

LOCAL

Trials, fires and a threatened lawsuit were among the top stories in 2023 in Cortland.



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SPORTS

Homer boys basketball beat Cortland Friday to win the Tom Neugebauer Holiday Tournament.



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2023 daily No. 280 SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2023 CORTLAND, N.Y.

Sheriff's Office is seeking details in fatal Solon car crash

By KEVIN T. CONLON
City Editor
kconlon@cortlandstandard.com
Police are asking for the public's help to identify the person who died in a one-vehicle crash Wednesday in Solon and to figure out what that person and the other occupant were doing in the hours leading up to the accident, the Cortland County Sheriff's Office announced Friday. Police on Friday also an-

nounced that Isaac D. Faircloth, 21, of Church Street in Cortland, was the survivor, and he has been charged with second-degree criminal contempt, a misdemeanor, for violating an order of protection in the city of Cortland. He was also charged with fourth-degree grand larceny, a felony, and second-degree obstructing governmental administration, a misdemeanor. Police initially withheld the

identities of the occupants as their families were contacted and on Friday released Faircloth's name. He was arraigned through Central Arraignment and sent to Cortland County Jail, pending payment of \$500 cash bail or \$1,000 bond. He is scheduled to appear Jan. 3 in Cortland City Court on the criminal contempt charge and Jan. 10 in Solon Town Court on the obstruction

and grand larceny charges. Faircloth was taken by TLC Emergency Medical Services ambulance to Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse for treatment of injuries after the accident and later released. A 2015 Nissan Sentra was northbound on Stillwell Road in Solon when the driver lost control and the car left the road and hit a tree at 3:53 a.m., according to a news release issued

Friday afternoon by the Sheriff's Office. Police said Faircloth obstructed the investigation at the crash site and they are trying to determine whether he or the other person was driving at the time. "We are asking for the Public's Assistance for any information regarding the whereabouts of Isaac Faircloth and the unidentified occupant of the vehicle in the early morning hours

of December 27, 2023 from approximately 1:00 AM to 3:53 AM," according to a Sheriff's Office news release issued Friday. "They are also believed to have been in the area of the City of Cortland, Town of Cortlandville, Village of McGraw and Town of Solon during this time period. We are looking for any information or video footage

See POLICE, page 6

NY sees largest population loss in US during '23

By ASHLEY HUPFEL
The Daily Gazette,
Schenectady (TNS)
ALBANY — New York State once again had the highest population loss in the nation last year, according to census data. A report released last week by the U.S. Census Bureau found 101,984 residents, or 0.52%, left New York between July 1, 2022 and July 1, 2023. It was one of only eight states that lost population. New York and Pennsylvania were the only states in the Northeast to lose population, but the declines were considerably reduced from the previous year. California had the second-highest population loss, with 75,423 residents leaving the state. "U.S. migration returning to pre-pandemic levels and a drop in deaths are driving the nation's growth," Kristie

Wilder, a demographer in the Population Division at the Census Bureau, said in a statement. "Although births declined, this was tempered by the near 9% decrease in deaths. Ultimately, fewer deaths paired with rebounding immigration resulted in the nation experiencing its largest population gain since 2018." An additional report released by the comptroller's office earlier this month examined the state's in- and out-migration by tracking the number of personal income filings. It found, during 2020 and 2021, more than a half million New York personal income taxpayers (PIT) moved into and out of the state. In 2020, out-migration skyrocketed largely due to people leaving New York City during

See NY, page 6



Margaret Mellott/Staff Reporter

As Cortland County prepares for incoming developments like iSpice, Micron and potential support for technology hubs to the north and south, it might see an increase in traffic. When a semiconductor manufacturing plant was built in Saratoga County — much like the Micron development just north of Cortland — Waterford saw an increase in traffic, said Waterford Town Supervisor Jack Lawler.

'Start planning sooner than later'

Incoming developments could change Cortland County's economic landscape

By MARGARET MELLOTT
Staff Reporter
mmellott@cortlandstandard.com
Cortland could see increased traffic. It could see an influx of workers, students and families. It might even see new industries — but first, it needs to plan. Between newcomers — like iSpice and Micron Technology — and the federal technology hubs of chip manufacturing to the north, along the state Thruway, and batteries to the south, centered around Binghamton, Cortland County is centrally located. What could this mean? While it's likely decades before Cortland will see some of the major growth those industries will bring, it's important to start planning and thinking

now, officials said. "Start planning sooner than later," said Waterford Town Supervisor Jack Lawler, who saw the town through a semiconductor manufacturing development. "It's never too early to start planning and, and really get organized so that people, organizations whose resources will be needed down the road are involved as soon as possible." Brendan O'Bryan, executive director of the Cortland County Business Development Corp. and Industrial Development Agency, said it'll probably be 20 to 30 years until Cortland sees some of the changes brought by the incoming developments. "To keep it very optimistic, I

would want to think that we're going to see a lot of housing built in the area to support both developments to the south, as well as to the north," O'Bryan said. CORTLAND POTENTIAL President Joe Biden announced the federal technology hub list in October, which included the semiconductor manufacturing tech hub of the Buffalo-Rochester-Syracuse corridor and the battery tech hub of the Southern Tier, centered around Binghamton. "We could see an influx of population to support the employment needs that we're seeing from supply chain

See COUNTY, page 6

What stores are open on NYE?

By W. GRANTHAM-PHILIPS
AP Business Writer
It's just about time to celebrate New Year's Eve and say goodbye to 2023. Preparing for a midnight toast and more year-end festivities may require a run or two to the store — but it's wise to expect some limited business hours. While a handful of major chains operate normally on the final day of the year, many others close up shop early. Much of this depends on location and each company's policy — so when in doubt, call ahead or check online for more specific schedules near you. Here's a rundown of New Year's Eve hours for stores across the U.S. this year.

**WALMART
NEW YEAR'S EVE HOURS**
Walmart is open with regular operating hours on New Year's Eve.

**TARGET
NEW YEAR'S EVE HOURS**
Most Target stores will close at 9 p.m. on New Year's Eve.

**COSTCO
NEW YEAR'S EVE HOURS**
Costco's warehouses will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on New Year's Eve, although hours may vary between locations.

**CVS
NEW YEAR'S EVE HOURS**
Many CVS Pharmacy locations will operate with normal hours on New Year's Eve, but some non-24 locations may be closed or have reduced hours. Customers are encouraged to call ahead or double check local hours online.

**WALGREENS
NEW YEAR'S EVE HOURS**
Walgreens stores will be open with regular hours on New Year's Eve, but pharmacy hours can vary by location. You can check ahead online.

**HOW ARE OTHER STORES
OPERATING ON NYE?**
Here's a rundown of how some other grocery, convenience and retail

See STORES, page 6



AP Photo/Ted Shaffrey

A statue of Mercury, the Roman god of commerce, seen atop the Aqueduct Building in Rochester, on Nov. 28, 2021.

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WEATHER



Mostly cloudy
Tomorrow's Weather:
High near 35
West wind 6 to 8 mph
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ONLINE



www.cortlandstandard.com

MAKING IT RIGHT

The Cortland Standard will print corrections and clarifications of news articles. If you find mistakes or omissions, call the managing editor at 607-756-5665, ext. 166 or email news@cortlandstandard.com.



Weather

Local

Rest of today: A slight chance of snow showers between 8 p.m. and 1 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 26. West wind 8 to 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 20%.

Sunday: Mostly cloudy, with a high near 35. West wind 6 to 8 mph.

Sunday night: Snow showers likely, mainly before 1 a.m. Cloudy, with a low around 27. Chance of precipitation is 60%.

New Year's Day: Mostly cloudy, with a high near 32.

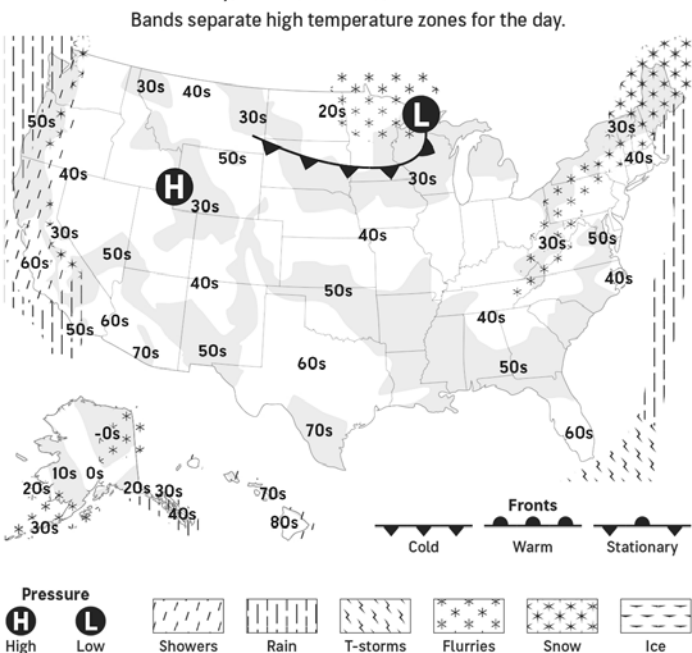
Skies Today

Saturday, December 30, 2023	
Sunset today	4:39 p.m.
Sunrise tomorrow	7:35 a.m.
Normal high temperature	31
Normal low temperature	17
Average temperature	24
Last quarter moon	Jan. 3

Forecast for Saturday, December 30, 2023



Forecast for Saturday, December 30, 2023



NATIONAL SUMMARY: A storm will tend to weaken over time today, with rain in California and snow in the Sierra Nevada losing intensity as showers reach central Washington and Oregon. In the East, snow will cross areas from interior New England to the central Appalachians, with rain in southern New England and snow for the northern Plains.

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Extended

Monday night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 23.

Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 37.

Tuesday night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 26.

Wednesday: Mostly cloudy, with a high near 39.

Wednesday night: A chance of snow showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 29. Chance of precipitation is 40%.

Thursday: Snow showers likely. Cloudy, with a high near 35.

City Snowfall

Dec. 28-29	None
Season to date	3.0 inches

Precipitation

Dec. 28-29	0.32 inches
Month to date	4.61 inches

Ex-Trump lawyer Cohen says he sent AI-generated fake cases to his attorney

By **LARRY NEUMEISTER**
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Michael Cohen, Donald Trump's onetime personal lawyer and fixer, says he unwittingly passed along to his attorney bogus artificial intelligence-generated legal case citations he got online before they were submitted to a judge.

Cohen made the admission in a court filing unsealed Friday in Manhattan federal court after a judge earlier this month asked a lawyer to explain how court rulings that do not exist were cited in a motion submitted on Cohen's behalf. Judge Jesse Furman had also asked what role, if any, Cohen played in drafting the motion.

