



**Cornwall Center for Metropolitan Studies  
E-Newsletter – May 13, 2003**

## **Announcements**

### ***Cornwall Center Celebrates Grand Opening – May 1, 2003***



(Pictured: Mark Murphy, Joseph C. Cornwall, and Steve Diner)

With over 90 people in attendance, the Cornwall Center celebrated the grand opening of its new headquarters on Bleeker Street. The celebration began in front of the new building. Steve Diner, Rutgers-Newark Provost, Mark Murphy, Executive Director of the Fund for New Jersey, and Joseph C. Cornwall, co-founder of the Fund for New Jersey and the Center's namesake, kicked off the event with the official ribbon cutting. Guests, including community leaders and Rutgers-Newark faculty and staff, reassembled in the Ackerson Hall Lounge for a reception and speeches. Provost Steve Diner, Professor Marc Holzer, Professor Kimberly DaCosta Holton, Yanique Taylor (a Rutgers-Newark undergraduate student), Mark Murphy, Dr. John W. Cornwall, and Professor Clement Price spoke about the importance of the Center and its role in the Rutgers-Newark and Greater Newark communities. Tours of the new building were given after the program.

### ***Urban Research Inventory Released by the Cornwall Center***

On May 1<sup>st</sup> the Cornwall Center released its "Urban Research Inventory." The inventory provides an accounting of research on cities and metropolitan issues and outreach programs on the Rutgers-Newark Campus. It encompasses disciplines as diverse as the arts, the social and natural sciences, business, nursing, law and criminal justice. To collect this information, the Center reached out to urban researchers and coordinators on the Rutgers-Newark campus. The inventory provides contact information, funding sources, and brief project descriptions and is a resource for scholars, people involved with public policy issues, and the community. An electronic version of the inventory is

available on the Center's website: [www.cornwall.rutgers.edu/Inventory.htm](http://www.cornwall.rutgers.edu/Inventory.htm). For a printed copy, please contact Katherine Accousti at [accousti@andromeda.rutgers.edu](mailto:accousti@andromeda.rutgers.edu).

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## News

### Local News

**Study: Newark ranks high for pedestrian fatalities.** A recent study conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) found that Newark had the fourth highest pedestrian fatality rate (5.24 per 100,000) in the nation. The three highest ranked cities were all in Florida, Fort Lauderdale, Miami and Tampa. Approximately 64% of all pedestrian deaths occur in urban communities; roughly 20% of pedestrian fatalities occur in hit and run incidents; seniors and children have higher fatality rates than other groups—more than 20% of the pedestrians killed were children ages 5 to 9.

Since 1979 the overall number of pedestrian fatal accidents has fallen by over 30%, however in New Jersey the number rose 37% from 2000 to 2001. Newark recently received a grant from the Division of Highway and Traffic Safety to “improve visibility of signs and crosswalks in troubled areas.” The Newark Police Department is also implementing strategies to improve pedestrian safety.

**Related article:** “Beware Newark's mean streets: Study ranks the city ranks 4th in nation for fatalities to pedestrians,” *Star Ledger*, Wednesday, April 23, 2003.  
<http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/essex/index.ssf?/base/news-3/105107967731280.xml>

**New Jersey Institute for Technology welcomes new leader.** On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2002, Dr. Robert Altenkirch was inaugurated the 7<sup>th</sup> president in NJIT's 120-plus year history. In his inauguration speech, Altenkirch cited “change” as the underlying theme for the school: this spring the school closed its South Jersey campus because of state budget cuts; NJIT also awaits the outcome of a report that recommends merger with Rutgers and UMDNJ into one statewide system. Altenkirch does not perceive this as a negative event, but as a time to deal with adversity. “It is the optimistic, can-do attitude of NJIT that will allow us to address those challenges.”

**Related article:** “Change is in the air as NJIT welcomes its new president,” *Star Ledger*, Saturday, May 03, 2003.  
<http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/jersey/index.ssf?/base/news-3/1051943549105950.xml>

**Property tax appeals begin in Newark.** The Essex County Board of Taxation will allow some property tax appeal hearings to be held in Newark rather than in the board's East Orange headquarters and the assessor will hire additional Spanish speaking staff to facilitate the process. These concessions are a response to the more than 6,000 property tax appeals filed by the cutoff date last month. About two thirds of the county's appeals were filed by Newark residents following the city's first property tax revaluation in more than 40 years and it became clear that the tax burden has shifted largely to residential owners. Property values estimated at about \$780 million dollars soared to \$10.6 billion

under the new assessment. The East Ward and North Wards experienced the highest rates of increase.

