



Letters to the editor, Aug. 29



Local should do better on police blotter

In the police blotter published Aug. 22, your paper notes the following:

Sunday, Aug. 16 - silver Nissan Maxima left the Crescent Park Deck without paying. The driver is described as a young black male with short hair

Exactly who is this description designed to help? Are the police going to put together a lineup of every young, black man with short hair hoping for an ID? Are they appealing to the public to turn in every young, black man with short hair? Will the police conduct a sweep of the high school in search of the perp, "Will all young, black men with short hair please report to the auditorium...?"

Come on, people, this is Journalism 101.

Though the police report may have included the race of the suspect based on the witness account, you are not required to publish what is clearly an incomplete description that only serves to perpetuate racism. To be obvious about it, what you're saying is that become one young, black male with short hair may be a suspect in a crime, all young, black men with short hair are to be suspected of the crime.

In journalism, race is never included in a story unless it is relevant and never in a crime story/blotter item unless accompanied by a complete description (height, weight, clothing, etc.).

You owe every young, black man with short hair an apology.

LIZ BIRGE

Montclair

ICE jail? Not in our backyard

Many of us see disturbing things occurring in our country, and we are wondering how we can make a difference in our local communities, at the town or county level.

One way which may not have been obvious, or seemed necessary, is to attend our local freeholders meeting and advocate for the issues that are important to us.

One issue I would like to see addressed at the next Essex County Freeholders meeting, (to be held in Montclair on Wednesday, Sept. 11) is to schedule a public referendum on the contract with the Essex county ICE jail. Essex County Executive Joseph DiVincenzo Jr. recently stated in a message on the Turtle Back Zoo that “My job as county executive is to advocate for our county and find grants and other alternatives to lessen the burden on our taxpayers.”

My question to our freeholders is how much of the zoo funding, or other improvements to our county parks and playgrounds, come from the unlawful detention of immigrants in the ICE facility?

At a minimum we need transparency on how the ICE contract funds are being used in Essex county. Ultimately, we need a public vote on whether to continue with this controversial and unethical support of ICE policies.

We love going to the zoo and the beautiful parks and playgrounds in Essex county. Let's protect our backyard by ensuring our freeholders are serving the will of the citizens, living up to New Jersey values and working for the benefit of all our families.

DEVIKA GUPTA

Montclair

Republican Club lauds NJ Transit for fostering political speech

The Montclair Republican Club praises NJ Transit for its recent decision to allow political speech on NJ Transit-owned property.

In today's political and media environment, when so many are hesitant to tackle important issues in the public square, NJ Transit has opened-up endless opportunities for citizens to leverage NJ Transit property to promote critical political viewpoints encouraging debate and discussion.

A recent mounting of a mural advancing the cause of gun control on a train trestle managed by NJ Transit was recently approved by the agency.

The members of the Montclair Republican Club intend to commission a mural of equal scope and significance highlighting the importance of the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution to republican government.

Not only has the Second Amendment been indispensable to the peace and prosperity of America for over 230 years, but the larger principle of the individual's right to be armed has been essential to every freedom movement the world-over for centuries. It is our expectation that the artist or artists we commission to deliver this message will capture the spirit of freedom that yearns in every human heart.

In addition to beginning to solicit proposals from artists the Montclair Republican Club attorneys have also begun drafting appropriate requests to be granted NJ Transit-owned space of equal prominence for their Second Amendment-themed mural.

Our club feels that the opportunity for the public to view pieces of artwork addressing a key issue from different viewpoints will edify the community at large in significant ways. Moreover, Montclair which prides itself on a diversity of opinions, is an ideal venue to host these competing views.

We look forward to working NJ Transit and other key stakeholders in developing this project in the weeks and months ahead.

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Montclair

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