



Singh Brings Fresh Voice As Candidate For MO Council

By Cheryl Conway

With election time just three weeks away, does one know who the new candidates are running for Mt. Olive Twp. Council?

In this week's issue, "Mt. Olive Online" rolls down the red carpet to introduce the third Democratic candidate vying for a seat on the local governing body- Raj Singh of Flanders.

Singh joins two other Democratic candidates Irene Sergonis and Lloyd Deans in their run to fill three seats on the Mt. Olive Twp. Council. The dynamic three face off against incumbent candidates- Republicans Colleen Labow, Alex Roman and Joseph Nicastro.

Each seat carries a four-year term on the council. When going to the booths on Tuesday, Nov. 5, registered voters need to decide if they are happy with the current board? Are they happy with the current tax rate? Are they happy that all members currently serving the board are registered Republicans? Can more be done to improve transparency, climate change and reduce expenses in Mt. Olive? New candidates bring change, new ideas and solutions to local concerns, fresh ears to listen and renewed energy to keep Mt. Olive on the map as a top place to live, raise a family, run a business and strive for greatness.

Singh is one of those new candidates who addresses his concerns and solutions in the following interview with "Mt. Olive Online."

Meet Raj Singh

As a resident of Flanders for 10 years, Singh moved to the area with his family in 2009.

Married "to my beautiful wife Rashmi Singh" for 18 years, the couple has "two wonderful children. Ananya, my oldest is a senior at Morris County School of Technology and my son Aryan Singh is a freshman at Mt. Olive High School," says Singh, 44.

"When my wife started working in Flanders in 2006, we researched the town and discovered that the school district had an excellent rating," says Singh. "That was why we decided to settle down in Mt. Olive.

"We like the schooling system and love the natural resources of Budd Lake, the trails and the natural beauty of Mt. Olive," he adds.

Singh completed his bachelor's in computer science in 2000 from DY Patil College of Engineering in India.

"I work as a manager of engineering & DEA Operations," says Singh, working as an engineering professional in the pharmaceutical industry for 13 years.

In his first run for political office, Singh has been a registered Democrat since 2007. As a frequent attendee at Mt. Olive Democratic meetings, Singh decided in May of this year that he would like to run for council, he says.

Why are you running?

"I've been involved with community organizations for the last 12 years at various positions," says Singh. "I feel that the people of Mt. Olive don't have proper representation on the council. There is a lack of transparency and a need [for] effective checks and balances in our local government."

What strengths do you bring if elected as a council member?

"I'm an engineer by profession and I'm involved in handling projects from inception to closing," says Singh. "I collaborate with various government agencies, including the EPA, DEA, FDA, NJ Division of Taxation and NJ Department of Community Affairs."

In deciding to step up and serve the community, Singh "will utilize his management and leadership skills to help our community efficiently achieve our shared goals," as it is states on the Mt. Olive Democratic website. Singh says he believes "we can make Mt. Olive an ideal location to build a life and family by focusing on fostering diversity, making public resources more accessible to all and by providing a voice for the unheard in our community."

What local issues are most concerning to you?

"I want to preserve our natural resources, e.g. trails and Budd Lake and reduce the carbon footprint in Mt. Olive," says Singh. "I also want to promote the use of solar energy in our municipal government."

What ideas or solutions do you have to resolve or improve those concerns?

"We will work with the power suppliers to use renewable energy sources instead of traditional energy sources that harm the environment," says Singh. "We will use energy efficient lights in place of regular light bulbs. Our website has more proposals that should be explored with the assistance and recommendations of our Environmental and Open Space Committees."

Rising taxes and dropping property values are a concern to many homeowners; any ideas or suggestions on how to turn this trend around?

“Ecotourism is something that should be pursued, considering our abundant natural resources,” says Singh. “Bringing business to Mt. Olive will reduce the burden on homeowners and improve property values. We should cherish our namesake, Budd Lake, and explore ways to share the beauty with tourists.”

One objective is to continue to develop the community trail system to ensure it’s safe for activities. Expand on what is unsafe about these trails and what ideas you have to improve the trail system?

“We have noticed that signs are missing and some of the trails paths are covered with bushes,” says Singh. “We have also noticed cans and garbage on the trails. The Open Space Committee has done much in the past few years to promote and map our trail system but it is a small group of volunteers who need assistance. We need to make every effort to expand and support our volunteer base in all committees and bring them more recognition.”

How will you make renewable energy sources more available for businesses and residents so Mt. Olive can one day be a 100 percent green community?

“We will increase the use of solar power for the businesses and residents and shall work with the power suppliers to have the power from the renewable energy,” says Singh.

Can you expand on how you will work towards developing the accessibility of recreational activities in a way that is respectful to the environment?

“We will work with the town to implement the sharing of the road with bicycles and pedestrians,” says Singh. “Our roads are so narrow that we cannot walk or ride bicycles safely. Our Open Space and Recreation Plan from 1999 had listed an objective of having a park within 10-minute walk or bike ride of every resident. We need to work to reach that goal to improve the health and well-being of our residents.”

One of Singh’s primary objectives is to work to continue to develop the community trail system to ensure safe walking, biking, and hiking throughout Mt. Olive, as stated in his bio on the Mt. Olive Democrats website. “It is important that every member of our community can safely enjoy our beautiful local natural

resources while maintaining the integrity of our local infrastructure and promoting environmental sensitivity.”