Newark Mayor Sharpe James testifying before the board alleged improprieties with the assessment process, saying that some inspections were conducted as “drive bys” and that the assessor failed to provide inspectors who were proficient in Spanish. James vowed to offset the increases with public funds and a lowered local tax rate. Still, given the Mayor’s proposed tax rate—\$2.19 per \$100 assessed value—the average homeowner can expect to pay more than a \$1,000 in additional property tax in the coming year.

**Related articles:** “Mayor says revaluation is off base: James testifies before board of taxation,” Star Ledger, Monday, May 05, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/essex/index.ssf?/base/news-3/1052135541216910.xml>

“Newark's new budget drives tax adjustments: Proposal, revaluation shift burden to residential property owners,” Star Ledger, Friday, May 09, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/essex/index.ssf?/base/news-3/1052462409124961.xml>

***Newark arena talks forge ahead with new voices and old challenges.*** Negotiators are settling in for a new round of talks on whether to site a downtown sports arena in Newark. At the same time, recent opinion polls suggest that public support for the project is waning. Reportedly 61% percent of the respondents said the move (from the Meadowlands Arena) is a “bad idea.” According to the poll White respondents were less likely to approve of the project than African Americans (65% vs. 43% respectively). The poll was conducted by Fairleigh Dickinson University’s PublicMind poll.

Despite additional incentives the City recently offered to close the deal the financially strapped YankeeNets organization continues to seek out options that will lower its cash outlay for the new construction.

**Related articles:** “It's do or die again for a Newark arena: Money is key issue facing James team as governor wants fate of project brought to closure,” Star Ledger, Tuesday, May 06, 2003

<http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/jersey/index.ssf?/base/news-3/1052201944216130.xml>

“Poll: Newark arena has little support,” Star Ledger, Tuesday, April 29, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/jersey/index.ssf?/base/news-3/105159801191340.xml>

***It's official: Bolden reappointment affirmed by local and state boards.*** The saga of the Newark School board superintendent ended last week as the state Board of Education reappointed Marion Bolden to lead the district. The superintendent’s appointment is believed to be an important first step in returning the Newark Public Schools to local control.

**Related articles:** “Contentious chapter in Newark schools ends: State reappoints Bolden as superintendent and looks to hand back control of district.” Star Ledger, Thursday, May 08, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/jersey/index.ssf?/base/news-0/1052376123151360.xml>

“A popular board vote in Newark: Superintendent wins support of a reconstituted school panel,” Star Ledger, Wednesday, April 30, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/jersey/index.ssf?/base/news-3/1051683351298350.xml>

New Jersey Board of Education (NJBOE) press release:

<http://www.nj.gov/njded/news/0507bol.htm>

***Newark schools meet standards for second year.*** Two Newark schools, McKinley Elementary School, and Roseville Avenue Elementary School, were among nine removed from the state’s “Needs Improvement List”. Two others, Mount Vernon Elementary School and Thirteenth Street Elementary School were among thirty-six schools in the state that met adequate yearly progress (AYP) standards this year. If this progress is maintained the schools will be removed from the “Needs Improvement List” next year. A list of schools status for 259 schools can be viewed at: [2002 State Assessment Data Analysis for Schools In Need of Improvement](#). A press release is available at:

<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/news/0501ayp.htm>

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## **Other Education News**

***NJ education plan approved by feds.*** The U.S. Department of Education has approved New Jersey’s accountability plan submitted under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. A copy of the plan can be viewed at: [State’s NCLB Accountability Plan](#). The Department’s press release is available at: <http://www.nj.gov/njded/news/0508nclb.htm>

***Essex seeks relief for training costs.*** “County to sue state for vo-tech funding: Action seeks to boost aid to instruct students from needy school districts,” Star Ledger, Friday, May 02, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/essex/index.ssf?/base/news-3/1051857683181440.xml>

***High cost jeopardizes Jersey’s pioneering special needs education policies.*** “Budget crunch puts special education under scrutiny: Report finds too many pupils sent out of district at too high a cost.” Star Ledger, Sunday, May 04, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/jersey/index.ssf?/base/news-3/1052030304245670.xml>

***Governor adds technology to list of minimum standards.*** “Technology education becomes requirement,” Star Ledger, Tuesday, May 06, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/jersey/index.ssf?/base/news-0/1052202748242540.xml>