The AI-generated cases were cited as part of written arguments attorney David M. Schwartz made to try to bring an early end to Cohen's court supervision after he served more than a year



AP Photo/Yuki Iwamura, File

Michael Cohen arrives at New York Supreme Court for former President Donald Trump's civil business fraud trial, Oct. 25, in New York.

behind bars. Cohen had pleaded guilty in 2018 to tax evasion, campaign finance charges and lying to Congress, saying Trump

directed him to arrange the payment of hush money to a porn actor and to a former Playboy model to fend off damage to his

2016 presidential bid.

Cohen, who was disbarred five years ago, said in a declaration submitted to the judge on Thursday that he found the citations by doing research through Google Bard and was unaware that the service could generate nonexistent cases. He said he uses the internet for research because he no longer has access to formal legal research sources.

"As a non-lawyer, I have not kept up with emerging trend (and related risks) in legal technology and did not realize that Google Bard was a generative text service that, like Chat-GPT, could show citations and descriptions that looked real but actually were not," Cohen said. "Instead, I understood it to be a supercharged search engine and had repeatedly used it in other contexts to (successfully) find accurate information online."

NYC mayor to dismantle 'disruptive' task force

By **CHRIS SOMMERFELDT**
New York Daily News
(TNS)

NEW YORK — Mayor Eric Adams, an avowed booster of New York City's nightlife scene, is dismantling a decades-old, multiagency enforcement task force that has long been accused of using heavy-handed tactics during inspections at bars and

venues across the Big Apple.

The so-called MARCH task force, which has comprised the NYPD, the Department of Buildings, the FDNY, the State Liquor Authority and other agencies, will be replaced by a new initiative called CURE — Coordinating a United Resolution with Establishments — that's going to focus on

"compliance and education, not overenforcement," Adams said Thursday.

"This is an era of no more demonizing successful businesses, but promoting, lifting them up," Adams said during a press conference at the Paragon nightclub in Bushwick, Brooklyn. "We want to continue to be the city that never sleeps."

The NYPD-led MARCH initiative, which was launched by Mayor Rudy Giuliani in the 1990s, has drawn the ire of nightlife establishment owners for decades over its SWAT team-like surprise raids during peak business hours in response to noise complaints, health code violations and other community grievances.

Obituaries

Albert (Al) A. Nitti

Albert (Al) A. Nitti, 93, of Cortland, passed away peacefully surrounded by his family on December 27th, at Guthrie Cortland Medical Center in Cortland. He was born in Utica NY to Albert L. Nitti and Beatrice (Mazza) Nitti. He attended Cortland JR/SR High School and served as a S/SGT with the 18th Fighter Bomber Wing in the United States Air Force in the Korean War conflict. He retired from SUNY Cortland where he worked as a Supervising Janitor. Prior to that, he worked at Cobakco Bread Bakery, and Monarch Machine & Tool. He was a huge NY Yankees and SF 49ers fan, and enjoyed bowling, hunting and fishing. One of his greatest joys was the time he spent with his beloved wife Dorothy, traveling to Daytona Beach FL, as well as to many different casinos; and we cannot forget, sitting on their front porch together as the horns were always blowing, followed by waves to friends, neighbors and family that loved them — then came the stories. He loved spending time with his children and grandchildren, getting updated on what was going on, attending sporting events when he could, and watching game shows together. No matter what he was doing when with his family, he beamed with pride and the conversations were full of sound advice, quick wit, and love.

He is survived by his son Thomas (Mary Kay) Nitti, son Steven, daughter Michelle (Randy) Congdon and son Mark (Juanita Bush) Nitti; grandchildren Katelyn (Mac) Desmond, Anthony Nitti, Caden Congdon and Cameron Nitti; sister Elizabeth Demers; brother Gregory (Liz) Nitti, several nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his parents Albert and Beatrice (Mazza) Nitti; and sisters Rosemary Curtis and Florence Parsons. Services will be at Wright Beard Funeral Home, and will be private. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

To offer online condolences, please visit www.wright-beard.com.



Irving L. Fuller

Irving L. Fuller, 94, of Groton, passed away peacefully at home on December 20, 2023.

He was born on February 27, 1929 in Groton, a son of the late Harold V M and Nellie (English) Fuller. A lifelong area resident, Mr. Fuller was a graduate of the McLean High School and served from 1948-1952 as a control tower operator in the US Navy. He was a design draftsman, working first for GE in Schenectady, and then for many years locally with IthaCo. He was a past member of the Groton Congregational Church and the McLean Community Church. He was an avid hunter, fisherman, competitive ping pong player and member of barbershop quartets in earlier years.

He is survived by his wife of 70 years, Janet (Ramos) Fuller; sons, Steven Fuller (Priscilla), of CA and Harold "Hal" Fuller (Kitty), of Groton; daughters, Kathy Grier (Bill), of MO and Karen Buckley (Charles), of NJ; six grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his sister, Martha Clay Hemingway.

Services will be held at a later time and will be announced by the Shurtleff Funeral Home, Groton. Spring interment will be in Groton Rural Cemetery. Memorial contributions are graciously directed to Carrington-Fuller Post 800 American Legion, 307 Main St., Groton, NY 13073.

Daniel 'Bone' Hammond

Daniel "Bone" Hammond, 53, of Homer NY, passed away with family by his side December 29, 2023 at University Hospital, Syracuse NY, after a long and courageous battle with cancer.

Bone was a lifetime resident of the area, graduating from Homer High School in 1988. He was proprietor of DJ Hammond Construction Co. for many years. His family and friends will remember his generosity of donating his time and talents for whatever was needed such as household improvements or with the Homer American Legion. When he wasn't helping others or working, he could be found on the golf course, one of his greatest joys. He also enjoyed watching golf, football, and NASCAR. But again his true joy was being with family and friends and lending a helping hand to whoever needed him.

He is survived by his wife of thirty one years Tamara Hammond, his daughter Jordan Hammond, his father John Hammond, his siblings Tammy (Brian) Weegan, John Hammond, Amy (Matt) Strauf, and Brian Hammond, his sister in law Tina (Adam) Brickey, many nieces and nephews. Bone was predeceased by his mother Sylvia J. Hammond.

Calling hours will be held Friday January 5, 3-6 p.m. at the Wright-Beard Funeral home inc., 9 Lincoln Ave., Cortland NY, 13045.

A celebration of Bone's Life will be held Saturday January 6, 12-4 p.m. at the Homer American Legion, Main St., Homer NY. Contributions may be made to the Country Acres Pet Services, 5852 W Scott Rd., Homer NY, 13077.



Lottery Winners

ALBANY (AP) — Here are the winning numbers selected Friday in the New York State Lottery:

Numbers: Midday: 9-7-0, Evening: 5-1-0; **WinFour:** Midday: 0-4-1-6, Evening: 2-1-6-8; **Pick 10:** 1-2-6-13-15-27-36-39-42-44-45-49-55-59-62-65-70-72-73-79; **Take Five:** Midday: 6-7-20-32-38, Evening: 7-20-21-27-37; **Cash4Life:** 6-13-26-39-41, Cash Ball: 4; **Mega Millions:** 11-27-30-62-70, Mega Ball: 10, Megaplier: 3

Making It Right

The Cortland Standard will print corrections and clarifications of news articles in this space. If you find mistakes or omissions, call the managing editor at 607-756-5665 x 166.

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The Cortland Standard assumes no financial responsibility for typographical errors in advertisements, but will reprint that part of any advertisement in which a typographical error occurs. Advertisers will please notify the management immediately of any error which may occur. We reserve the right to reject any advertisement.

Police/fire

Laundry fire reported at Hampton Inn

Employees of the Hampton Inn on River Street in Cortland used an extinguisher to contain a laundry fire at the hotel Thursday, preventing it from spreading, according to the Cortland Fire Department.

There were no injuries, fire officials said.

At 9:10 p.m. city fire crews responded to an automatic alarm from the Hampton Inn, which sounded at the main city fire station, arriving before the first 911 call came through county dispatch. One of the fire crews, which included volunteers, found moderate smoke in the main lobby. Smoke worsened as firefighters moved to the laundry room. Crews entered the laundry room, where sprinklers dowsed burnt laundry around the source of the fire, a burning dryer.

“The Hampton Inn’s fire suppression and detection systems both worked as intended during this incident,” the department noted in its news release. “The sprinklers in front of and behind the affected dryer had activated.”

The department said the hotel’s staff used a fire extinguisher, an action that kept the fire from spreading throughout the building. The hotel was nearly full, with 61 of 69 rooms occupied. Guests had to evacuate briefly while fire crews checked for gas leaks or other hazards.

— *Jack Lakowsky*

Towns

Retired nurses group meets Jan. 2

The Cortland retired nurses will meet at Perkins Restaurant in Cortland at 11:30 a.m. Tuesday. The speaker will be County Coroner Denise Bushnell. A short business meeting will follow. All retired health care professionals are welcome.

City Board of Ed. meets Jan. 3

The Cortland Board of Education’s Audit Committee will meet at 8 a.m. Jan. 3 at the Kaufman Center, 1 Valley View Drive, Cortland.

Homer Bd. of Ed. to meet Jan. 9

The Homer Central School Board of Education will hold a regular meeting at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 9 in the Homer Training and Education Center.

City Bd. of Ed. committees

announce meetings

The Cortland Enlarged City School District Board of Education has the following workshops scheduled Jan. 9 at the Kaufman Center, 1 Valley View Drive:

- 5 p.m. - Randall Middle School Data Presentation
- 5:45 p.m. - District Finances with Fiscal Advisors
- 6:30 p.m. - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Guthrie offers scholarships

SAYRE, Pa. — Applications are being accepted for the Guthrie scholarship program.

Guthrie offers scholarships to area high school seniors who plan to enter, in the summer or fall of 2024, an accredited college, university, hospital-based nursing, or allied health program with careers in health professions.

There are also a limited number of Guthrie Employee Scholarships for the children of Guthrie employees who plan to enroll in an accredited junior college, college or university. The employee must be 0.6 FTE or greater and have at least one year of employment with Guthrie. These scholarships will support any field of study. Children of Guthrie physicians are not eligible. The deadline for applying for these scholarships is Feb. 2. Applications and more information about these scholarships are available at: www.guthrie.org/news.



Kevin T. Conlon/City Editor

Amber Suprunchik apologizes Sept. 22 at her sentencing in Cortland County Court following her conviction for striking and killing a bicyclist in 2021 on Route 26 in Cincinnatus.

Trials, fires among top stories of 2023

Cortland’s 2023 began with a murder trial, and ended with a major fire that left 12 people unhoused, with many long-awaited trials in between.