Why should residents vote for Raj Singh?

“Raj Singh will be a voice for the many residents who are concerned with transparency, climate change and reducing expenses in Mt. Olive,” says Singh. “Our current local government ruled by only one party is at risk of making mistakes and promoting improper behavior. Competition makes everyone better. We need to challenge ourselves and our leaders to strive for excellence in all areas. There is always a reason to change and grow!

Is there anything to add?

“To promote the use of renewable energy we would support the installation of charging stations for electric vehicles at public places,” says Singh. “We would like to reduce the use of single use plastic bags modeled on Parsippany’s recent ordinance- <https://parsippanyfocus.com/2019/07/17/parsippany-passes-ordinance-to-ban-single-use-bags-at-retail-establishments>. We need more educational programs for our residents to reduce waste, promote energy efficiency and increase civic engagement.”

Are there any upcoming events to support Mt. Olive Democrats?

“Visit our website at VoteMountOlive.com and find ways to volunteer or donate,” suggests Singh. “The next meeting of the Mt. Olive Democrats is Wednesday, Oct. 16 at the Mt. Olive Library. The General Elections are on November 5th. Polls are open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Please Vote!”

Malinowski Endorses Deans, Sergonis and Singh For Council

Congressman Tom Malinowski (D-NJ 7th District) has endorsed for the Mt. Olive Town Council, the Democratic slate of Lloyd Deans, Irene Sergonis, and Raj Singh.

Malinowski said, “Lloyd, Irene and Raj will work to protect the environment, increase open spaces, and bring a new voice to the Mt. Olive Town Council.”

Deans, Sergonis, and Singh said they’re honored to receive Malinowski’s endorsement, noting the congressman has shown a commitment to Mt. Olive while running for office, and that has continued since being elected.

Lloyd Deans, a former Army Veteran who currently works supporting mothers of children with special needs, police officers, and veterans, said "I'm proud to get the endorsement of our Congressman and former Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. Representative Malinowski stands for what I fought for overseas. And as Democrats, we will continue to fight for those values here at home."

As a small business owner for 28 years in Mt. Olive and the founder of the Mt. Olive Volleyball Association, Irene Sergonis said she understands that all politics is local. "You look at what's happening nationally and it can get overwhelming. But I've learned that individuals can have a voice in a community and can shape its future. Representative Malinowski has shown a keen interest in our community and the platform the Democratic slate for Mt. Olive Town Council is running on," Sergonis said.

Raj Singh, a pharmaceutical engineer for the past 13 years, said he was glad to see Malinowski highlight the environment in his endorsement. "The environment is one of my key issues for Mt. Olive," said Singh. "I want to continue to develop the community trail systems and make renewable energy more available for businesses and residents in an effort to one day create a 100 percent green community."

"As Congressman Malinowski said, the Democratic slate for Mt. Olive Town Council will "bring a new voice" to Mt. Olive," said Deans. "A voice that believes in transparency, fiscal responsibly, checks and balances, diversity, and respect for the environment."

Welcome readers to the 30th issue of Mt. Olive Online. Get MO news online today! Advertise with us

First Mt. Olive Twp. Playground Upgraded

By Cheryl Conway

Tucked away on Warren Street off of Sandshore Rd. in Budd Lake is a pocket park

that was recently renovated.

Known as Mt. Olive's first neighborhood park, the Lou Nelson Park is 4.01 acres and features two basketball courts, a playground and several swings, according to Mt. Olive Twp. Business Administrator Andrew Tatarenko.

"Improvements were made this summer," he says. "The park was taken down in the spring due to safety concerns at the recommendation of our risk manager." Adds Tatarenko, "the mayor requested the improvements after the playground was taken down in which the council approved re-allocating prior capital funding which was available."

Cost for the renovations were "Approximately \$25,000" which "came from unexpended capital accounts which was re-allocated to fund this project," he says.

The playground equipment may look familiar to some as the swing set used to be situated at Flanders Park in Flanders.

"Our Public Works Department also re-located a swing set to Lou Nelson Park that was taken down at Flanders Park," says Tatarenko.

The playground was purchased and installed by Ben Shaffer Recreation, he adds.

Who Was Lou Nelson?

In a "Daily Record" article dated Aug. 14, 1977 that was provided by Thea Dunkle, president of the Mt. Olive Twp. Historical Society, Mt. Olive Twp. officials dedicated the Lou Nelson Park on Wednesday, Aug. 17, 1977. The park is named in honor of Lou Nelson, a former township committeeman who was killed in a car accident in 1971.

At that time, the park consisted of a play area for small children with swings, and a slide; and for older kids a basketball net and handball area with a wall. The park was two acres with the notion of making it larger with nature trails, tennis courts and picnic areas.

"It's the first truly neighborhood park in Mt. Olive and we're proud of it," said Eric B. Shulte, recreation director at that time.

After the short dedication ceremony, former Mayor Blaine Rowland took the first basketball shot.

According to Dunkle's research, Nelson and his wife, Patricia, at the time had a house built in Clover Hill, Flanders, in 1968. They had moved to Mt. Olive after living in Virginia Beach, Va.

He took office Jan. 1, 1971 as a newly elected committeeman after winning the election in November 1970.