**State bolsters training options to retain professionals turned educators.** “Alternate route for teachers smoothed: State looks to boost support, preparation.” Star Ledger, Thursday, May 08, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/jersey/index.ssf?/base/news-0/1052376118151360.xml>

or view the press release available at: <http://www.nj.gov/njded/news/0507arp.htm>

**High School Proficiency Assessment scores released.** “State scores offer few surprises: High school students still weaker in math, even in the wealthier districts.” Star Ledger, Friday, May 02, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/jersey/index.ssf?/base/news-3/1051857939181440.xml>

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## State News

**Child protection agency needs sweeping reforms.** The newly appointed head of the former Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) says the agency is in even worse shape than anticipated. Colleen Maguire calls the condition of the agency “appalling” and will press for system wide reforms that include repealing civil service laws that prohibit the agency from hiring, firing, and promoting qualified personnel on merit. Maguire expects to issue yearly “report cards” to grade the performance of the managers of 37 local offices across the state. The proposed reforms will require legislative action and are likely to face opposition from labor unions.

In the short term Maguire will appoint a new DYFS director, reinstate a quality protection unit, and consult with experts to develop a management training curriculum. The reorganization will result in a streamlined Division of Child Protection and Permanency that will focus only on child abuse investigation, foster care, and adoption.

“The change DYFS needs,” Star Ledger, Sunday, May 11, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/search/index.ssf?/base/news-1/1052634001110700.xml?starledger?oed>

“New boss finds DYFS 'appalling': Overhaul of child welfare agency to include civil service challenge,” Star Ledger, Thursday, May 08, 2003

<http://www.nj.com/search/index.ssf?/base/news-1/1052376234151360.xml?starledger?ntr>

**State program extends five-year welfare limit for special cases.** The state Department of Human Services has devised a plan to protect families and individuals who remain unemployed after the five-year welfare limit is reached. The program provides intensive case management to assist families and adults who have complied with the Welfare-to-Work requirements but face other complex barriers to employment such as mental and physical health, addiction, low literacy skills, and learning disabilities. Other extenuating circumstances include those who have lost employment through no fault of their own or those who don't make enough money to live without support. The new program will extend eligibility for services for up to two years.

**Related article:** “Program seeks to extend five-year limit on welfare benefits,” Star Ledger, Saturday, May 03, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/jersey/index.ssf?/base/news-3/1051943544105950.xml>

***Economic forecasts show improvement; budget battles continue to loom.*** Although the state continues to show modest economic growth in recent months the state’s budget shortfall continues to draw attention and protest from groups hit by proposed cuts.

**Related articles:**

***Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia tracks moderate steady path of growth in New Jersey economy.*** “State's economy growing,” Bergen Record, Thursday, April 24, 2003.

<http://www.bergen.com/page.php?qstr=eXJpcnk3ZjczN2Y3dnFIZUVFeXkyOSZmZ2JlbDdmN3ZxZWVFRXl5NjM3MDA0MSZ5cmlyeTdmNzE3Zjd2cWVIRUV5eTI=>

***Private sector job gains in March promising for state’s economy says NJ Department of Labor.*** “State reports strong job gains,” Bergen Record, Wednesday, April 16, 2003.

<http://www.bergen.com/page.php?qstr=eXJpcnk3ZjczN2Y3dnFIZUVFeXkyOSZmZ2JlbDdmN3ZxZWVFRXl5NjM2NjgyOSZ5cmlyeTdmNzE3Zjd2cWVIRUV5eTI=>

***Rescue workers decry proposed loss of training funds.*** “Rescuers protesting transfer of training funds: Administration sees need to pay for homeland and bioterrorism security,” Star Ledger,

Friday, April 25, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/essex/index.ssf?/base/news-3/105125250910870.xml>

***New Jersey State Council on the Arts challenges budget cuts.*** “Arts council rallies cultural groups to fight funding cut: Chairwoman sees looming 'catastrophe'; legislators sympathetic,” Star Ledger, Thursday, April 24, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/statehouse/ledger/index.ssf?/base/news-1/1051165050315630.xml>

***Possible higher-income tax hike supported by some.*** “Supporters of tax hike for rich get boost: Some higher-income Jerseyans speak out in favor of idea to address budget shortfall,” Star Ledger, Thursday, April 24, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/statehouse/ledger/index.ssf?/base/news-1/1051165045315630.xml>

**Follow these links for updates on stories recently covered by the *Cornwall MetroNews*:**

***Land use/Sprawl.***

“Water regulation to face legal battle: Builders' challenge expected,” Star Ledger, Sunday, April 27, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/jersey/index.ssf?/base/news-3/1051424696108890.xml>

