

**It sounded like a gunshot or firecrackers.** — Susan Holland of Toms River, describing a large sycamore tree that fell yesterday, killing a Bound Brook man at a Hunterdon County campground

# YOUR TOWNS

Your daily summary of news happening around New Jersey

For more, go to [nj.com/news](http://nj.com/news)

## TODAY

### 1 P.M.

New Jersey General Assembly holds voting session. Agenda includes state budget legislation, charter schools bills and a measure to ban "fracking," the hydraulic fracturing process used in natural gas drilling. Assembly Chamber, Statehouse, Trenton.

### 7 P.M.

Don Carter Quintet, R&B music; Essex County Free Orchestra. Irvington Park, Lyons Avenue and Grove Street, Irvington.

### 7 P.M.

Annual Newark Black Film Festival. Museum, 49 Washington St., Newark.

### 7:30 P.M.

Willie Nile Band. Parker Press Park, 400 Park Ave., Woodbridge.

## TOMORROW

### 5 P.M.

"Sounds of the City" Summer Music Festival, DJ Joey Mazza, Badia Farha, Ragan Whiteside, Spanglish FLY. New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Theater Square Plaza, 1 Center St., Newark.

## FRIDAY

### 9 P.M.

Film festival, short films by filmmakers from Hunterdon County, N.J., and Bucks County, Pa. Pocket Park, Bridge and Union streets, Lambertville.

## LODI

### Man convicted of 1972 killing of little brother

A judge convicted Joseph Barbarino yesterday of murdering his little brother 39 years ago, bringing an end to one of the coldest murder cases in Bergen County and capping a trial that unveiled a bitter feud within a deeply troubled family.

"It took 39 years for someone to believe my story," said Michael Barbarino, who said he saw Joseph Barbarino repeatedly stab 6-year-old Vincent.

"In the end, he is still my brother, but I will never back him up for what he did," he said after the verdict. Joseph Barbarino, 54, often smirked and shook his head as Superior Court Judge James Guida read the 37-page decision in a Bergen County courtroom.

Defense attorney Ray Beam did not return calls yesterday.

Guida's decision retraced the case to its beginning in April 1972, when Vincent's naked and bloodied body was found inside a truck at a construction site a block from his family's home in Lodi.

The killing was ruled a homicide, and although the then 15-year-old Joseph Barbarino was a suspect, the case remained cold until 1988. That was when Michael Barbarino first implicated Joseph in Vincent's murder.

Prosecutors arrested Joseph Barbarino in 2006. He faces up to 20 years when he is sentenced July 15.

— Kibret Markos/The Record

## SANDY HOOK/SOUTH AMBOY

### New Jersey lighthouses sell for \$90K each



Romer Shoal Light Station was one of four lighthouses up for purchase.

ROBERT SCIARRINO/THE STAR-LEDGER

Romer Shoal Light Station, north of Sandy Hook Bay, sold Thursday for \$90,000. Great Beds Lighthouse, one mile east of South Amboy in Raritan Bay, sold yesterday, also for \$90,000.

A bidder who registered as "jvscal" placed the winning bid for Romer Shoal.

Keith Kilgannon, 45, of Madison, had been eyeing the lighthouse since his childhood in Staten Island. He placed the

opening bid and the second-best bid on this lighthouse — \$85,000.

"It's a bit disappointing. I was so close," Kilgannon said. "But it was getting up there in price and I had already bumped my limit. Especially given what it is gonna take to restore it."

A bidder registered as "homeben@" placed the highest bid for Great Beds.

While the online auction is closed, the

sale will not be final until approved by the General Services Administration.

Three more New Jersey lighthouses are being offered at no cost to municipalities and nonprofit groups. They are Miah Maul Shoal, Brandywine Shoals and Ship John Shoal, all on the New Jersey side of the Delaware Bay.

— Alice Sperti

## NEW BRUNSWICK

### Law enforcement takes aim at increased gang activity

State law enforcement authorities are mounting a coordinated response to rising gang activity in cities and suburbs, New Jersey U.S. Attorney Paul Fishman said yesterday.

Gang violence in the state has become "more widespread, more violent and more sophisticated" in recent years, Fishman told about 400 law enforcement agents at the opening of a three-day conference at the Hyatt Regency. The increased gang activity comes amid severe budget woes that have forced places like Newark and Camden to reduce their police forces.

"Gangs aren't just confined to one bad area now," said Mary Lou Leary, U.S. principal deputy assistant attorney general in the Department of Justice. "They're spreading out. We didn't see that 10 years ago."

Fishman said his office and the Newark field office of the federal Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and Explosives are sponsoring the conference in response to a federal directive to lower gang-related violence. Fishman and other officials urged law enforcement agencies to reach new levels of cooperation and develop strategies to reduce recidivism and prevent kids from joining gangs.

— Abram Brown

## NEWARK

### Hoboken, Hispanic officers settle civil rights lawsuit

Five Hispanic Hoboken police officers who filed a discrimination and civil rights lawsuit against the city held a press conference yesterday to officially announce a \$2 million settlement in the case.

Filed in October 2007, the lawsuit accused a former lieutenant of being an "unabashed white supremacist" who donned a mock Ku Klux Klan hood and forced the officers to do manual labor at his home. The suit alleged that the top brass failed to address these issues.

"I am glad this is over with. We can put it behind us, finally," Sgt. Edwin Pantoja said yesterday. "What was going on before is not going on now ... It is definitely a different environment."