Resolution After Tragic Death

In a township resolution on May 17, 1971, the Mt. Olive Township Committee recognized Nelson after his tragic death to express sorrow of his death and extend sympathy to his family and friends.

"Whereas Lou Nelson in his five months of service on the Township Committee devoted himself unstintingly to serving the best interests of the township and its residents, combining energy and enthusiasm for his job with his warm personality and genuine concern for the problems facing the township," as the resolution stated. He "always was concerned for the welfare of the citizens of the township and endeavored the aid and assist them in every way," as the resolution stated.

His obit appeared in the "Daily Record," Tuesday, May 11, 1971, the same day his funeral services were held.

According to the clippings provided by Dunkle, Nelson, who was 45, died Sunday night, May 9, 1971, in a three-car accident on Route 10 in Randolph Twp.

In a May 10 article in "The Daily Advance," the head-on collision occurred at 6:12 p.m., a mile west of S. Salem Street overpass, when a car driven by Jon Pollack of Victory Gardens careened across the dividing island and head-on into the path of Nelson's small red Volkswagen. Franklin J. Dorsett, a passenger in Pollack's car, also died in the accident.

Nelson's 10-year old son David Nelson, and a Randolph man, were also critically injured in the crash.

David Nelson, a Mt. Olive Midget football standout, sustained multiple injuries including concussion and pelvic fractures, according to the reports.

Serious Loss To Mt. Olive

Born in the Bronx, NY, Nelson was a salesman for radio station WRAN in Randolph Twp.; a member of Temple Shalom in Succasunna and Mt. Olive

Democratic Club.; was chair of the board of health, recreation commissioner, commissioner of buildings and grounds and assistant road commissioner. Then Mayor Paul J. Amadio called Nelson's death a "serious loss" to the township. He was dedicated, sincere, enthusiastic and honest" and declared a week of mourning throughout the township. He was survived by his wife Patricia, two sons David and Stuart; two daughters Dana and Susan.

Earlier Renovation Of Park

In an article that appeared in the "Daily Record" on in August 25, 2004, the Lou Nelson Park had swings, two basketball courts, a slide, merry go round, tennis bang board and climbing equipment. It had received a \$38K grant from the county's Community Development program to be refurbished. Upgrades were to include repaving the basketball court, adding play equipment, repainting the tennis backboard and improving accessibility for the disabled, according to the article.

More Park Upgrades

Flanders Park also received renovations this year.

"We also renovated Flanders Park this year with a new pavilion, playground and swing set," says Tatarenko. "We are currently working on our park improvement budget for next year."

"Mt. Olive Online" thanks Thea Dunkle, president of the Mt. Olive Twp. Historical Society, for providing history as to who Lou Nelson was and how the park was named after him. She had gathered a lot of her information from newspaper clippings.

Photo Credit: Basketball Court Photos by Lara Del Bosco

LaValley Hits Home Run Helping Students Find Their Voice

By Cheryl Conway

She was only 24 when she started teaching in the district, and now 30 years later

at the age of 54, Karen LaValley wonders how fast the time has gone by. The Mt. Olive Middle School physical education teacher was recognized on Monday, Sept. 23, by the Mt. Olive Board of Education for her 30 years of service as a teacher in the district. She was among 39 recipients lauded at last month's school board meeting for 10, 20 and 30 years of employment in Mt. Olive. This month actually marks LaValley's 31st year in the district. While three decades can be a long time, LaValley is appreciative of her time working in the district and is grateful for the recognition.

"Recognizing staff for their years of experience was such a kind and generous gesture from both Dr. Zywicki and the Board of Education," says LaValley. "I feel like a lot of wonderful things will be happening in our district. Kindness, caring, love and empathy goes a long way."

LaValley of Rockaway was one of two teachers and two custodians who received the Acrylic Shooting Star Award - "30 YEARS" - "To Honor Your Service to Education" - "Your exceptional accomplishments and outstanding service enrich the lives of students... And inspire us all."

Comments LaValley, "I am so grateful for my 30 years at Mt. Olive. "I have had such a wonderful experience here in my profession.

"I had several veteran teachers tell me the years go by fast and they are right!" she says. "They told me one day you will look at it and say where did all those years go. I started in this district at the age of 24 and now I am 54. Looking back at these years have been such a blessing. I have so many positive recollections and very few negative. Thank you! Thank you! Mt. Olive School district and community."

Jumping Around In Her Career

After attending Parsippany Hills High School, LaValley earned a bachelor's in health and physical education for grades kindergarten through 12 at Lock Haven University in Pennsylvania. She then went on to Mary Grove College in Detroit, Mich., earning her master's in teaching.

In choosing her career, LaValley was contemplating on nursing or physical education. It was her middle school field hockey/softball coach who became her role model and led her toward choosing physical education for her field of study.

"She was an awesome person," says LaValley about her teacher Judy Cilman.

"She had such an amazing impact on me. I saw the good in me."

It was from Cilman that LaValley became passionate about showing others that "there is good in you."

She says Cilman also taught her to be a "life learner. She really instilled that in everybody. I took on a lot of her traits."

Her teaching career spans back 32 years.

LaValley's first began teaching in September 1987 in Rockaway Valley Middle School in Boonton Twp., teaching physical education in grades K-8. She left there two years later, in September 1989, to come to Mt. Olive.

