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Does NJ Need to Bring Back Death Penalty for Brutal Murders?

Many New Jerseyans no doubt have been following the sickening news of the brutal murders of a family of four, including two children, in their home in Colts Neck on November 20. A father was shot to death in his front yard, with his wife and their children, ages 8 and 11, brutally stabbed to death. The alleged murderer is Paul Caneiro, brother of Keith Caneiro and uncle to Sophia, 8, and Jesse, 11, and brother-in-law to Jennifer Caneiro.

This was a heinous crime, deserving severe punishment. In our view, the death penalty is warranted in this case. Monmouth County Prosecutor Christopher Gramiccioni said he would prosecute these murders as a capital case if New Jersey still had the death penalty. But New Jersey abolished capital punishment in 2007. And the last time a person was put to death in this state was 1963. According to the *Asbury Park Press*, the death penalty is still permitted in 31 states.

Other cases that we believe were capital penalty cases include the slaying of a man in the Short Hills Mall parking garage. Dustin Friedland was shot during a car jacking while his wife, Jamie, was still in their SUV.

"I live with the anxiety of if or when they do get out of prison, they will return to their awful criminal past," said the victim's father, Wayne Friedland, during the sentencing last January for the three men

convicted for the 2013 crime. "I live with this fear because the State of New Jersey does not have the courage or sense to implement the death penalty for these types of inhumane crimes."

In 2007, four young people, three attending college in Delaware, were gunned down execution style after being robbed by four males ranging in age from 16 to 20. A news report said the victims were "forced to kneel against a wall" before they were each shot in the back of the head.

There are several pieces of legislation in Trenton that would bring back capital punishment in some cases. Each of the crimes listed above would seem to merit such a punishment.

In light of the brutal nature of some of the crimes occurring in this state, is the death penalty the only justifiable punishment? We call for the Assembly and Senate Judiciary Committees to conduct hearings on legislation before their panels regarding the death penalty. One bill, ACR82, sponsored by Assemblyman Ronald Dancer (R-12th, Jackson Township), calls for a Constitutional amendment that would go before voters as a question on election ballots.

It is time, in our view, that horrendous crimes that rip families apart here in New Jersey are met with equally harsh punishment upon conviction following trials by juries.

Legal Marijuana Issue Calls For Diverse Community Input

With the advancement of a bill that would legalize adult-use recreational marijuana in New Jersey, municipal officials last week voiced concerns about the potential impact the legislation could have on their communities, including the prospect of cannabis dispensaries eventually seeking to set up shop within their borders.

The state Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee on November 26 approved bill S-2703, which would make legal the possession and use of limited quantities of marijuana by adults age 21 and older, and also establish policies regulating businesses that dispense marijuana.

The legislation was sponsored by Senator Nicholas Scutari (D-22nd, Linden) and Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3rd, Gloucester). In a release announcing the Senate committee's approval of the bill, published in last week's edition of *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*, Senator Scutari maintained that S-2703 will allow marijuana use to be "controlled, regulated and taxed, just as alcohol has been for decades."

Besides regulating cannabis use, the bill would create what its proponents have described as "social justice reforms," according to the release. Among them would be the expungement of past convictions for activities that no longer would be illegal under the legislation; dismissal of pending marijuana-possession cases and the release of those presently incarcerated as a result of such charges.

As stated in the release, New Jersey will tax marijuana products at 12 percent, and municipalities where dispensaries are located will have the option of imposing an additional 2-percent tax. The article also noted "a local governmental entity may prohibit the operation of a cannabis establishment for a period of five years at a time, prohibit the consumption of non-smoking cannabis in a

public place and other ordinances or regulations, including time, place and manner zoning restrictions."

While those in favor of S-2703 say it will support the economy and criminal justice reforms and make marijuana use safer, opponents argue that legalized marijuana will pose a public health and safety hazard for the general population.

During Cranford Township Committee meetings held November 26 and 27, Commissioner Mary O'Connor recommended the municipality address the matter in a public forum. She stated that "one proposal we are going to move forward on is assembling a local panel that brings together experts in law, public safety, planning and zoning, education, church and community organizations and residents, to look at this issue objectively."

The topic also was broached by Councilman Richard McCormick during the Garwood Borough Council meeting on November 27. He said he believes legalizing recreational-use marijuana will negatively impact communities, particularly youth and non-users. He said earlier in life he witnessed friends graduate from marijuana to stronger narcotics, and expressed concerns that the public will be put at risk from drivers impaired by marijuana.

Unlike medical-use marijuana, the benefits of which are overwhelmingly clear, legal recreational-use marijuana is a highly complex issue involving many valid concerns. We endorse the proposal by the Cranford Township Committee to form a panel reflecting a cross-section of the entire community for the purpose of exploring all aspects of the subject ahead of anticipated legalization, with a diversity of voices heard, since all segments of the population would potentially be impacted one way or another, and encourage other municipalities to do the same.