GARCIA’S ROOF FIRE

Hundreds watched March 6 as a fire caused by an electrical malfunction destroyed Garcia’s Mexican Restaurant and two apartments, located at 137 Main St.

No one was injured, but two were left homeless. Neighbors of the building watched as firefighters stopped the fire from spreading, despite the flames returning after being smothered.

WOMAN FOUND GUILTY FOR KILLING CYCLIST

A Dolgeville woman was found guilty in June of hitting two bicyclists with her vehicle, killing one, then leaving the Cincinnatus scene in June 2021.

Amber M. Suprunchik, 38, was sentenced in Cortland County Court to 2 1/3 to seven years in prison for leaving the scene of an accident with a death without reporting, a felony; 15 months to four years each for criminally negligent homicide and tampering with physical evidence, both felonies.

Suprunchik struck two of four bicyclists June 26, 2021 on Route 26, killing Kitt Warren, 67, of DeRuyter and injuring John Rutan of McGraw. She left the scene and later struck the hood of her 2011 Jeep Cherokee with a sledgehammer to conceal the damage, the indictment states.

STONE LOUNGE THREATENED TO SUE UNDERAGE PATRONS

Seventy-nine underage people received letters following the Oct. 19 raid at The Stone Lounge: If they don’t pay \$10,000 for using false identification to get into the bar, they’ll be included in a lawsuit.

The 79 were among 94 people in the bar when city police and the state Liquor Authority checked IDs. The 77 patrons and two employees were ticketed, and given 30 days to pay the fine. This deadline was later extended.

The liquor authority charged The Stone Lounge with multiple violations of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law, including selling alcoholic beverages to persons under 21, failure to

have trained, licensed security guards at the door in violation of their approved method of operation, failure to maintain adequate and accurate records of business transacted on the licensed premises and failure to supervise.

The state revoked the tavern’s license and it remains closed.

MAN SENTENCED 20+ YEARS FOR SEXUAL ABUSE

A man was convicted in March of repeated sexual abuse, and sentenced to 20 years to life in state prison.

Mitchell L. Padbury, 63, of Marathon, was convicted on all six counts in Cortland County Court, found guilty of committing sexual acts on a young girl at least 10 times between September 2014 and March 2015, when she was 6.

Padbury had tried to suppress statements he made on May 5, 2021, saying they were made involuntarily, made under the use or threat of force by a law enforcement official, according to court documents. In the statement, Padbury painted the victim as the aggressor. Judge Julie Campbell denied the motion.

JURY FINDS MAN GUILTY IN STABBING DEATH

A former McGraw man was convicted in January of stabbing to death a Cortland man in November 2021 after an argument over a relationship with the defendant’s daughter.

Harold Young, 57, was found guilty of first-degree manslaughter, first-degree assault, and third-degree criminal possession of a weapon, felonies; following a weeklong trial in Cortland County Court. First-degree manslaughter is punishable by five to 25 years in prison.

After about four hours of deliberation, the jury found Young guilty of stabbing his daughter’s former boyfriend, David Sears-Lopez, 28, to death on Nov. 2, 2021.

Cortland police said then the two men were arguing before the stabbing in front of 19 Maple Ave., Cortland. Testimony revealed that Sears-Lopez punched Young twice in the face before being fatally stabbed.

MAN CHARGED WITH ARSON

A Truxton man was accused in September of barricading two

people inside a trailer and setting it on fire.

Matthew S. Clark, 37, of Chenango Solon Pond Road in Truxton, was charged with second-degree attempted murder, second-degree arson, second-degree criminal mischief, first-degree reckless endangerment, felonies; and seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a misdemeanor.

On Sept. 17, officers responded to a residence at 11 Kingsley Ave. at Penguin Trailer Park in Cortlandville for a structure fire, a news release from the Cortland County Sheriff’s Office said.

Officers determined Clark barricaded the entrance and exit to the residence and set it on fire, due to a dispute regarding property that was inside the residence.

FIRE LEAVES 12 HOMELESS IN CITY

Twelve residents of 37 Clayton Ave. — seven of them children under 14 — lost virtually everything in a fire in November, Mayor Scott Steve said.

SUNY Cortland students took the families to their homes during the fire, and brought their own coats and blankets to keep them warm.

They also comforted the children.

No people were injured, but two of three dogs inside died.

The Cortland Fire Department reported via social media that the fire was accidental. Steve said none of the two-family home’s fire alarms worked.

CORTLAND FLOORCRAFT DAMAGED BY FIRE

Cortland Floorcraft, located at 4357 N. Homer Avenue, caught fire July 20 and, when the Cortlandville Fire Department arrived, crews found heavy fire from the front of the building.

Due to the volume of fire, crews were forced to fight the fire from the outside, but were able to enter the building and contain the fire to the front of the building. The fire was under control after an hour.

In a month, they expect to have a shell of a new building, which will be more modern and energy-efficient, said business owner Scott Hicks Thursday.

— *Lily Byrne and Jack Lakowsky*

Weapons charges follow landlord, tenant dispute

By JACK LAKOWSKY
Staff Reporter

jlakowsky@cortlandstandard.com

Following a dispute that led police to charge several people with weapons and assault crimes, Cortland landlord Mike Buchalla says landlords face an unreasonably costly and lengthy process to evict problematic tenants.

“It shouldn’t take 90 days to get someone out,” Buchalla said earlier this month. “It’s unfair to landlords. They (tenants) can damage the property and there’s nothing you can do. A lot of the landlords get burnt.”

Buchalla is going public with his concerns over landlords vs. tenants’ rights, saying he decided to do so after disagreements with a 36 Grant St. tenant escalated to violence.

Buchalla, owner of the rental property, called police Dec. 5 to report he had been jumped by eight people, including juveniles, after a disagreement with his tenant, Adam Schifilliti, according to Cortland City Police. The argument started when Buchalla told Schifilliti he needed to clean his apartment and that he couldn’t have guests. Schifilliti attempted to close the door on Buchalla, but Buchalla held it open.

Buchalla told police he was hit with a rock, sticks, punched and kicked. Buchalla told police he was not injured.

Police spoke with Schifilliti at the scene. The tenant told police Buchalla had been screaming, and that Buchalla said he could beat Schifilliti up. Schifilliti said his eight friends attacked Buchalla, and two witnesses police spoke to said Buchalla deserved it.

Buchalla told police several times he wanted to kill Schifilliti, according to a police report. Police told Buchalla that retaliation is not a solution, and asked him if he wanted to press charges. Buchalla changed his mind and said no, he would not press charges, and said he did not want to provide a statement.

“No prosecution desired, no further police action taken,” police said of the Dec. 5 incident.

Police returned Dec. 7, responding to another complaint from Buchalla, who said eight people were trying to fight him with weapons including an axe and a knife.

Buchalla told police that Schifilliti, accompanied by an unidentified boy, taunted him, asking if he wanted to get beat up again. Buchalla said he ignored the taunts and tried to finish his work for the day but a car pulled up to the property.

Buchalla said one of the boys held a hatchet and a folding knife, while Buchalla, saying he feared for his life, pulled a hammer. Police questioned the boy, who refused to share his name and said he had done nothing wrong.

Schifilliti’s girlfriend, Ariana Haynes, said Buchalla often tries entering their apartment without permission and recently shut

their power off maliciously.

Eventually, on Dec. 15, police charged two minors with second-degree menacing and fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon.

Buchalla said he feels powerless to evict the tenants, that there’s too many requirements for evictions. Judges can delay eviction processes further if it causes undue hardship in a tenant’s life.

If a landlord wins, the court orders the tenant’s eviction. Landlords lose if they can’t prove their case.

Sharon Sherman, executive director of the Greater Syracuse Tenants Network, said while state laws enacted in 2018 grew tenant protections, expanding the time they have to either pay what they owe or comply with an eviction, landlords have ways of removing problem renters.

The tenants network also provides landlords with training.

Sherman’s first advice for landlords is to call her or another organization.

She said one way landlord’s can protect themselves against problem tenants is using month-to-month lease agreements, rather than for 12 months or more. Ending a year lease early requires both parties’ consent. Landlords can also raise the rent as much as they want with each new lease agreement.

Dealing with evictions, Sherman said, is also a cost of owning rental property.

“It’s just part of the business,” Sherman said Wednesday. And indeed, Sherman said, it can be a costly one. However, she said, more leeway for tenants serves an important purpose.

Before the reforms from a few years ago, Sherman said a landlord could get a tenant out in 10 days if they rushed it. They could give a 72-hour verbal notice, then the landlord could take them to court within a day or two, then a judge could give the tenant another 72-hour notice. Such a rapid process can put people on the streets before they have a chance to get the money to pay what they owe, or find another place.

“It was totally weighted towards the landlords,” Sherman said. “Sometimes people can’t pay because they got sick, or they had a funeral to pay for.”

Now, rent legally can’t be considered late until the sixth day after it’s due. Then a landlord serves a 14-day eviction notice. The parties can get a court date within 10 days, so they might make it to a judge on day 24 of the proceeding. If a judge grants an eviction, the tenant has another 14 days to move on. So, in theory, a landlord could lose out on two months rent before the eviction completes. Judges can also delay the process, but the tenants have to pay all they owe until they find a new place.

Balancing the needs of landlords and tenants is tricky, Sherman said.

“It is what it is for now,” she said.

Cincinnatus gets \$75K highway garage grant

Cincinnatus received a \$75,000 grant to help cover the cost of town highway garage improvements, Assembly Member Jeff Gallahan announced Friday.

“I certainly know the taxpayers of Cincinnatus are grateful for this grant,” Town Supervisor Luann King said in the news release. “The highway department can now house all their equipment securely.

We, the town board, thank Assemblyman Gallahan for securing this grant.”

The funding comes from the state Community Resiliency, Economic Sustainability and Technology program. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2024, the news release states.

“I am very proud to serve the town of Cincinnatus and I look forward to see-

ing this project completed in the near future,” said Gallahan (R-Clifton Springs). “With winter weather on the way, reinforcing our highway facilities with stronger, insulated doors and structurally sound additions is critical. I will continue to serve and address the needs of the good, hard-working people of the town of Cincinnatus with this project and oth-

ers as we look forward to the new year and the start of the legislative session.”

“Assemblyman Gallahan’s help with funding our highway addition project made completion so much sooner,” said Cincinnatus Highway Superintendent Steven Mudge. “Thank you for your support of CHIPS funding and this grant.”

— *Margaret Mellott, staff reporter*



Photo provided by John Hartsock

These markers at the north end of the village of Homer commemorate the first European settlers in Cortland County, but they're miles away from where they actually established their farms.

Where did the first settlers land? And what happened to the baby?