"Chester M. Stephens who was the superintendent at that time hired me," says LaValley. It was October 1989 when LaValley started out at Mountain View North teaching grades K-2. A year later she jumped over to Tinc Rd. School where she stayed until June 1997.

When the principal at Tinc Rd. School, Richard Wenner, was being transferred to the middle school, "I put in for a transfer," says LaValley.

The middle school in Mt. Olive at that time was located in the Chester M. Stephen's building. In September 1997, LaValley moved over to the CMS middle school where she taught until Dec. 1999.

It was in January 2000, when the new Mt. Olive Middle School opened up on Mt. Olive Rd. and CMS was turned into an elementary school for grades K-5.

MOMS has been LaValley's home ever since.

"Elementary became so easy for me," says LaValley as to why she wanted to move over to the middle school level to teach. "I became concerned I'd be burnt out. I've been here ever since. It's never going to be the same day. I love the differences."

Currently, LaValley teaches physical education for the sixth and eighth graders. Some of her classes include Pillars Life Skills, Pillars of Character, Project Impact and health.

When asked why she has remained in the Mt. Olive School District for so long, LaValley says, "I love it here; it's so nice to see how far the district has come. I just love being here and now I'm having children of former students' kids. That's what

that woman Judy Cilman said to me: 'When you get invited to the wedding and their baby showers and you get to see the adults they've become;' some are my colleagues."

There is just "something about Mt. Olive that has kept me here...whether the students, colleagues, the community," says LaValley. I never thought of teaching somewhere else because I've always been happy here."

Great Accomplishments

Giving children a voice has probably been LaValley's greatest accomplishment as a teacher in Mt. Olive.

Involved with the Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee, LaValley was instrumental in seeking funds to start a teen center in the building next to MOMS, which is now the Mt. Olive Child Care & Learning Center. The building used to be the former Mt. Olive Public Library and then became "vacant for a while" after the new library was built, she says.

LaValley had received approval of \$100K from the state to open a teen center after years of discussion by her students, but after Sept. 11, 2001, those funds fell through.

"I remember" receiving approval of those funds, she says, "nothing can ruin my day. It came from the town council that I got the state money. Then they had to withdraw the funds" as the state needed the funding for recovery efforts, she explains.

Although the plans for the teen center fell through, what came to fruition was her students gaining their voice and being heard.

"I said, 'you should be heard,'" and that they were. "I was so happy that the kids had a voice and someone was listening."

LaValley and her students had been working on getting the teen center for four years.

"Kids came to me and said 'we need to have a teen center,'" explains LaValley. "I called the mayor," former Mayor Paul Licitra, at the time. He came for a presentation by the students, who then met every four years talking about a teen center. Kids put together plans for an outdoor volleyball court and basketball court.

“It was amazing,” says LaValley. “We almost got a teen center, not because of me but because of you guys. It’s not what you say but how you say it.

“We almost had that youth center; we were that close.”

LaValley still found a way to use the building next door. Instead of a teen center, she brings her students there to do community service such as having students read to the younger students. This effort is part of the Community Links club that she runs since the early 1990’s.

Through the Community Links Club, 50 students and 50 people in the community get together to visit Morris View Nursing Home to play Bingo, participate in arts & crafts with the elderly at St. Francis Elderly Residential Center in Denville and activities at the Mt. Olive Child Care & Learning Center. In addition to teaching and running this club, LaValley also coaches the girls in field hockey and softball.

Another great accomplishment was being honored in 2009 at Teacher of the Year, she notes.

Many Enjoyable Moments

“Working with so many different types of students,” has been one of LaValley’s joys with teaching. “They’re the ones that keep me young.”

As with any job, challenges do exist, admits LaValley.

There are “challenges all the time; it’s not a negative thing. It’s all how you determine to handle it. I am much more proactive now; I used to be reactive. You learn to pick your battles.

“I embrace the challenges,” she continues. “If challenges come up, I look for the opportunity for growth.”

Favorite memory or moment working there?

"I really cannot pick one favorite memory because I have so many that are special and unique," says LaValley. "What I can tell you is I love when students, present or past, come to visit and tell me that they are doing well. Several highlights have been having former students who later became my colleague and friend. Also, having former students' children in my class."

How have things changed since you've been there?

"Things have changed a lot since I first started working here," says LaValley. "There were lots of farms, open space and the school district was much smaller. The small size allowed the opportunity for teachers to get to know each other. I realized all the wonderful gifts and words of wisdom the veteran teachers left me. They taught me so much and I am sure they never realized it. I observed great educators in action, and I use a lot of their knowledge and wisdom today. Thanks to them all for helping me become a better person and educator."

Anything new and exciting coming up in your profession/ classroom/school this year?

"A new thing they are having me do this year is helping students problem solve by being reflective," says LaValley. "I meet with students to discuss problems or behaviors that may be unsafe, irresponsible or disrespectful.

"We work together to reflect on how to turn that around and be more proactive in their approaches," she explains. "I like doing this because it reinforces all the character education material that I teach in class. I feel it is a way to develop positive interactions with the students and be a resource for them to help problem solve."

As far as retirement, LaValley is staying at home base for a while.

"I am not sure when that time of retirement will come," she concludes. "I still enjoy being a part of the Mt. Olive family and community."