Letters to the Editor

Garwood Mayor-Elect Sara Todisco Sets Borough Application Process

I am proud to announce an open application process is now available to any and all residents in the Borough of Garwood to serve on a variety of boards, commissions, and committees. Our residents have such diverse backgrounds, skills, and talents. I hope many will consider volunteering their time to ensure Garwood is a vibrant place to live and work for many years to come.

A simple application can be found on the official borough website at www.garwood.org and paper copies are now available at Borough Hall at 403 South Avenue. A description of each of the boards, commissions, and committees is also available on the borough website homepage under "Community Volunteer Resource Form." Information is also available for anyone interested in volunteering for one of our emergency service organizations or Garwood non-profits.

Existing groups with open positions include the Planning/Zoning Board, Recreation Commission, Board of Health, Library Board of Trustees, Celebrations Committee, Green Team, and Historical Committee. I am also excited to add a first-ever Citizens' Advisory Panel. There will be nine spots available for residents of a variety of experiences, ages, and backgrounds to provide input on potential capital projects, like equipment and road work.

Please feel free to return a paper copy of the completed application to Borough Hall (office open Mon. to Fri. 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or police dispatcher 24/7) or to email me your completed form at STodisco@garwood.org. This is considered a "rolling application" process as positions often open at different times throughout the year. However, in order to be considered for appointment at the re-organization meeting of the mayor and council on January 2, 2019, please submit your application by December 15.

I am committed to working to ensure each committee is non-partisan and reflective of our community. I look forward to meeting with anyone interested in an appointed position. Also, I thank you in advance for your willingness to devote your time to better your community. Together, we will make sure Garwood remains a "small town with a big heart" and has a bright future ahead for all to enjoy.

Sara Todisco
 Mayor-Elect
 Garwood

ABCD EFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
 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 this deception of diction?

If you can guess one correctly - good guess. If you get two - well-read individual. If you get three - word expert. If you get all four - You must have a lot of free time!

All words and correct definitions come from the board game Diction Deception.

Answers to last week's arcane words.

1. Impalpable - That which cannot be felt
2. Siccative - Causing to dry
3. Pungar - A crab
4. Salto - In music, a skip

TUSSICULAR

1. Twining about; twisting
2. Pertaining to a cough
3. Full of life; very lively
4. Formed like a fan

KAME

1. A low mound or hill composed of sand, gravel, etc.
2. Boiled corn meal; mush
3. Brittle
4. A small brook or rivulet

PULE

1. To run abandon; decamp
2. Covered with a hairy substance or wool
3. A type of sweet onion
4. To whine, cry, whimper

KEB

1. Playful; sportive
2. Untidiness; filth
3. Scottish for a tic or sheep louse
4. A pustule or pimple

A National Trend Of Increased Anti-Semitism And Racism And Bigotry

Editor's Note: This Letter Was Forwarded to The Westfield Leader

Dear Members of the Temple Emanu-El Community;

On November 29 there was an anti-Semitic incident at Edison Intermediate School in Westfield.

This follows an anti-Semitic incident at the Franklin School, and a racist, anti-Semitic, misogynist incident at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School.

After the incident at Franklin, Rabbi Sagal was asked to come and speak to the administration of the school. He did so on two occasions, and a productive conversation ensued which resulted in increased attention to promoting tolerance in the schools and a renewed effort to oppose discrimination and bigotry in the school. Our vigil after Pittsburgh was supported and attended by many school officials. We believe that the efforts of the school administration were sincere, heartfelt, and attempted to address bigotry and anti-Semitism directly. We also express gratitude to the Westfield Police Department for treating such incidents with the seriousness they deserve.

However, there now seems to be an increasing frequency of such behavior in our schools. While this may reflect a national trend of increased anti-Semitism and racism and bigotry in our nation, this should not be tolerated in our local communities.

Your clergy are calling on the community leadership of Westfield and the surrounding towns, both civic and educational, to do the following:

To denounce, in the strongest possible terms any expression of anti-Semitism, racism and bigotry in our community;

To treat every act of anti-Semitic or racist vandalism as a hate crime, punishable by local, state, and national laws and to prosecute offenders to the fullest extent of the law;

To hold the parents or guardians of minors who commit hate crimes as accountable as the law permits;

To acknowledge, at every communal gathering of the Town and the Board of Education that Westfield is a community where bigotry is not tolerated.

In the Torah portion for last week, we are taught that our ancestor Jacob prepared for his encounter with his nemesis Esau in two ways: by engaging in discussion and reasonable dialogue, and by preparing for confrontation and resistance. In dealing with anti-Semitism in Westfield and the surrounding communities, like Jacob, we are prepared to engage in discussion and dialogue, but we are also firm that we will not tolerate, countenance, or accept anti-Semitism or bigotry in our community.

