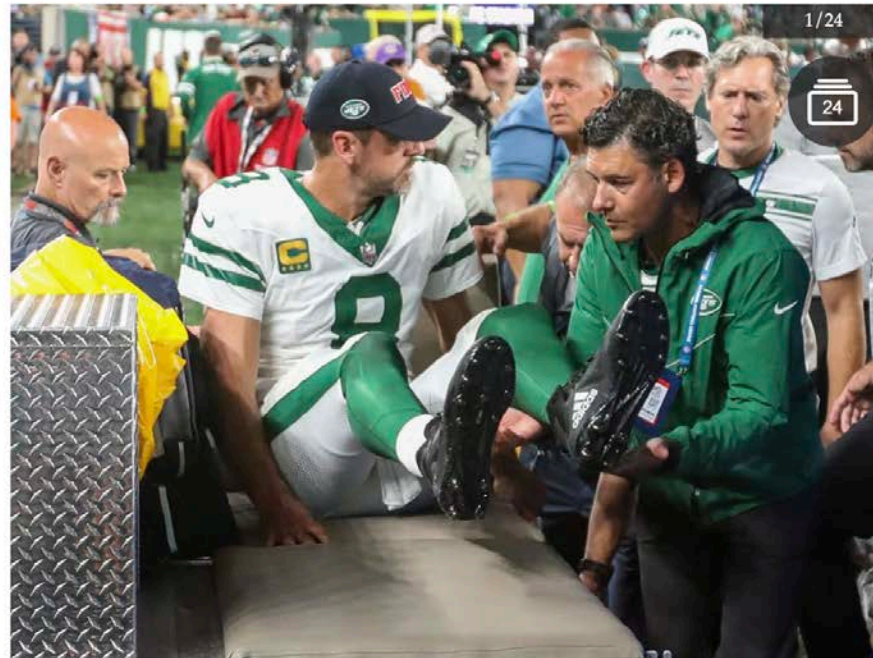
Sports Column **FIRST PLACE**

Steve Politi

Rodgers' Injury is Proof Jets are Cursed; Pacheco Makes Super Bowl History for Rutgers; 'Not Bad for a Bunch of Nerds'

Aaron Rodgers' injury is proof: The Jets are hopelessly cursed | Politi

Updated: Sep. 12, 2023, 9:49 a.m. | Published: Sep. 12, 2023, 7:03 a.m.



Daily Online/Editorial Awards

Sports Writing Portfolio **FIRST PLACE**

Kevin Armstrong

Death at the Racetrack;
Name, Image and Mustache;
Ghanaian Grace



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2023 Better Newspaper Contest

NJPA
NEW JERSEY PRESS ASSOCIATION

Get Ready for the Big Finale!

**GENERAL
EXCELLENCE
FINALE**

Get Ready for the Big Finale!

General Excellence Criteria

The General Excellence winner is awarded according to which newspaper receives the highest cumulative total for first-, second- and third-place awards in all categories, including photography. First place earns three points. Second place receives two points. Third place gets one point.

The newspaper with the most cumulative points in each division wins the award. For dailies, two General Excellence winners are awarded – one in each circulation division.

**GENERAL
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Weekly



**GENERAL
EXCELLENCE**

Weekly

The SandPaper



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Daily — Under 15,000



**GENERAL
EXCELLENCE**

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Journal**



**GENERAL
EXCELLENCE**

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Thank You

For Coming!

See You Next Year!