By JOHN HARTSOCK
Contributing Writer

Cortland County has a fascinating pioneer history. However, while reading H.P. Smith's "History of Cortland County," I was surprised to find on page 186 that in 1791 the first settlers to the area — Joseph and Rhoda Beebe and her brother Amos Todd — came up the Tioughnioga River by boat or canoe and put up a temporary shelter near the river in what is now the city of Cortland.¹

The surprise? Like many, I have often driven by a bronze plaque on a large boulder at North Main Street and Hooker Avenue in the Village of Homer claiming they landed near there. The boulder and plaque were dedicated in 1924.²

The two locations are nowhere near each other.

I was often referred to Smith's 1885 volume — by the Cortland County Historical Society no less — as the most complete source on the county's early history. Smith cites Rhoda Beebe revisiting the 1791 landing place in today's city many years later, "which she was enabled to recognize by some spring of water issuing from the ground."³

According to Smith, this would be about midway between the Port Watson Street bridge and where the east and west branches of the Tioughnioga River join, or approximately where Elm Street dead ends at the river today.

The earliest source I could find for the

Part 1 of a series

Homer village claim appears to be H.O. Goodwin's "Pioneer History," published in 1859. When the settlers arrived, Goodwin says, "Mr. Beebe erected his house north of Homer village, near the upper bridge."⁴ Today, that would be just south of the bridge by Durkee Park on North Main Street.

While acknowledging Goodwin's claim, H.P. Smith, writing later, insists the correct landing place was in today's city of Cortland.⁵

Nor was this the only historical discrepancy. The village of Homer added another memorial, one of the Pomeroy Foundation road markers, dated 2018, to the site of the stone memorial.⁶ It describes Joseph Beebe and Amos Todd departing for Windsor in the winter of 1791-92 for more "provisions."⁷ Rhoda Beebe was left behind — that much historians agree on. However, the sign says she was by herself, or "solo," in the wilderness for six weeks.

There is one omission: The baby.

According to Smith's "History of Cortland County," "it now appears on good authority" that Rhoda "had a daughter named Clara, who remained with her" when the men left for Windsor.⁸

Digitized archives support Smith and his "good authority" except for one dif-

ference. Her name was Clarrissa, and Clara was used as a diminutive (similarly, Clara Barton was born Clarissa). We can find Clarrissa on Find a Grave.⁹ She died in 1860 and is buried in Clarksfield, Ohio, as Clarrissa (née Beebe) Fletcher.

If there is any doubt that she is the same "Clara," Clarrissa's parents were Rhoda and Joseph Beebe and she was born Aug. 8, 1791, in Windsor, not long before their departure that autumn for the future Cortland County.

I was left scratching my head, and could only wonder, how can you leave out a baby?

Her role will be examined in more detail later in this series. But a larger issue was raised: Why was Smith's history ignored when the memorial boulder at the intersection of Hooker Avenue and North Main Street in Homer village was dedicated in 1924? Local historians certainly had access to Smith's 1885 volume.

I suspect it was because Clarrissa provided a validation of the city of Cortland's claim. Goodwin's earlier claim for the village landing does not include Clarrissa or Clara. These are some of the discrepancies between the accounts that prompted me to begin exploring the early history.

Next week: Examining the claims.

John Hartsock of Homer is a retired journalist and professor of communications at SUNY Cortland.

End notes

1. H.P. Smith, ed., History of Cortland County (Syracuse: D. Mason & Co., 1885).
2. The plaque reads: "Near this spot in 1791 a log cabin was built by the first settlers of Cortland County[,] Amos Todd, Rhoda Todd Beebe and Joseph Beebe[,] Erected 1924[.]" The memorial stone

and plaque were paid for by Leisure Hour and the Sennightly Club, two ladies social clubs in the village, according to the *Cortland Standard*. However, it's not clear who composed the message on the plaque. See "Homer Women Will Mark Site Where First Settlers Built," *Cortland Standard*, 18

- Jan. 1924.
3. Smith, 187.
4. H.O. Goodwin. Pioneer History: Or, Cortland County and the Border Wars of New York (NY: A. B. Burdick Publisher, 1859): 148.
5. Smith, 187.
6. It reads: "Rhoda Beebe lived solo in a lean-to six wintry weeks 1791-1792

subsisting on roots & bark until men returned with provisions from Windsor, NY." 7. Goodwin, 149. 8. Smith, 187. 9. Clarrissa Beebe Fletcher. Find a Grave. Accessed 6 Dec. 2022: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/120349452/clarrissa-fletcher>.

New year, new books, new library activities

By JEN GRANEY
Contributing Writer

JANUARY 2024 BOOK RELEASES

A selection of some of the most anticipated releases.

"The Age of Deer: Trouble and Kinship with Our Wild Neighbors," by Erika Howsare

"The Ascent," by Adam Plantinga

"Be A Revolution: How Everyday People are Fighting Oppression and Changing the World — and How You Can, Too," by Ijeoma Oluo

"Dream Town," by Lee Goldberg

"The Friendship Club," by Robyn Carr

"Goldenseal," by Maria Hummel

"Missing Persons," by James Patterson

"Mrs. Quinn's Rise to Fame," by Olivia Ford

"One in a Million," by Janet Dailey

"Random in Death: An Eve Dallas Novel," by J. D. Robb

"The Survivors of the 'Clotilda': The Lost Stories of the Last Captives of the American Slave Trade," by Hannah Durkin

"Upside Down," by Danielle Steel

JANUARY PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Food Giveaways

12:30 p.m. Tuesdays in January: Groton Public Library. Food donated by Wegmans and organized by the Friendship Donation Network.

Noon Jan. 6: Groton Public Library. Food from Ithaca Bakery, Colleetown Bagels, and Tops grocery store.

2 p.m. Jan. 8: Groton Public Library. Kids' farmers market with free fruit and produce provided by the Food Bank of the Southern Tier.

6 to 7 p.m. Jan. 9 and Jan. 23: Cortland Free Library. Cortland County Mutual Aid has its Really Free Market giveaway of food and personal care items the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month through winter.

For Families

Author and illustrator Jacob Souva: "Silly Ideas Grow Up to Be Great Stories!" 4 to 5 and 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Jan. 26 at Phillips Free Library during Winterfest. Registration required. Jacob will draw with children (K-6) from 4 to 5 p.m. and with teens and adults from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Masks! Join Carol Hockett from the Johnson Art Museum at 11 a.m. Jan. 20 at Southworth Library in Dryden to learn about masks in history from their special collection and create one of your own. Register to reserve your spot.

Miss Angie's Music and Movement. Get your feet stomping and your body moving at 10:30 a.m. Jan. 27 at Southworth Library with Miss Angie. Register to reserve your spot.

Paws to Read. Pick a pup to

practice reading with at 10:30 a.m. Jan. 13.

Cornell Canine Companions will be at Southworth Library with furry friends ready to hear you read (or snuggle). Registration appreciated.

Second Saturday Family Fun Winter Wonderland from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Jan. 13 at Cortland Free Library.

Winter stories, games, a craft, and a snack geared to ages 3 to 8, but all families are welcome. Registration required.

Time Travel: The World of Walrus from 10 to 11 a.m. Jan. 6 at Cortland Free Library.

Walrus-themed stories, a craft, and a snack geared to ages 4 to 8 but all families are welcome. Registration required.

For Seniors

Fourth Friday Senior Coffee Hour. 9:30 a.m. Jan. 26 at Kellogg Free Library. Coffee and treats.

"Sweet 60 and Up!" seniors program, 1 p.m. Jan. 19 at Phillips Free Library. The third edition of this program includes a craft, cooking/baking, and book talk starting at 1 p.m. (please sign up by contacting office@phillipsfreelibrary.org) and music by The Elderly Brothers from 2 to 3 p.m. (no sign up needed for this part of the program).

Winter/Valentine paint event with Sandra Simpson, 6 p.m. Jan. 25 at Kellogg Free Library. \$15. Registration required.

To register

Registration is required for many library programs. Contact your local library for more information and to learn about additional offerings:

Cortland Free Library: 32 Church St. 607-753-1042, cortlandfreelibrary.org.

Groton Public Library: 112 E. Cortland St., Groton. 607-898-5055, grotonpubliclibrary.net/.

Kellogg Free Library: 5681 Telephone Road Ext., Cincinnatus 607-863-4300. kelloggfreelibrary.org.

Lamont Memorial Free Library: 5 Main St., McGraw. 607-836-6767. lamontlibrary.org/.

Peck Memorial Library: 24 E. Main St., Marathon. 607-849-6135. peckmemoriallibrary.org/.

Phillips Free Library: 37 S. Main St., Homer. 607-749-4616. www.phillipsfreelibrary.org/.

Southworth Library: 24 W. Main St., Dryden. 607-844-4782. southworthlibrary.org/.

Library hours

Please note the following changes in library hours for January: Monday: Cortland, Groton, Kellogg, Lamont, Peck, Phillips, and Southworth are closed for New Year's Day.

Jan. 15: Phillips Free Library is closed for Martin Luther King Day.

Jen Graney is the director of the Cortland Free Library.

Reader goes round the bend at roller rink birthday party

DEAR AMY: Every year, with the help of my husband and six children, I throw myself a birthday party at a local roller rink.

It's all I want: to party and rollerblade with my family and friends like I'm still young.

We rent out the entire venue and invite many families. We serve a handful of refreshments and play fun music. It's a blast and I usually look forward to it every year, except this year.

I'm dreading it because one family (neighbors of ours) are just terrible guests. They bring extra people without asking, their four kids come blazing down the middle of the rink and have actually knocked people down before, and last year they took the water bottles from the refreshment table and were throwing them down the stairs to the front entrance, where they would burst open.

The parents never do anything about it and never offer to help clean up the mess their kids leave.

The problem is, they know I have this party every year.

How do I avoid inviting them when I know they are going to ask about it? I feel like my only option is to cancel it for a few years and hope they forget about it.

— Party Pooper

DEAR PARTY POOPER: Yes, you could cancel your celebration and hope that these neighbors forget about it over the course of a few years.

You could also hope that this boisterous family would perhaps join a traveling circus and take their act elsewhere.

Or ... you could simply not invite them.

If they ask you about it, you could tell them, truthfully: "We're trimming the guest list down this year; we're going to keep things smaller and more contained. Unfortunately your group isn't included this year. Maybe some time in the future we'll expand it again."

I don't suggest diving into

the particulars about why they are being excluded unless they explicitly ask about it. The reason not to lead with your reasons is because if you do, then you might be forced into a dialogue about behavior that happened a year ago which you didn't react to proportionally (or at all) at the time.