“Legislators put together caucus to fight sprawl: Bipartisan group calls for 'smart growth' as debate on McGreevey plan heats up.” Star Ledger, Thursday, May 01, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/search/index.ssf?/base/news-3/1051771047268420.xml?starledger?nnj>

“Sprawl linked to increase in American girths: Health officials, urban planners say building patterns lead to less exercise,” Star Ledger, Monday, May 05, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/search/index.ssf?/base/news-8/1052134288207000.xml?starledger?ntop>

***State property tax reform.***

“Inching ahead on tax reform,” Star Ledger, Monday, May 12, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/search/index.ssf?/base/news-1/1052720632168280.xml?starledger?oed>

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**National News**

***Proposed tax cut pared down.*** The House Ways and Means Committee recently approved a smaller tax cut than that originally proposed by President Bush. The smaller tax cut is expected to fair more favorably among the closely divided Senate.

**Related article:** “House panel advances \$550 billion tax cut plan,” Star Ledger, Wednesday, May 07, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/index.ssf?/base/news-8/1052289142138660.xml>

***New Jersey Senators introduce new gun arguments in Republican-controlled congress.***

New Jersey Senators Lautenberg and Corzine, both democrats, cast the fight against guns in terms of homeland security, arguing the need for better background checks and longer waiting periods. Terrorist handbooks refer to the relative ease of obtaining weapons in the U.S. The bill is offered in counterpart to legislation supported by the National Rifle Association. A coalition of states, counties, cities, and individuals hit by gun violence have filed suit against gun manufacturers and distributors alleging their practices facilitate illegal gun use. The House has shown its support for an NRA-backed bill to ban such suits, thus protecting the gun industry. The Senate is considering the house bill.

**Related article:** “N.J. senators seek gun restrictions: Tied to homeland security, measure would extend background checks.” Star Ledger, Thursday, May 01, 2003.

<http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/index.ssf?/base/news-8/1051770868268420.xml>

***Children’s Defense Fund report finds black children in jeopardy.*** A recent study indicates a sharp increase in the numbers of black children living in “extreme” poverty—from 622,000 in 1999 to more than 932,000 in 2001—a fifty percent increase in just two years, and the highest since 1997.

A recent Kid’s Count report (published by the Association for Children Of New Jersey) demonstrated related concerns for Newark children. To obtain a copy of the ACNJ’s “2002-2003 Newark Kid’s Count” visit the website (PDF) at:

<http://www.acnj.org/admin.asp?uri=2081&action=15&di=228&ext=pdf&view=yes>. Visit the Children's Defense Fund website at: <http://www.childrensdefense.org/> for a copy of it's report or additional information.

**Related article:** "Number of black kids in extreme poverty rises," Star Ledger, Thursday, May 01, 2003. <http://www.nj.com/news/ledger/index.ssf?/base/news-8/1051770921268420.xml>

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## Upcoming Events

### *Ethics Colloquium Series*

The Cornwall Center for Metropolitan Studies and the Prudential Business Ethics Center, in association with the Northern New Jersey Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration, will host the second in a series of colloquia exploring the ethical responsibilities of community stakeholders in urban development. "*Ethics and Urban Development: The Role of Non-Profit Organizations*" will be held in Room 257 of the Robeson Campus Center **on the Rutgers-Newark Campus on Thursday, May 15th from 8:30 am to 10:00 am**. The colloquium will feature presentations and discussion among representatives from local non-profit organizations. The panel is expected to include:

- Dorothy Knauer, Deputy Executive Director, Community Agencies Corporation of New Jersey
- Alex Plinio, President, AFS-USA, Inc.
- Karen Olson, President, Family Promise
- Maria Vizcarrondo-DeSoto, President and CEO, United Way of Essex and West Hudson
- Ken Zimmerman, Executive Director, New Jersey Institute for Social Justice

Breakfast will be served. To RSVP please contact Irene Welch by phone at 973-353-1750 ext. 221 or by email at [irenew@andromeda.rutgers.edu](mailto:irenew@andromeda.rutgers.edu).