Photo Gallery

Local Library News

Library Events Covered This Fall Like Leaves

Free Movie Night- Family favorite "Aladdin" will cover the screen at the MOPL on Tuesday, Oct. 15, at either 1 p.m.-3:15 p.m.; or 6 p.m.-8:15 p.m., in the Gathering Room. Rated PG 2019, fantasy/romance, 2 hr. 9 min. "Aladdin" is a 2019 American musical fantasy film produced by Walt Disney Productions. It is a life-action adaptation of Disney's 1992 animated film of the same name, which is based on the eponymous tale from "1001 Arabian Nights." Movie-style snacks provided!

Birds And Prey Up Close- The MOPL plans to host the Delaware Valley Raptors on Tuesday, Oct. 22, at 6:30 p.m. in the Gathering Room for its educational program "Close Encounters with Birds of Prey." It will be bringing an American kestrel, red-tailed hawk, peregrine falcon, great-horned owl, saw-whet owl and an immature bald eagle. The program is for adults and children over 6 years old only. Registration requested.

You Don't Have to Pay the Full Price for College- a "College Funding Seminar" is set for Wednesday, Oct. 23, at 7 p.m. in the Gathering Room. This free seminar, presented by Alvin G. Newell, vice president of Solutions for College Funding, Inc., will discuss how parents of college-bound high school juniors and seniors can: Make sure to not over-value your home on financial forms; try not to save money in child's name as it weighs more heavily than parent's savings; don't be afraid to negotiate with the college for a better financial aid package. Registration requested.

Come See the Real World Birthplaces of Gothic Horror- The MOPL plans to host "Strange Tales in Stone" on Wednesday, Oct. 30, at 7 p.m. in the Gathering Room. Join horror artist, Steve Gale and experience a unique blend of original artwork, Gothic literature, macabre history and European travel in this family-friendly presentation. Exhibition of his artwork will open on Wednesday, Oct. 16, in the Gathering Room to view for those unable to attend the presentation. Registration requested.

Interested in **learning to speak Spanish**? Join Dr. Paul Reilly for a 10 week class, which will emphasize spoken conversational Spanish in travel situations as a tourist.

Classes are set for Thursdays through Nov. 21, from 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. in the Career Room. If someone misses more than two classes, they will forfeit their space. Limited to 10 adults.

Registration required for all programs. Call 973-691-8686 Ext. 106 or go to www.mopl.org to register.

Local and county news

Mobile App Unveiled So Students Can Report Threats

In advance of National School Safety Week, the Morris County Sheriff's Office and the Morris County Police Chiefs Association on October 10 unveiled a mobile app called RSVP-3 Morris County, NJ, through which students can anonymously report threats to school safety and behavior that could disrupt classroom security.

The free RSVP-3 app – which stands for Responsible School Violence Prevention, Preparation, Protection – is one component of a multi-faceted RSVP-3 program that Morris County Sheriff James M. Gannon immediately began developing with the Morris County Chiefs of Police Association in response to the February 14, 2018, school shootings at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., that killed 17 people and wounded 17 others.

The creation and activation of the app was announced at a press conference hosted Thursday by Gannon, and attended by Morris County Police Chiefs, School Superintendents, Morris County Freeholders, Morris County First Assistant Prosecutor Thomas Zelante and other stakeholders.

The app can be downloaded as follows: Go to the Google Play Store or Apple iTunes Store on your mobile device; Search for RSVP-3 Morris County, NJ.; Click Install; Open the application; Enter a unique 4-digit passcode to use as a log-in. Once the user has entered the passcode, do the following: Select location; Select the town; Select the Affected School. To then report an incident or threat: Select

the action/tip on who is being reported. The user can add screenshots and attach documents, fill out tip report with all available information, and click submit.

Tips to the app are monitored in real time, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by law enforcement professionals working cooperatively with school officials.

The app was developed by Anderson Software's P3 Campus, a tip reporting solution designed for the educational community. The Morris County Sheriff's Office received \$16,500 in start-up funding for the RSVP-3 application from the Sheriff's Office CrimeStoppers program. Unlike CrimeStoppers, there are no rewards attached to making tips through RSVP-3.

"The app is a practical tool to help prevent school violence and allow for the sharing of critical information between police, school leaders and mental health providers," Gannon said.

So far, two public school districts in Morris County have committed to forming teams that will help law enforcement agencies investigate the tips. The app is available for anyone – students, parents, teachers and staff – to report a tip about school safety or a troubling school environment. All 36 municipal police departments in Morris County have signed on to the program.

"Sheriff Gannon and the Chief's Association have again successfully collaborated on the RSVP-3 program in congruence with the recommendation of the United States Secret Service "Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted Violence." In particular, this app addresses step 3 of their 8-step platform, which recommends the creation of a central reporting mechanism," said Butler Police Chief Ciro Chimento, president of the Morris County Police Chief's Association.

Morris County Deputy Freeholder Director Heather Darling expressed support for the entire RSVP-3 program.

"I, as a freeholder who is committed to keeping Morris County as safe and appealing as possible, support a proactive measure like this app," said Darling. "We want to be ahead of any violence and we want to reach the person who is making threats, or behaving erratically, or whose grades are plummeting, and get them the help they may need."

The app is one element in the overall RSVP-3 initiative that brings together police, educators and mental health professionals in a multidisciplinary approach

to stopping violence before it erupts in the classroom.