It might be worthwhile to see if the roller rink has a security person who might want to work an extra shift during your party. This would shift some of the pressure and responsibility for enforcing basic safety rules away from you.

Ask Amy By Amy Dickinson

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time for her group.

I thought I was rid of Jerry, but my wife just told me he'd like to rejoin the group.

She knows I can't stand this guy, or what happened, but she seems excited that he's rejoining.

I know if I tell her I don't want him in the house it's going to start a huge argument.

Any advice?

— Played

DEAR PLAYED: This relationship has already been the catalyst for a separation between you and your wife. Regardless of "Jerry's" current marital status, your wife should respect the acknowledged risk to her own marriage and decline to spend time with him regularly.

You might find over time that the trust between you and your wife has been completely restored and the risk of this outside relationship has faded. That would be the time to allow Jerry back into your

gaming circle, and for you to consider ways to tolerate his presence.

You might call an audible here and suggest that Jerry is welcome to rejoin the Friday gaming group, but that he should attend the one that you run at the store, versus the one your wife hosts at home.

DEAR AMY: I appreciated your gentle rebuke of "Incompatible," the "smartest guy in the room," who had no patience for his elderly in-laws and for whom counseling didn't work. This man might be smart, but until he develops some humility, he'll be very lonely.

— Been There

DEAR BEEN THERE: His intelligence was matched by his cluelessness.

You can email Amy Dickinson at askamy@amydickinson.com or send a letter to Ask Amy, P.O. Box 194, Freeville, NY 13068. You can also follow her on Twitter @askingamy or Facebook.

Our Opinion

Business groups build community

It takes a village to raise a child, we’ve often read. In Dryden, the business community has come together to raise the village, in the form of the Dryden Business Association.

In March 2022, the Dryden Business Association was formed to help the village apply for a New York Forward grant. Although that round of grant funding didn’t come through, the village is now a finalist in the latest round. Similar to the \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative grants that the city of Cortland and village of Homer have received, the New York Forward program aims to enliven downtown areas in small and rural communities with grants of either \$4.5 million or \$2.25 million. Moravia received one earlier this year.

As development consultants point out, the mere existence of a business association is an important part of the process. If a community can’t come together in that fashion, it’s unlikely to have the wherewithal to effectively utilize multi-million dollar grants to their full benefit. As Cortland discovered, and Homer is currently grappling with, these projects involve a lot of choices, tradeoffs, hard realities and unmet desires. Successfully navigating all that with the state breathing down your neck and millions of dollars on the line requires a certain amount of trust, discipline and community-mindedness.

The Dryden Business Association is still finding its footing, even as it pursues that larger goal. Group members have volunteered to create a mural at Montgomery Park, partnered with other local organizations for holiday celebrations, and agreed to keep the environs of their businesses cleaned up. While the association might feel like these are only baby steps, these projects are exactly how communities improve themselves and become stronger. The more they practice working together on the small things, the greater Dryden’s success when it comes time to accomplish the big things.

The association will also strengthen its members’ businesses, which is also good for the village (and town). Most small businesses face the same challenges, and a business association allows those who’ve already successfully navigated problems to pass along hard-earned advice to their peers. It also brings inherently entrepreneurial-minded folks together in one spot, which can be a recipe for even greater ideas — things that a single small business on its own might not be able to accomplish.

So now the businesses are stronger through this collaboration. The village and town, and even broader community, are stronger. With more practice and experience, the association will be able to forge closer ties with even more entities — such as the fast-growing Tompkins Cortland Community College, which is a goal of the New York Forward grant, if awarded. The more connected the Dryden Business Association becomes, the more connections it will forge. It’s a feedback loop for greater success for everyone.

We applaud the good work done by the Dryden Business Association thus far, and wish them luck in their future endeavors. Building community isn’t easy, but the effort is well worth it.

Good Old Days

December 30, 1998

SUMMERHILL (SUMMER HILL) — There are signs of a controversy everywhere in this rural Cayuga County town, but the signs are confusing.

For many decades, there has been a disagreement over whether the name of the town is one word or two.

The sign outside Town Hall proclaims the name of the town as Summerhill, while a sign printed on a snowplow blade outside the town’s Highway Department building has it as two words.

A spokeswoman from the Department of State in Albany said matter-of-factly that Summerhill is one word, and that’s according to the New York State Department of Transportation Map.

The history noted that the town was originally named Plato when it was formed from part of Locke in 1831, but was renamed Summerhill about one year later, possibly after a street in Dublin, Ireland.

December 30, 2013

As 2013 comes to a close, the city and the Cortland Downtown Partnership will conclude the year with the city’s second annual First Light New Year’s Eve celebration Tuesday evening.

The event, brought back last year after a lack in funding canceled it in 2011, will feature the traditional ball drop and fireworks display as seen in past years, said Downtown Partnership Event Coordinator Jane Witty.

A large video screen streaming the ball drop in New York City will be featured for a second year, and with live music being featured in local venues and the presence of numerous street vendors, Witty said she believes this year’s festivities have the potential to be a prominent local event for years to come.

“Downtown is the heart of the city, and we aim primarily to host events that create memories,” Witty said. “We want to foster a positive attitude and celebrate the community we have. It’s a universal celebration about reflecting on both success and improvement, and we believe our town needs that type of unity.”

Today in History

The Associated Press

Today is Saturday, Dec. 30, the 364th day of 2023. There is one day left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History:

On Dec. 30, 1922, Vladimir Lenin proclaimed the establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which lasted nearly seven decades before dissolving in December 1991.

On this date:

In 1813, British troops burned Buffalo, New York, during the War of 1812.

In 1853, the United States and Mexico signed a treaty under which the U.S. agreed to buy some 45,000 square miles of land from Mexico for \$10 million in a deal known as the Gadsden Purchase.

In 1860, 10 days after South Carolina seceded from the Union, the state militia seized the United States Arsenal in Charleston.

In 1903, about 600 people died when fire broke out at the recently opened Iroquois Theater in Chicago.

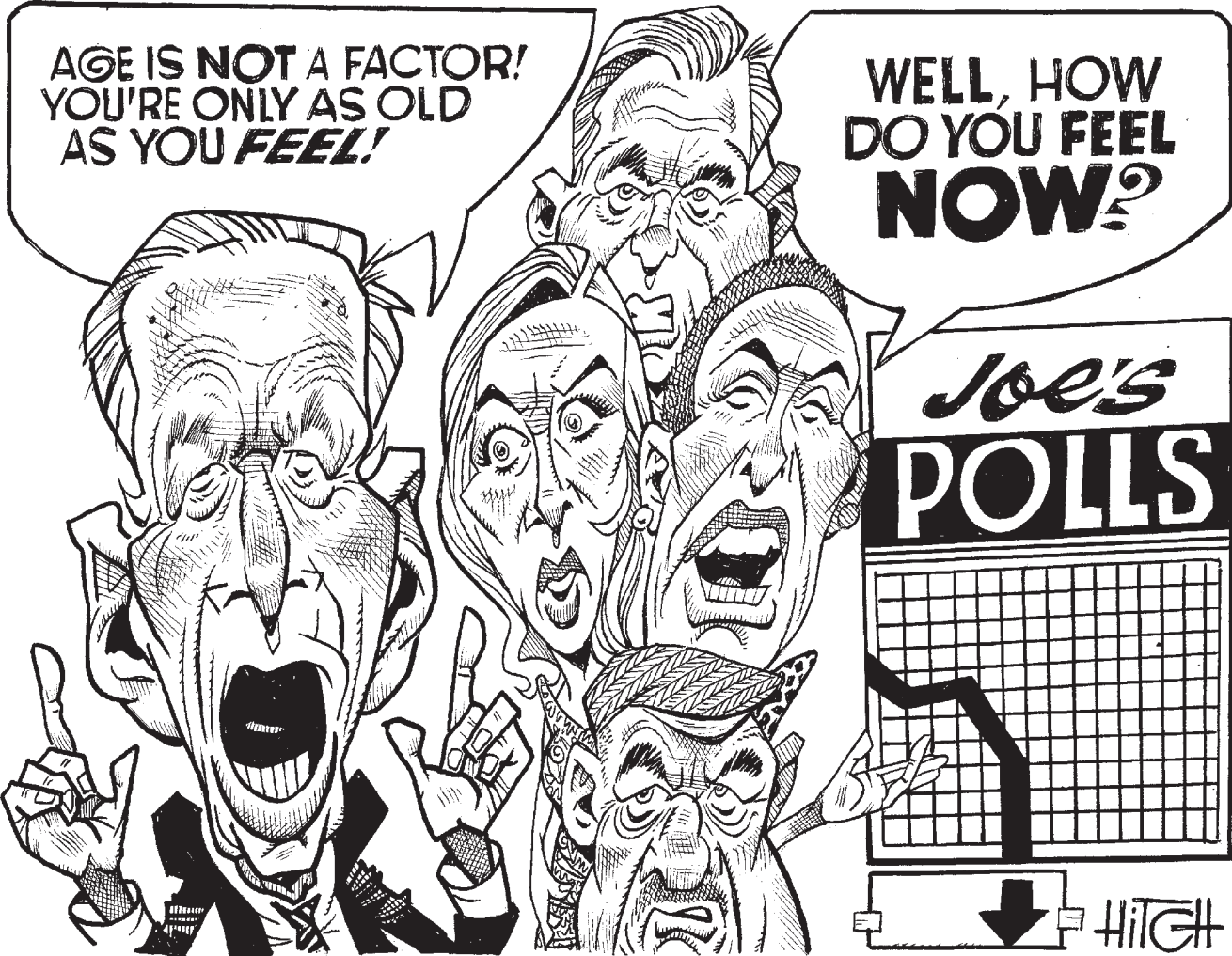
In 1954, Olympic gold medal runner Malvin G. Whitfield became the first Black recipient of the James E. Sullivan Award for amateur athletes.

In 2004, a fire broke out during a rock concert at a nightclub in Buenos Aires, Argentina, killing 194 people.

In 2006, a state funeral service was held in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda for former President Gerald R. Ford.

In 2009, seven CIA employees and a Jordanian intelligence officer were killed by a suicide bomber at a U.S. base in Khost (hohst), Afghanistan.

In 2012, recalling that the shooting rampage that killed 20 first graders in Connecticut as the worst day of his presidency, President Barack Obama pledged on NBC’s “Meet the Press” to put his “full weight” behind legislation aimed at preventing gun violence.



Want climate progress?

Jim Hightower



“OK, boomer.” That’s a snarky phrase currently some use to mock 60- and 70-year-olds they consider to be cluelessly out of touch.