### *UMDNJ Hosts the Newark Health Renaissance Conference*

The New Jersey Medical School will host the Newark Health Renaissance (NHR) Conference on Friday, May 16, 2003. Co-sponsored by the City of Newark Department of Health and Human Services, UMDNJ Institute for the Elimination of Health Disparities, University Hospital, the Newark Department of Health and Human Services and other partners, this conference will advance the cause of healthy living and better healthcare for Newark's people. This free program will focus on closing racial and ethnic gaps in public health status, preventive healthcare, diversity in medical research, and improving access to healthcare. The NHR Conference features workshops, public forums, and panel discussions on: *Achieving Consistent Age-Appropriate Immunization; Nutrition, Obesity and Chronic Illness: Heart Disease, Cancer, Stroke, Hypertension and Diabetes;*

*Asthma Management; Lead Poisoning Prevention; Dental Care and Oral Health; Violence Prevention; Research Participation & Clinical Trials in Health Care; Glaucoma and Eye Care; Bio-terrorism: Is Newark Ready? (Town Meeting); Culturally Competent Care & Health Care Access; HIV and Hepatitis C Prevention.*

This conference marks the start of the Newark Health Initiative, which continues with:

- The Healthy City in Action Expo at JFK Recreation Center on Saturday, May 17th, which will feature large-group dancing and other fitness activities promoting health through exercise, nutrition and other factors; and
- The Healthy Sabbath on Sunday, May 18th, involving congregations throughout the city in promoting the mental and physical benefits available through spiritual wisdom.

For more information, visit the Department of Urban and Community Development Website at [www.umdnj.edu/comreweb/comm\\_part/index.htm](http://www.umdnj.edu/comreweb/comm_part/index.htm). Please RSVP by calling ext. 2-7289 or e-mailing [urbandev@umdnj.edu](mailto:urbandev@umdnj.edu) (be sure to leave your name, phone number and the organization you represent).

**MetroPeople:**     **Julia Atkinson**  
                          **Dr. William H. Brown Academy**

Ms. Atkinson is a 7<sup>th</sup> grade literature teacher at Dr. William H. Brown Academy in Newark’s central ward. She is a 5-year veteran of urban education and in this interview describes some of the rewards of working in the Newark school system.

**Cornwall:** How many kids do you serve?

**Ms. Atkinson:** I serve 85 seventh grade students.

**Cornwall:** I think we are all familiar with the kinds of scores that emerge from Newark as it relates to standardized exams. What do you think is the most difficult part related to Newark students achieving academic success?

**Ms. Atkinson:** There are several reasons. Sometimes it’s hard to describe, but I’ll try. The family is a factor. Students that have the most educational difficulties come from families that also lack educational achievement. In other words, these students are placed into environments that even if the parents wanted to help them, they can’t. There are also a lot of outside influences, including the kind of music they listen to as well as peer pressures.

**Cornwall:** How do you overcome some of these obstacles?

**Ms. Atkinson:** I wouldn’t say that we overcome these obstacles; it’s more like we try to work within them. You have to be very creative in the classroom. You have to take life experiences and turn them into a starting point for lessons.

**Cornwall:** And do you find that you can motivate the students through these methods?

**Ms. Atkinson:** Some students, yes; others we have to work a little bit harder. And yes, there are days when, sadly, I can say that I don’t accomplish very much. It is a very difficult job – being a teacher in Newark. And being a “teacher” goes far beyond just planning lessons. I wish that was

all I did. But, there's no State exam that measures the amount of time and effort I put into my teaching.

**Cornwall:** What do you like most about working in Newark?

**Ms. Atkinson:** I think Newark has a lot of resources to offer in education. I think with the universities in the area and its library system, that students do have opportunities to expand their knowledge.

**Cornwall:** What do you like least?

**Ms. Atkinson:** I think we have a lack of cohesiveness. For example, we don't really get to meet the parents. There's no parent night. Report cards are distributed every cycle and our only record that the parent actually sees it - is through the signature. Once in a while, we will have to call home when there is a problem.

**Cornwall:** Where do you see yourself going in the next year?

**Ms. Atkinson:** Again, I'm going to continue teaching. Despite some problems, working in Newark is rewarding. These kids can and do learn. My kids are learning.

The Cornwall Center for Metropolitan Studies circulates the **Cornwall MetroNews** e-newsletter to publicize urban-related topics, news, and events on the Rutgers-Newark Campus.

If you would like to add an item or add / remove a name from our distribution list, please contact Katherine Accousti at [accousti@andromeda.rutgers.edu](mailto:accousti@andromeda.rutgers.edu) or 973-353-1750 ext. 224.

*The following individuals contributed to this edition of the **Cornwall MetroNews**:* Donita Devance-Manzini, Katherine Accousti, LaMont Rouse, and Irene Welch.

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