The Morris County Board of Freeholders and the federal Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) have each contributed funds used to pay for behavioral threat assessment curriculum and the costs of training school leaders and mental health professionals who work with schools.

The curriculum, authored by Sigma Threat Management Associates, guides school leaders, mental health experts and police on how to evaluate and respond to threats to school safety in a scientifically reliable manner.

“We are training people to distinguish between the child who shouts in a moment of anger that he will kill someone and the student whose grades are dropping, who is socially isolating himself or making disturbing comments,” said Gannon.

“We need to be ‘left of bang.’ We want to reach that student – before the bell rings – and get him or her the professional help they may need,” Gannon said.

An author of the curriculum, Dr. Marisa Randazzo, in November 2018 trained 75 Morris County police, school and mental health professionals on how to develop assessment and evaluation tools.

Randazzo is CEO of SIGMA and an international expert on threat assessment, targeted violence and violence prevention. She served for 10 years with the U.S. Secret Service and most recently was its Chief Research Psychologist.

In May 2019, Randazzo and Dr. Melissa Reeves, the past president of the National Association of School Psychologists and former chair of the NASP National School Safety and Crisis Response Committee, trained another 40 teachers and school staff in May 2019 on how to scientifically assess troubling behavior to determine whether school safety is at risk.

Additional training of educators and police on behavioral threat assessment is planned in Morris County this November.

State Assemblyman Anthony Bucco, also present at the event, noted that he continues to push in the New Jersey Legislature for support for A-5242, a bill that would fund a pilot RSVP-3 program specifically in the counties of Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic and Union and the first class cities of Newark and Jersey City – all part of the UASI zone.

Bucco said: "This is about our children. This is about our future. This is about the safety of our schools."

MOHS Boys Varsity Soccer County Game Held MOHS Boys Varsity Soccer team played a tough game in the Semi-finals against Montville High School on Sunday, Oct. 13 at Parsippany Hills High School. MOHS lost by a score of 3 - 2. Goal scorers for Mt. Olive were Eli Conway and Leo Tiago.

MC Sheriff's Office Set For Site Assessment

The Morris County Sheriff's Office is scheduled for a site-based assessment as part of a program to achieve accreditation by verifying it meets professional standards.

Administered by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA®), the accreditation program requires agencies to comply with state-of-the-art standards in four basic areas: policy and procedures, administration, operations and support services.

As part of the assessment, agency employees and members of the community are invited to offer comments at a public information session on Oct. 22, at 3 p.m. The session will be conducted in the Freeholder Public Meeting Room located on the Fifth Floor of the County of Morris Administration & Records Building, 10 Court Street, Morristown.

Agency employees and the public are also invited to offer comments by calling 973-285-6053 on Oct. 22, between the hours of 10 a.m. and noon. Comments will be taken by the Assessment Team.

Telephone comments as well as appearances at the public information session are limited to 10 minutes and must address the agency's ability to comply with CALEA's standards.

A copy of the Standards is available at the main Sheriff's Office located in the Morris County Courthouse, 56 Washington Street, Morristown. Local contact is Accreditation Manager Detective/Captain Denise Thornton at 973-285-6675. Anyone wishing to submit written comments about the Morris County Sheriff's Office's ability to comply with the standards for accreditation may send them to the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement, Inc. (CALEA), 13575 Heathcote Boulevard, Suite 320, Gainesville, Va., 20155 or email calea@calea.

Freeholders Congratulate Mayo Performing Arts Center On 25th Anniversary

The Morris County Board of Freeholders this week presented the Mayo Performing Arts Center with a special 25th anniversary resolution, honoring the county's premiere performing arts institution for three decades of outstanding contributions to the cultural vitality of Morris County. Watch the video:

<https://youtu.be/UkB0wVJG490>

Accepting the resolution at the freeholders' Monday (Oct. 7) work session in Morristown was MPAC President and CEO Allison Larena.

"MPAC has become one of the leading arts and cultural centers in our state, drawing more than 200,000 people to the theater each year, making it a cultural

drawing more than 200,000 people to the theater each year, making it a cultural and economic engine for Morris County," said Freeholder Deputy Director Heather Darling. "We congratulate MPAC on 25 great years!"

Mayo Arts kicked off its 25th season in 2019 with an opening night in September featuring American Idol sensation Katharine McPhee and last Friday hosted William Shatner. The 2019/2020 season line-up also includes Tony Bennett, Gladys Knight, Darlene Love, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, and other national stars and shows.

The arts center's also works to spark a lifelong interest in music dance and culture by hosting 40,000 children each year in theatre classes, school time shows, workshops, seminars and recognition programs.

"We believe that a 21st century performing arts center should transcend beyond the four walls of the theater," said Larena. "We serve all of the members of our

community, our county and our state through community outreach programs, and free performances at non-traditional venues.

"When we look to the future and the next 25 years, we look to grow those community outreach programs and augment our educational and outreach by building an educational center, which we can only do with the generosity and support of our community."

MPAC opened 25 years ago, on Sept. 29, 1994, on South Street in Morristown with a show featuring the Kirov Orchestra of Saint Petersburg, Russia, and Morristown resident and pianist Alexander Slobodvanik.

The opening followed an extensive renovation of the Community Theater, which was constructed in 1937 as a 1,300-seat Walter Reade movie theater. It had been closed for years.