Recently, however, teenagers and 20-somethings have turned that snide sentiment into a positive challenge directed at doomsayers of all ages who claim nothing can be done to stop runaway global warming: “OK, doomer,” these young climate activists respond. It’s their shorthand way of saying to do-nothing fatalists: Give up if you want, but please step aside while we organize and mobilize for climate sanity.

Our globe’s fast-warming, catastrophe-creating climate is more than just another issue: It has become a generational cause for young people. Indeed, 62% of young voters support totally phasing out fossil fuels, and they’re channeling their anger about official inaction toward both political parties. Such feisty grassroots groups as Gen-Z for Change, Zero Hour, Black Girl Environmentalist and Our Children’s Trust are on the front lines — in the face of power, and on the move.

As in all progressive struggles — from civil rights to labor to environmental justice — progress comes from sticking

with principle, building incrementally on local victories and persevering against moneyed reactionaries. Already, one breakthrough by these young climate activists was made this year in deep-red, rural Montana. In a case filed by Our Children’s Trust, 16 children, ages 2-18, charged that a state law took away their right to challenge energy projects that increase global warming. Noting that Montana’s constitution establishes a right to “a clean and healthful environment,” state Judge Kathy Seeley ruled for the children...and for a clean, healthy climate future.

Progress is not made by spectators and cynics, but by activists. And those who say that activism can’t produce change should not interrupt those who’re doing it.

The rattiest right-wing Congress critter

Vanguun, one of the Solomon Islands, is home to a giant species of rodent called the vika. Astonishingly, this rare and very large rat has jaws so powerful it can bite through a coconut shell!

That made me think of Rep. Jim Jordan, the GOP’s rattiest far-right-wing Congress critter. There is no documented proof that this extremist partisan was raised on Vanguun, but he sure keeps gnawing on Joe and Hunter Biden, desperately trying to crack open a scandal that simply doesn’t exit. Vikas are powerful, but they’ve not been accused of being smart.

Jordan, the former coach of a boy’s wrestling team, now has his team of House Republicans in a choke hold, draining

national media attention to his goofy obsession with impeaching Joe. Impeach him for what? Well, says Jordan, we’re looking for a reason.

He has it bass-ackwards — real impeachment proceedings start with specific charges of an official’s “high crimes and misdemeanors.” But Coach Jordan is perverting that constitutional requirement by first accusing Biden of high crimes, then holding hearings in hopes of finding one. But poor Jim — it turns out to be easier for him to bite through a coconut than to fabricate a Biden crime.

But Jordan keeps gnawing, wasting Congress’ time, staff and credibility (plus millions of taxpayer’s dollars) scuttling down trails that go nowhere. Meanwhile, as he and the GOP House prioritize their clownish political agenda, they can’t perform the basics of government, which is simply to keep essential public services funded and functioning.

Unable to govern, Republican leaders abruptly stopped working in the House in early December, saying they’ll get serious next year. But, uh-oh, the vika congressman has just announced he’ll hold more impeachment hearings next year so he can keep gnawing at the Biden coconut.

Sorry, haters. Calif. is just fine

Froma Harrop



have a woman’s body.

Same goes for Florida, which, like Texas, has virtually banned abortion. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has made a specialty of attacking local businesses for oddball reasons. He pushed through a law forbidding employers to require proof of vaccinations from their workers. And he reserves special punishments for Disney, his state’s largest private employer, for daring to disagree with him on gay rights.

Losing population is not always a bad thing. The raps against California include the high cost of housing and brutal traffic. Fewer people means less competition for real estate and fewer cars on the road. Meanwhile, the cost of housing in Austin and Miami has shot skyward.

With 39 million people, California still has 10 million more residents than does Texas, the second most populous state — not that this should matter on the individual level. What does the population race have to do with the quality of life?

That’s not to say all is nifty in California. The Californians going elsewhere tend to be middle-class or poor. Many end up in next-door Arizona or Nevada. The result has been a growing and concerning disparity in wealth.

California still has nice weather and, for those who care about show business, Hollywood. But its great draw is brain power supported by top universities and the tech magnet of Silicon Valley.

Right-wing politics can turn off rich people more than low

taxes turn them on. Dave Nixon of the Patriotic Millionaires, a group of well-to-do business leaders who advocate for “fair” taxation, moved back to California in 2022 after selling his St. Pete Beach home in Florida.

San Francisco Mayor London Breed said she knows “several” people who recently returned from Austin for similar reasons. This is clearly anecdotal evidence, but one can believe that a sharp right turn in local politics could get some former Californians down.

There’s no point, though, in playing one cultural preference against another. People may go to Florida or Texas — or stay in California — for different reasons. And even some progressive-minded people dislike some of the silly woke stuff or flashy esthetics coming out of Southern California. They would include liberals in Washington state.

But suffice it to say, California’s economy is doing just fine. A new members-only club demanding initiation fees as high as \$100,000 is opening in San Francisco. The club’s backers are assuming that the city’s stressed downtown will be coming back.

“If people were telling us, ‘I’m planning my exit,’” a club spokeswoman said. “We wouldn’t come here.”

Letters

The Cortland Standard welcomes letters from readers for publication on this page. All letters submitted must be signed by the writer and include the writer’s home address and daytime telephone number. Letters may be edited for length and content. Letters are limited to 300 words in length. Letters endorsing or opposing the election of candidates for public office are limited to 200 words. Thank-you notes will not be accepted.

POLICE NY

continued from page 1

that would assist in this investigation.”

During the investigation, police found Faircloth possessed a stolen credit card and that he had violated a full stay away order of protection in the city of Cortland, according to news release.

Lt. Garry Williams of the county Sheriff’s Office declined Friday afternoon to release additional information on the accident, noting the investigation is still in progress.

Anyone with any relevant information is asked to contact the Sheriff’s Office’s Criminal Investigation Division at 607-758-6151.

continued from page 1

the COVID pandemic — a trend echoed in other large cities nationwide.

Nationwide, the country gained more than 1.6 million people last year, growing 0.5% to 334,914,895. This year’s national population growth is still historically low, but is a slight uptick from increases in the two previous years.

Population growth in the South accounted for 87% of the nation’s total growth in 2023, adding more than 1.4 million residents. The 1.1% increase is compared to a 0.2% increase in the West and Midwest and a -0.1% decrease in the Northeast. Texas had the highest number of in-migration, with 473,453 people entering the

state, followed by Florida, which added 365,205 residents. South Carolina and Florida are currently the two fastest-growing states in the nation.

New York’s out-migration is a frequent talking point for Republicans in the state. Last year, during the gubernatorial race between Gov. Kathy Hochul and former U.S. Rep. Lee Zeldin, the candidates sparred on the subject during a debate. Zeldin blamed the population loss on high taxes and crime.

Despite a spike in crime during the pandemic, crime in New York City remains at historic lows. Outside of the city, crime trends for murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault have also declined. New York is, however, one

of the states with the highest taxes.

At a GOP rally in Schenectady last month ahead of Election Day, state Sen. James Tedisco, R-Saratoga Springs, criticized the state’s current leadership

“Young people are leaving the state in droves. The affordability factor is unbelievable,” he said. “If [Democrats] had an agenda that was working on the local, state and federal level, states like ours wouldn’t be No. 1,” Tedisco said. “This is a beautiful state. People shouldn’t be walking out in droves, they should be coming to New York state.”

Tedisco, along with assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara, are introducing legislation to create a state-

wide task force to study why people are leaving the state in droves.

The commission would have 13 members, with three appointed by the governor, three by the Assembly speaker, three by the state Senate president and two each by the minority leaders in both houses. The makeup of the commission is similar to the state’s limousine safety task force following the deadly crash in Schoharie that killed 20.

An October poll found 80% of Democrats, Republicans and independents say the cost of living in the state is a major problem.

Tedisco said that the state can no longer afford to ignore the problem of out-migration.

STORES

continued from page 1

stores are operating on New Year’s Eve:

1. Albertsons: Stores are open with regular hours, but pharmacy openings may vary.
2. ALDI: Stores are open with limited hours.
3. Home Depot: Stores are open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.
4. IKEA: Stores are open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
5. Jewel-Osco: Stores and pharmacies will be open with reduced hours.
6. Kroger: Most stores will close early.
7. Lowe’s: Stores close at 6 p.m.

8. Macy’s: Stores will be open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

9. Meijer: Stores are open from 6 a.m. to midnight.

10. Rite Aid: Stores are open with regular hours.

11. Sam’s Club: Stores close at 6 p.m.

12. Safeway: Stores are open with regular hours, but pharmacy hours may vary.

13. Sheetz: Stores are open.

14. Trader Joe’s: Stores close at 5 p.m.

15. 7-Eleven: Most stores are open 24/7 (including on holidays), but some locations’ hours can vary.

COUNTY

continued from page 1

businesses to support the tech advancements to the north to the south; and advancements with our career readiness programs to make sure the people that are currently living here to support those businesses so that people are getting employed,” O’Bryan said.

Onondaga County is where microchip manufacturer Micron plans to build a 20,000-job manufacturing facility, spinning off similar industries and research stretching across the Thruway corridor and dipping south to Binghamton.

Binghamton University is where the inventor of the lithium-ion battery, Nobel Prize winner M. Stanley Whittingham, does his research, and where a number of battery and energy-storage firms have been established.

The U.S. Department of Commerce is sponsoring a funding opportunity for the tech hubs, allowing them to apply to receive between \$40 million and \$70 million each for implementation funding, totaling nearly \$500 million.

Cortland has representatives on both the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board, which includes Syracuse, and the Southern Tier 8 Regional Board — both organizations support the growth and development of their communities, including in technology.

One of the challenges, O’Bryan said, will be providing housing to an influx of workers.

“I think one of the primary biggest challenges is housing,” he said. “We’re currently at pretty high capacity for what we have for housing right now and what’s currently on the market is very expensive and interest rates are high. So, in order to get people to look at the area, we’re

going to want to make sure that there’s enough housing opportunities within the county to support those systems.”

“I’d say a secondary challenge is just making sure the development that’s going to possibly come to Cortland County is supported and wanted by the community that currently lives here,” he added. “We don’t want to try to force a square peg into a round hole.”

To prepare for these developments, O’Bryan is recommending municipalities review and update their strategic or comprehensive plans, which function as a guide for policy making and funding decisions, and are implemented over a longer period of time — often 10 to 20 years.

“My primary focus on what I’m trying to advise people on doing is to look at their strategic plans within their community,” O’Bryan said. “Look at the plans, look at how outdated they are and see if they need to be updated. Talk with the community members. Going back to what I said before — you don’t want to try to fit that square peg into a round hole.”

“So if your community members are saying we do not want X, Y and Z in our community, do update those plans to reflect that — to make sure that it shows this is what this community is open to and this is what this community is not open to,” he added.