Joseph Ginarte, attorney for the officers, said the settlement will be divided equally among the plaintiffs.

"All of the parties agreed that no party was admitting liability," said Robert E. Levy, the attorney who represented the city.

— Charles Hack/Jersey Journal

## ELSEWHERE IN NEW JERSEY

Rosa Blake, 55, of Kearny, pleaded guilty in Newark yesterday to defrauding immigrants of hundreds of thousands of dollars by posing as a federal official who could help them become U.S. citizens. ... The Walton Family Foundation gave \$3.6 million to education reform in Newark last year, the bulk of it to charter schools, foundation officials said yesterday. The largest grant in Newark was \$1.75 million to the Newark Charter School Fund, followed by \$950,000 to the New Jersey Charter Public Schools Association. ... A Maplewood man riding a stolen motorcycle died after slamming into a guard rail while being pursued by police on Interstate 78 west in Bedminster yesterday, State Police said. David F. Coleman, 23, lost control of the Suzuki while navigating the ramp from I-78 west to Interstate 287 north in Bedminster shortly after 4 a.m. ... A 9-year-old Camden boy has been blinded after being shot in the face by a stray bullet as he walked to his grandmother's house Friday, his family said. ... Most of southern New Jersey's 16 oceanfront towns are reporting beach badge sales are up an average of more than 3 percent this summer season. The Press of Atlantic City found the biggest increases over last year were in Avalon at 9 percent, Beach Haven at 7 percent and Sea Isle City at 6 percent.

## BELMAR

### Police stake out liquor stores to fight underage drinking

Law enforcement will again seek to prevent underage drinking at the Jersey Shore this summer, Attorney General Paula Dow said in announcing a series of initiatives in Belmar yesterday.

Thirty Shore police departments will participate in the Cops in Shops program. Undercover police officers will be stationed inside and outside liquor stores to seize customers using fake IDs and arrest adults who purchase alcohol for minors.

Highway Traffic Safety acting Director Gary Poedubicky said nearly 3,000 of the 28,000 people arrested on drunken driving charges in New Jersey in 2009 were under 21 years old.

— Associated Press

## NEWARK

### Police seek driver in fatal hit-and-run

Authorities are searching for the motorist who struck and killed a Maplewood resident while he was changing his tire on the shoulder of Routes 1&9 late Sunday. Douglas Hodgson, 51, was struck by a 1998 white Acura CL on the southbound side of the highway near the Pulaski Skyway around 11:45 p.m., said Katherine Carter, spokeswoman for the Essex County Prosecutor's Office. He died at the scene.

Hodgson was returning from a business trip in New York City, according to Carter, and had stopped to change a flat tire when the accident occurred. Carter said the driver did not stop after the accident. — James Qually

## FRANKLIN

### Man appealing sentence receives harsher terms

A man convicted in the 2006 drive-by shooting death in Franklin of Terrell Spruill, 15, found out that appealing his case was a bad idea.

Michael Ramsey, 23, was resented Friday to life in prison, with no chance of parole for 63½ years, said Somerset County Prosecutor Geoffrey D. Soriano. When initially sentenced in May 2008, Ramsey received a life term with chance of parole after 30 years. The case was sent back to Superior Court Judge Edward Coleman in Somerville after an Appellate Court ruled in August the sentence didn't comply with the state's No Early Release Act.

— Ryan Hutchins

## WAYNE

### Police discover firearms, man arrested after standoff

A cache of loaded firearms was discovered in the Wayne home of a man who kept officers at bay for hours yesterday, leading authorities to believe he had prepared for a showdown.

Police seized at least five rifles and handguns from the home of Basil N. Stephanatos, a Passaic County Sheriff's Department spokesman said.

Stephanatos, 53, who has a history of not paying taxes, was arrested at 2:05 p.m., more than five hours after two sheriff's officers attempted to evict him. Stephanatos "leveled a shotgun" at an officer and barricaded himself inside the house, Wayne Police Chief John Reardon said. Neither Stephanatos nor police fired during the standoff.

Stephanatos came out of the house of his own accord, Reardon said.

Stephanatos was charged with unlawful use of a weapon, hindering apprehension and aggravated assault, a department spokesman said.

Reardon said Stephanatos was being evicted for failing to pay taxes to the Wayne Board of Education. According to public records, a federal tax lien for \$62,990 was filed against his house in March and a state tax lien for \$5,646 was filed in January.

Stephanatos sued the Wayne school board, claiming with no children in local schools, he should not have to pay school taxes. The suit was dismissed in 2008.

— Marlene Naanes and Matthew McGrath/The Record

## ELIZABETH



PATTI SAPONE/THE STAR-LEDGER

### SOLAR PANELS TO HELP POWER MALL

Officials cut a ribbon yesterday on the first solar panel that will be installed on the roof of the Jersey Gardens mall in Elizabeth. The project will cover the state's largest indoor shopping center with 15,000 solar panels, enough to produce 11 percent of the mall's energy needs. It's being billed as one of the largest single-rooftop solar panel systems in North America by Glimcher Realty Trust, the mall's owner, and Clean Focus Corp., the company that is installing the panels and will own the system.

400

Total acres of the Tenafly Nature Center, according to its website

139

Number of plant species found at the center

50

Number of bird species at the center

4

Minimum thickness, in inches, of ice necessary for skating on Pfister Pond