In the subsequent 25 years, MPAC has become one of the leading arts and cultural centers in our state. Each year, the theater offers more than 200 events, covering the span of performing arts, from classical music to modern dance, theatre and popular music, bringing the world's greatest entertainers, New Jersey based artistic organizations, and emerging and dynamic performers to our county and region.

More than 200,000 people visit the theater each year.

In addition to presenting a wide array of programs to entertain, enrich, and educate a diverse population of Morris County residents, the nonprofit organization also is an economic engine for the county, adding \$15 million annually to the local economy.

MC Freeholders Proclaim October As Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Domestic violence, including its causes, ramifications, and efforts to help victims, is the focus of attention this month in Morris County, where the Freeholder Board has proclaimed October 2019 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Morris County.

The freeholders on Monday, Oct. 7, held a brief ceremony at their morning meeting in Morristown.

They presented the proclamation to JBWS (Jersey Battered Women's Service) President and CEO Diane Williams and JBWS Vice President Diana Kurlander, who oversees the JBWS sponsored Family Justice Center in Morristown.

"Domestic violence crosses economic, racial, gender, educational, religious and societal barriers," said Deputy Freeholder Director Heather Darling. "It is a crime of violence that violates an individual's privacy, dignity, security and humanity, and destroys self-esteem.

"We are not immune to domestic violence in Morris County, where 2,000 offenses are known to occur each year," continued Darling. "But we know that represents just a fraction of the real situation since most cases are not reported. Thankfully, we have a great team in place to handle those cases that we do know about, starting with the Morris County Prosecutor's Office and Sheriff's Office."

Attending the event on Monday were Morris County Sheriff James M. Gannon, Morris County Prosecutor Fredric Knapp, Executive Director of Legal Services of Northwest Jersey Michael Wojciz, plus staff from these agencies who work on the front line of domestic violence issues.

"Domestic violence continues to plague our communities," said Knapp. "To effectively serve survivors of domestic violence we continue to vigilantly prosecute

defendants charged with such offenses.

JBWS annually answers 5,500 helpline calls, provides 20,000 nights of emergency shelter and transitional housing, and accompanies 1,100 victims in court.

The Morris Family Justice Center also annually serves more than 400 adults and 40 children through its walk-in center for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating abuse, and human trafficking.

Proclamation issued by the Board of Freeholders:

Whereas, domestic violence is not confined to any group or groups of people, but crosses all economic, racial, gender, educational, religious and societal barriers; and

Whereas, the crime of domestic violence violates an individual's privacy, dignity, security and humanity due to the systematic use of physical, emotional, sexual, psychological, and economic control and/or abuse, and destroys a victim's self-esteem; and

Whereas, the Department of Justice estimates that an estimated 1.3 million women and 835,000 men are the victims of physical violence by a partner each year, and some 16 million children are exposed to domestic violence every year; and

Whereas, women are 70 times more likely to be killed in the weeks after leaving an abusive relationship than at any other time in that relationship, and almost 5 percent of male homicide victims are killed each year by an intimate partner; and

Whereas, in Morris County, there are approximately 2,000 domestic violence offenses each year, representing but a fraction of the domestic violence in the community since most cases are never reported; and

Whereas, each year, JBWS offers Safety, Support and Solutions for Abuse and answers 5,500 helpline calls; provides 20,000 nights of emergency shelter and transitional housing for 160 victims and their children; accompanies 1,100 victims in court; counsels hundreds of men, women and children; and provides education to 20,000 students and community members; and

Whereas, each year, the onsite partners of the Morris Family Justice Center serve more than 400 adults and 40 children through its comprehensive walk-in center for the survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating abuse, and human trafficking.

Now Therefore, I, Douglas R. Cabana, Director of the Morris County Board of Chosen Freeholders, proclaim October 2019 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Morris

County to raise awareness of the crime of domestic violence and to urge all Morris County residents to support those working diligently to end violence in our lives.

join Mount OLIVE walkers

Step into shape with a new walking program, Mt. Olive Walkers- a new class on Fridays through the Mt. Olive Exercise program. Get Lean At Lunch is held at 1 p.m. Walk-Ins are welcome.

Free to members; \$5 fee for non-members.

This new class will bring local residents together to walk with weights, core toning and stretch.

Email cherylc6@optonline.net for more details and to sign up.

College News

CCM To Hold Athletic Hall Of Fame

County College of Morris (CCM) in Randolph plans to hold its first-ever Athletic Hall of Fame to recognize key individuals who have contributed to the growth and success of the college's Titans athletic teams.

The ceremony is set to take place Saturday, Nov. 16, at the Meadow Wood, Randolph. The cocktail hour is at 6 p.m. with the dinner and program from 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.

To be recognized at the program are Jack Martin who served as CCM athletic director from 1968 to 2002 and George Dragonetti who served as CCM's first vice president of student affairs from 1969 to 1990.

Former Titan athletes to be recognized are Rebecca Caruso Williams '01, softball; Ed Higdon '75, hockey; Dennis Mack '69, baseball; Terry Ryan '75, basketball; Dirk Swaneveld '74, soccer; and Clarence White '75, basketball. Teams to be recognized are '85 Men's Baseball and '08 Men's Soccer.