WATERFORD, N.Y.

Nearly 20 years ago, GlobalFoundries — a semiconductor manufacturer — announced a development in Saratoga County. The facility in Malta, less than 20 miles from Waterford, is much like the development Cortland will see with the incoming Micron project, just 40 minutes north in Clay.

Lawler has been town super-

visor since 1994, seeing the development through its announcement, construction and opening in 2009.

He said the changes, particularly in the last decade, have come with many benefits, albeit a few challenges, too.

“We felt some of the effects very quickly in the sense that a lot of work had to be done before the plant, before construction could really start,” Lawler said. “For example, just to bring in the amount of power; the power generation to the site took a couple of years. We had to build a brand new water plant — 27 miles of pipe that took a year and a half to build, but it took probably two years, two and a half years to plan.”

“That water plant provides a lot of the county with water, not just GlobalFoundries,” he added. “I think something like over half of our county now gets their drinking water from that plant.”

The initial \$2 billion project employs approximately 3,000 people, Lawler said. However, the investment continues to grow. Since the facility’s construction, GlobalFoundries has invested more than \$15 billion in developing facilities in Saratoga County.

The project represents the largest industrial investment in the state, reports the state Economic Development Council. The facility’s construction called for approximately 6 million man hours and 4,600 construction and support jobs, the council reports.

However, the development has increased traffic, Lawler said.

“This plant runs 24/7, pretty much 365,” he said. “Three-thousand people work there and the plant is located in a small town. So, how do we move that many people in and out of there every day? And how do we do it in a way that respects and

minimally disrupts the quality of life for the people who live in that town? And that’s very important, because it’s easy to say, ‘This is a great idea. Let’s do it,’ until you live on the street that’s going to have 500 more cars a day going by.”

“You’ve got to do two things,” he added. “You’ve got to engage the public, especially the public that’s more affected than others, and you’ve got to be honest, transparent and you have to provide solutions for their concern. I think it’s really important early on so people don’t feel like their concerns won’t be listened to or won’t be acted on. It comes down to getting everybody at the table, being transparent in what you’re going to do, and start planning as soon as possible.”

Lawler’s best advice: engage everyone and confirm finances as soon as possible.

“Make sure that all the stakeholders are represented at the table,” Lawler said. “You don’t want to be a year and a half down the road and find out that National Grid isn’t fully on board because they didn’t know how much power was going to be needed. Or they didn’t know until late because then it can take them a year or two years or more to plan on major power upgrades and I’m just using them as an example.”

“Get your financing as ironclad as possible,” he added. “If the state says they’re going to give you money, get that documented. Get it? Get that money in hand as soon as possible because the state is — as any municipal official will tell you — getting the state to follow through on promises is sometimes challenging.”

N.C. RESEARCH TRIANGLE

The Research Triangle Park

of North Carolina is located between three top research universities — Duke University, North Carolina State University and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Much like the Research Triangle, Cortland is centrally located between research universities — Cornell University, 20 miles southwest of downtown Cortland; Syracuse University and Upstate Medical University, nearly 35 miles north; and Binghamton University, which is about 45 miles south.

The Research Triangle of North Carolina was founded in 1959, after the state ranked 47 out of 48 in the nation per capita income.

At the time, university graduates were leaving the state in search of better jobs. To better retain potential workers, the Research Triangle was formed — and is now home to more than 7,000 businesses.

“We get a ton of people from New York that are living in North Carolina, and they know that the jobs are here,” said Ryan Combs, executive director of the Research Triangle Regional Partnership. “We have customized training from our community colleges. We have a really good community college system and so for the bigger companies that may be producing something, part of the incentive that the state of North Carolina will give is they provide money to the community college to do custom training.”

Similarly, Tompkins Cortland Community College offers microcredential programs: short programs consisting of two to six classes that students can take to learn specific skill sets that can help prepare them to work certain jobs, according to the TC3 website.

The customizable programs were created in 2019 to re-

spond to local employer needs, and what skill sets they require from their employees — like its semiconductor microcredential program. The college didn’t know Micron planned to come when it began developing the program, but knew of the need for semiconductor workers nationwide.

While the microcredential programs are new, TC3 has long provided job training.

Carrie Coates Whitmore, the director of Continuing Education and Workforce Development at TC3, has said the college tries to keep pace with industry, and respond to its needs. If one year, there is a lot of growth in the healthcare field, TC3 will focus on getting students into that pipeline.

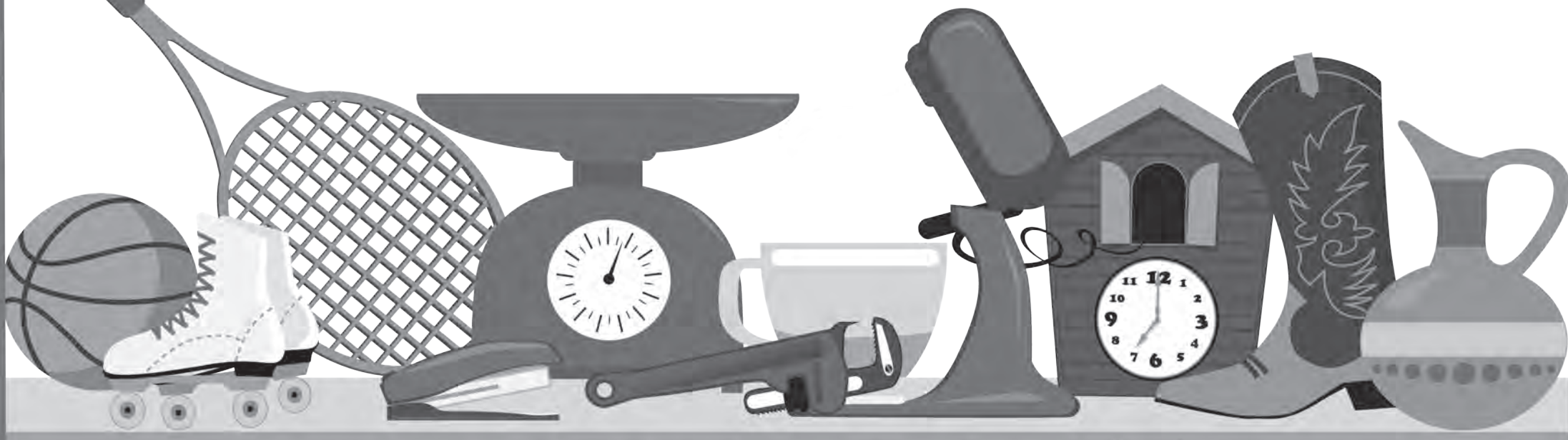
One of the benefits of having programs that match with local industry needs is retaining the work force, Combs said. However, quality of life is an important factor in retention.

“People have moved in and invested in these communities and are popping up with great restaurants and bar scenes,” he said. “It’s really become a place to live — it doesn’t feel as small as it used to be. I actually was born and raised in Raleigh, and I can tell you, it’s changed a lot in my lifetime.

“You have these different options for everybody,” Combs added. “You can live in a condo downtown; you can live on a farm, 30 minutes outside of town. There’s something for everybody to choose from. You’re two hours from the beach; three hours from the mountains. The quality of life plays a big part, but I do think the influx of companies that have moved to the triangle are really helping keep people here — good jobs, good salaries. I think all that plays into why we’re able to keep people in the triangle.”

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As wellness travel booms in 2024, here’s where to try it on a budget

By CARLEY ROJAS AVILA
Wealth of Geeks

A recent study by American Express Travel reveals 72% of American travelers say they’re more focused on self-care than a year ago, and 57% plan to take an extended wellness-focused vacation within a year.

After becoming one of the hottest trends in travel following the pandemic, wellness travel shows no signs of slowing down in 2024. But while high-end wellness experiences explode — with sky-high price tags to match — is the wellness travel experience getting out of reach for the average traveler?

Wellness-focused travelers are starting to skip world-famous wellness spots for more wallet-friendly experiences. They’re finding an even more nuanced definition of wellness in the process.



Wealth of Geeks via AP

Wellness travel is a relatively new trend where travelers elect to focus on self-care. Now, people are electing to skip famous wellness locations, which can be hard on the literal and figurative wallet, in favor of more budget-friendly locales.

wellness, whether it means taking a sunrise hike, going diving or doing any other adventurous activity, or enjoying a massage and a yoga class.”

LOVELY LORETO

The nuance of defining such a nebulous term as “wellness” is part of why Baja California Sur is doing an impressive job of marketing itself as a wellness destination.

The southern half of Mexico’s Baja California peninsula, Baja California Sur, somehow does every definition of wellness well.

The small beach town of Loreto on the Sea of Cortez is a prime example of the region’s appeal for wellness-focused travelers. There’s nothing too fancy, oversized, or busy about laid-back Loreto, which is all part of the appeal.

The mountainous islands of Loreto, part of the region’s UNESCO World Heritage designation for their immense biodiversity, punch through the Sea of Cortez just offshore, making this seafood spot even more magical.

Adventurous travelers count sailing to the islands and snorkeling at empty, white-sand beaches among the best things to do during a stay in Loreto. It’s also a haven for whale-watching, diving, sport fishing, and more, making it a dream for those with an active definition of wellness traveler. Desert can-

yons and richly preserved natural areas make it a haven for hikers. Even when the town is booked out with visitors watching the prestigious annual Baja 1000 off-road race that passes through town, Loreto feels perfectly peaceful and far from busy.

Travelers looking for rest and relaxation find that in Loreto, too. A burgeoning community of wellness gurus means there are plenty of ways to unwind while connecting to the higher self. From sound baths and cacao ceremonies on the beach to temazcal ceremonies that call upon ancient Mesoamerican wisdom, the options are diverse.

For those looking for a less “new age” experience, more traditional spa services like massages and facials cost just a fraction of what they would in the U.S. Couple the experience with a sunrise paddleboard (SUP) yoga session on the beach and a stroll on the oceanfront promenade before ending the night with freshly baked chocolate clams — a Loreto specialty — and it’s hard to imagine not coming away relaxed and restored.

“Loreto is a destination that naturally encourages relaxation,” says Felix. “You don’t have to plan a wellness-focused vacation to Loreto to feel that. It’s part of what makes it such a great choice for both wellness beginners and those looking for a little more structure and focus

to a wellness itinerary.”

COSTLY LOS CABOS

Travelers familiar with the world-class destination of Los Cabos may be surprised to learn that other parts of Mexico have an increasing array of things to offer the wellness traveler.