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Doug Sagal
Rabbi Ethan Prosnit
Cantor Martha Novick
Cantor Michelle Rubel
Rabbi Charles Krolloff

Letters to the Editor

Republican Elites, The Bubble Of Dr. Defelice

I guess Dr. Stephen DeFelice couldn't resist publishing his fondness for rubbing elbows with the "Republican Elites." He also then goes on to label the Democrats as "emotional and hateful." He certainly basked in the congeniality of his "Republican Elites" who couldn't possibly generate hate speech.

I could easily fill an entire page of *The Westfield Leader* by listing Trump and his Administration's disgraceful actions, words and behavior.

Dr. DeFelice appears to be totally blind as to what is going on in the current administration. Pay attention Dr., if you are ignorant and/or silent you are complicit.

Personally, I don't think there's enough outrage and I'm not even a Democrat! Yet, I wouldn't want the facts to disturb Dr. DeFelice's bubble.

Morgan O'Brien
 Westfield

Hateful, Vitriol, Deplorable, Chanting 'Lock Her Up'

Dr. Stephen DeFelice shared observations concerning his attendance at a conference off "Republican elites." I am certainly glad he enjoyed his trip, but his assertion that "the current Democratic mindset is substantially more emotional, hateful and energetic than the Republican one" is highly debatable. Does Dr. DeFelice recall the odious "lock her up" chants aimed at Hillary Clinton? How about the venomous attacks aimed at the media by Trump and Bannon, which have led to physical assaults on reporters? I would certainly classify Trump's incessant Twitter rants against Robert Mueller's investigation as emotional and hateful.

Trump has hurled personal insults against women for their appearance, John McCain for being captured, handicapped reporters for being handicapped, and his political opponents for just being his political opponents, while praising the "fine people" in the white nationalist movement.

Now Dr. DeFelice could argue that Trump's abhorrent rhetoric isn't the standard for all Republicans, but it is an indisputable fact that hate crimes, violent acts of anti-Semitism, and attacks on minorities have greatly increased in frequency since Trump began spewing his vitriol three years ago.

Yes, the Democratic mindset may be more emotional and energetic as we face the destruction of our democratic, small d, institutions, but Democrats don't spew hate nearly as much as the leadership of the Republican Party.

Bill Gottdenker
 Mountainside

What Has Happened To The Office Of The President?

Gone are the days when President Washington refused to shake hands because he thought that undignified and bristled when slapped on the back!

President Jefferson, a man of the Renaissance, authored Virginia's Statue for Religious Freedom and the original draft of the Declaration of Independence.

President Lincoln wrote his own speeches. Nothing has equaled the Gettysburg Address for eloquence and message in so few words.

Shall we see their likes again given the growing crassness of present-day presidential campaigns?

Where is the elevated tone in the office once occupied by George Washington?

Compare the closing words of President Lincoln in his Second Inaugural Address to President Trump calling United States Representative Adam Schiff "Adam Schitt" and Supreme Court Justice Ginsburg "an incompetent judge." "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right..."

President Lincoln concluded his First Inaugural Address with "The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

But where are "the better angels of our nature" when President Trump turns his back on the brutal murder of a *Washington Post* reporter and the tear gassing of migrant women and children at the southern border, says "Crazy Bernie" and "Crooked Hillary," and does not object when his audiences shout "Lock her up" and "CNN Sucks?"

Nor was it any better when Hillary Clinton called his supporters "deplorables" and Senators Sanders and Cruz called him a "pathological liar."

Are the candidates, the public, or the political strategists responsible for lowering presidential campaign standards almost to the point of embarrassment?

This is not to say that past presidential campaigns were always befitting the Office of the President. Thomas Paine questioned whether President Washington was "an apostate or an imposter." Opponents called him "monocratic." He was accused of entangling the country in "deep and incurable public evils."

Supporters of Vice-President Jefferson in the 1800 presidential campaign called President Adams a "hideous hermaphroditic character" while his supporters referred to Jefferson as "a mean-spirited low-lived fellow."

During the 1860 presidential campaign Lincoln was called a "horrid looking wretch... a cross between the nutmeg dealer, the horse swapper and the night man", a "slang wangling stump speaker," "a blood-thirsty tyrant," "a border ruffian," and "a vulgar mobocrat!"

Perhaps the worst thing a modern day presidential candidate before the 2016 presidential campaign ever said was JFK's "Do you realize the responsibility I carry? I'm the only person standing between Richard Nixon and The White House." Or was it Reagan's question to his opponent during a presidential debate "Where's the beef?"

President Washington, your country needs you once again and more so than ever. You told the country, "Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair." Let that be so!

Stephen Schoeman
 Westfield

HELLO, GEORGE.

HELLO, BARBARA.

IN MEMORY OF GEORGE H.W. BUSH
 41ST. PRESIDENT OF THE USA

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LD-21 includes Westfield, Mountainside, Garwood, Summit and Cranford.

LD-22 includes Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Plainfield, Clark, Rahway and Linden.