Bob Natarelli posthumously will be recognized with the Contribution Award for his years of service to the Hockey Team as a volunteer goaltending coach and mentor to countless CCM student athletes both on and off the ice. As a result of

his diligence and attention to detail, CCM Hockey produced multiple All American goalies, as well as over a dozen All Conference netminders in the mid-1970s.

Tickets for the Hall of Fame are \$75. For tickets and sponsorship opportunities, go to www.ccm.edu/Hall-of-Fame

CCM Publication Earns National Design Award For 8th Time

The Promethean, a literary and arts publication designed by County College of Morris (CCM) students and faculty, has been recognized by Graphic Design USA in its 2019 American In-House Design Awards contest.

The In-House Graphic Design Awards recognize materials created by in-house design departments at agencies and institutions across the nation. The contest recognizes outstanding work in media, self-promotion items, publications, invitations, signage and websites.

CCM's 2018-19 edition of The Promethean was among 5,000 publications submitted for the contest. Approximately 15 percent were presented with the prestigious award.

The Promethean student design team responsible for 2018-19 edition consisted of Melissa Ostrander, of Randolph; Kevin Manimbo, of Chester; Joshua Dimatulac, of Hackettstown; Harley Petrocelli, of Morristown; and Marissa Cook, of Oak Ridge. Professor Kathy McNeil served as the faculty advisor to the student design team.

The In-house Graphic Design category was established in 2009. Since then, the Promethean has received that award eight times.

For additional information on CCM's Art and Design programs, visit <http://bit.ly/CCMdesign>.

CCM Television Program Highlights College In Season 4

All Access student crew members Matthew Sinnott, from left, and Brenda Todd with Dr. John Marlin, vice president of Academic Affairs, and CCM student and crew member Daniil Barkov.

The Alex DeCroce Media Center at County College of Morris (CCM) in Randolph will begin its fourth season of “CCM: All Access,” a weekly television show, airing on Morris Educational Television (METV) on Mondays at 9 a.m., then at 3 p.m. and again at 9 p.m.

“We are thrilled to be able to continue the show and provide students with this real-world project,” said Professor Julian Costa, executive producer of the program. “What makes this even more exciting is that our returning crew members are truly coming into their own as leaders.”

Brenda Todd of Randolph, a sophomore majoring in broadcasting arts and technology, has rejoined the production team.

“Now in our fourth season, we have developed a dedicated core group of people who are committed to the success of the show,” said Todd. “We are having a lot of fun as we continue to learn and explore new ideas. We welcome any students at CCM to join us who have an interest in television production.”

Costa, an adjunct professor of business and communication, designed the program to provide students with a realistic experience in television production. She works with Daniel Cleary, television engineer at CCM, who says: “It’s great to be starting our fourth season of shows. Julian really knows how to keep the ball rolling and has done a great job at getting guests each week. It’s always good to highlight the talent we have on campus with our faculty and staff.”

“CCM: All Access” airs on METV, viewable on Channel 40 Fios and Channel 77 Optimum, at 9 a.m., 3 p.m., and 9 p.m. every Monday. Future guests include Najib Iftikhar, assistant professor of business and hospitality management; Shannon Lengares, executive director of the Women’s Center; and Dr. John Marin, vice president for academic affairs.

For more information on “CCM: All Access,” contact Costa at jcosta@ccm.edu or

call the Alex DeCroce Media Center at 973-328-5288.

Centenary University Cuts Ribbon For New Baseball Field

Centenary University in Hackettstown cut the ribbon on “Our Diamond of Dreams,” a new state-of-the-art baseball complex, during a ceremony on Oct. 5. The facility provides an on-campus home for the Cyclone baseball team, the University’s largest NCAA DIII sport.

Honored guest for the event was Steven M. Somers, who with his wife, Sharon, was lead donor for the new complex. Owner and president of Vigon International, Somers threw out the ceremonial first pitch and addressed the attendees. Other speakers included Centenary University President Dr. Rosalind Reichard, and Head Baseball Coach Scott Kushner.

Following the ceremony and a baseball-themed reception, the Cyclones faced off against Centenary baseball alumni for the field’s inaugural game.

Centenary Blesses Animals

Centenary University hosted a Blessing of the Animals in honor of World Animal Day on Friday, Oct. 4, at 3 p.m. at the Centenary University Equestrian Center in Long Valley. Members of the community were invited to bring their pets to be blessed by Rev. Timothy Nicinski, the university's chaplain.

Centenary University students helped organize the event and groom one of the university's horses to represent the teaching herd and receive the blessing on the herd's behalf. The University last year was named sixth in the nation among pet friendly schools by Best Value Schools, which cited Centenary as "one of the most well-known equestrian colleges in the country."

The mission of World Animal Day is to raise the status of animals to improve welfare standards around the globe. Events marking the occasion unite the animal welfare movement, mobilizing it into a global force to make the world a better place for all animals. The same day is also recognized as St. Francis of Assisi Day. It is customary that, in remembrance of St. Francis of Assisi's love for all creatures, animals participate in a Blessing of the Animals each year.

"This is a ceremony that we encourage our students, visiting family, faculty, staff, and neighbors to participate in," said Dr. Lynn Taylor, professor of equine science at Centenary University. "We think that stewardship and care for all living things is an important ideal that students can aspire to, and the realization of the many connections we have in this world to each other is something that grows and

develops throughout our lives. The horses are our teachers here, and many of us consider our pets to be an integral part of the family.”

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