Los Cabos has had many wellness experiences to offer and is home to some of the most exclusive resorts in Mexico. Outposts of internationally acclaimed, exclusive wellness brands like The WELL at Chileno Bay Resort & Residences, Auberge Resorts Collection, are open, making Los Cabos a haven for Californians needing an escape. While the buzziest spa and wellness treatments are just one way to experience Los Cabos, they’re priced out of reach for most average travelers. Flights to Los Cabos are a prime access point for travelers to the rest of Baja California Sur. However, increasingly well-served airports in the region’s smaller cities mean travelers can now more easily bypass the city entirely. American Airlines offers daily direct flights from Phoenix to Loreto and two weekly flights from Dallas, while Alaska Airlines connects San Francisco and Los Angeles to the city.

Even more flight options out of the region’s capital of La Paz, about four hours south of Loreto, help keep costs low and the travel experience hassle-free.

5 southern getaways to escape winter blues

By EMILY
STRINGER HERRIG
Wealth of Geeks

Even with the headwinds of a shaky economy and busy holiday season, vacation travel shows no signs of slowing down, with 71% of Americans planning to travel more towards the end of 2023 than last year.

However, budget is still top of mind for travelers struggling to cope with rising inflation. Almost half of people planning to vacation this season cited cost as the primary influence over the length of their trip, according to a recent survey by Vacasa. With many people planning shorter journeys closer to home, weekend getaways can provide a relaxing escape without burning a hole in your wallet.

When planning your winter vacation, the warmth of the South can be felt not only in the weather but also in the culture.

Memphis, Tennessee

Any music lover will be drawn to the birthplace of rock ‘n’ roll and to the hub of blues and soul music. Beale Street is an iconic street where you can hear music spilling out from restaurants, nightclubs, and shops. The National Civil Rights Museum, the Museum of Science and History, and Elvis Presley’s Graceland are top sites to explore. Memphis has the big-city amenities but a natural small-town feel for a relaxing getaway.

Charleston, South Carolina

Charleston is the quintessential southern city. A city founded in 1670, the cobblestone streets and horse-drawn carriages will take you back in time.

Being so close to the water, there are a variety of activities, such as paddleboarding, boat-

ing, kayaking, and fishing. For those who simply want to take in the sun, there are three beaches to choose from.

Waco, Texas

For Texans, Waco is conveniently located on a major highway connected to Dallas, Austin, and San Antonio. For non-Texans, the airport in Waco is only 15-20 minutes from downtown.

Waco offers an unexpected array of activities, from family-friendly options to high-end luxury experiences. You can venture to the Cameron Park Zoo beside the Brazos River or visit the Dr. Pepper Museum. Or, you can soak at a beer spa.

New Orleans, Louisiana

The music and food scene are staples of such influences. From savoring the Crescent City’s jambalaya, riding on the Canal St. Ferry, or photographing the famous architecture, the Big Easy offers more than just Mardi Gras.

If you visit outside of Mardi Gras, be sure to visit Mardi Gras World to see the exquisite floats and a behind-the-scenes look at the float-making process.

Fayetteville, Arkansas

Surrounded by the beautiful Ozark Mountains, there are plenty of activities for any outdoor enthusiast to unwind and appreciate nature. While there are plenty of hiking trails, parks, and rivers to fish, Fayetteville has a thriving downtown and is an entertainment destination all on its own.

The energy found on Dickson Street is the perfect way to spend an evening. Plenty of restaurants offer live music any night of the week.



Wealth of Geeks via AP

The warmth of the South can be felt not only in the weather but also in the culture — which makes it the perfect vacation destination to beat your winter blues.

Traveling on the ‘Dry’ side: Gen Z leads new sober tourism trend

By KAREE BLUNT
Wealth of Geeks

Millions of drinkers around the world plan to give up booze as part of the social phenomenon known as “Dry January.” However, Gen Z is ahead of the game. According to Gallup, only about 38% of young adults are regular drinkers, and adult beverage companies aren’t the only ones paying attention to this growing trend.

The tourism industry has also raised its glass to alcohol-free travelers.

As the “sober curious” phenomenon grows, more people are opting to cut back on their alcohol use, especially while traveling.

“It is no longer commonly accepted that you need to drink alcohol to have fun. People have started to question this narrative, which is why we have seen an increase in demand for alcohol-free drinks and alcohol-free events and activities,” says Lauren Burnison, owner of We Love Lucid.

Burnison launched a travel company in 2018 focused on providing alcohol-free itineraries. “Adventure travel was such a life-changing and integral part of my own recalibration after getting sober that I felt compelled to share it with others.”

While baby boomers have slightly increased their drinking habits, according to Gallup, only 42% of millennials claim to drink. For Gen Z, the total is even lower, with only 21% drinking regularly.

A recent IWSR Drinks Market Analysis study shows the global market values non and low-alcoholic beverages at \$11 billion.

Expedia, a leading global online travel agency, predicts that “dry tripping” will emerge as a significant trend among vacationers in 2024, and the travel industry is quickly adapting.

Nonalcoholic drinking travelers are realizing they no longer have to be content with water or sodas. They’ve found their voice when expressing interest in other options, such as mocktails, a term used to describe alcohol-free cocktails.

“I stopped drinking a while ago,” says Chhavi Agarwal, personal finance expert at Mrs Daaku Studio. “However, I often order a mocktail to feel more included in the social group. My favorite drinks are either an alcohol-free Mojito or a Virgin Mary. I love having a drink with my dinner, and mocktails are a great way to do it.”

Research conducted on behalf of Expedia Brands found that 50% of travelers say they’d be interested in staying at a hotel that offers easily accessible alcohol-free options like mocktails or nonalcoholic beer.

“Hotels are rolling out delicious mocktails, adaptogen drinks, teas, and serotonin sodas,” says Melanie Fish, chief trend tracker for Expedia Brands, which has coined the term “Dry Tripping,” and luxury hotels are leading the way.

At Brenner’s Park Hotel &

Spa, a 5-star accommodation in Baden-Baden, Germany, guests can savor a variety of alcohol-free beverages on the menu. The Mount Royal Hotel in Banff, Canada, and The Phoenician in Scottsdale, Arizona, mirror this trend. The global shift towards nonalcoholic drink options is not just a passing trend but is gaining momentum worldwide.

“We just returned from an all-inclusive vacation in the Dominican Republic, celebrating my mother’s 85th birthday,” says Adriana Copaceanu from Recipe Idea Shop. “We reserved the hibachi restaurant and ordered virgin Mojitos, Mango Tangos, and Pina Coladas because we don’t drink alcohol. We were able to celebrate and feel special without alcoholic drinks.”

Expedia’s research also reveals one out of every four travelers mentioned their main reason for decreasing alcohol use on vacation is to stay in control. They also aim to improve their emotional and physical well-being.

“Wellness is a much more considered, integrated experience at hotels now,” says Rhianon Jones, future forecaster at Kantar. “When people go away now, they want to come back feeling healthy and rested.”

Tiffany McCauley, owner of The Gracious Pantry, says, “I only order mocktails now because I’m kind of over drinking. I never feel good after having a drink, so I enjoy mocktails when I go out with friends.”



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US homelessness up 12% as rents soar, pandemic aid lapses

By KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press
WASHINGTON — The United States experienced a dramatic 12% increase in homelessness to its highest reported level as soaring rents and a decline in coronavirus pandemic assistance combined to put housing out of reach for more Americans, federal officials said Dec. 15.

About 653,000 people were homeless, the most since the country began using the yearly point-in-time survey in 2007. The total in the January count represents an increase of about 70,650 from a year earlier.

The latest estimate indicates that people becoming homeless for the first time were behind much of the increase.

A rise in family homelessness ended a downward trend that began in 2012.

“For those on the frontlines of this crisis, it’s not surprising,” said Ann Oliva, chief executive officer at the National Alliance to End Homelessness, an advocacy group.

Housing and Urban Development Secretary Marcia Fudge said the data underscored an “urgent need” to support proven solutions that help people quickly exit homelessness and that prevent homelessness in the first place.

Going back to the first 2007 survey, the U.S. then made steady progress for about a decade in reducing the homeless population as the government focused particularly on increasing investments to get veterans into housing. The number of homeless people dropped from about 637,000 in 2010 to about 554,000 in 2017. The numbers ticked up to about 580,000 in the 2020 count and held relatively steady over the next two years as Congress responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with emergency rental assistance, stimulus payments, aid to states and local governments and a temporary eviction moratorium.

Jeff Olivet, executive director of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, a federal agency, said the extra assistance “held off the rise in homelessness that we are now seeing.” He said numerous factors are behind the problem.

“The most significant causes are the shortage of affordable homes and the high cost of housing that have left many Americans living paycheck to paycheck and one crisis away from



Will Taylor, 32, cleans up the campsite of a friend before Rapid Response Bio Clean removes the belongings during a sweep in Portland, Oregon, July 27, 2023. Taylor says that he has had to move three times since becoming homeless.

homelessness,” Olivet said.

Within the overall rise, homelessness among individuals rose by nearly 11%, among veterans by 7.4% and among families with children by 15.5%.

People who identify as Black make up about 13% of the U.S. population but comprised 37% of all people experiencing homelessness. People who identify as Hispanic or Latino make up about 19% of the population but comprised about 33% of those experiencing homelessness. Also, more than a quarter of the adults experiencing homelessness were over age 54.

HUD said that rental housing conditions were “extraordinarily challenging” in 2022, with rents increasing at more than twice the rate of recent

years. It noted that trend has subsided since the January count. Such relief could show benefits when volunteers and housing officials around the country begin the next homeless count in just a few weeks.

Officials also noted that President Joe Biden’s budget for this fiscal year has recommended guaranteed vouchers for low-income veterans and youths aging out of foster care, among other investments designed to reduce homelessness.

More than half the people experiencing homelessness in the country were in four states: California, New York, Florida and Washington. While about 28% of the nation’s homeless are estimated to be in California, its in-

crease was only about half the national rate. New York’s homelessness went up more than three times the national rate, according to HUD’s report. New Hampshire, New Mexico and Colorado along with New York saw the largest percentage increases in homelessness. In all, the number of people experiencing homelessness increased in 41 states and the District of Columbia, and decreased in just nine states.

Dave Giffen, executive director of The Coalition for the Homeless in New York City, said the cost of rental housing soared after the pandemic.

“So when we saw the pandemic-era protections go away, we did start to see homelessness starting to increase again. We saw more people being

evicted, housing instability,” Giffen said. “But then all of that got kind of masked by the sudden, very rapid influx of new asylum seekers, and that is a crisis for which the city and state were more unprepared to deal with.”

Starting in the summer of 2022, New York City’s homeless shelter system has been overwhelmed by waves of international migrants who are being bused into the city from southern U.S. border states. More than 150,000 migrants have been in the city’s shelters for some period of time.

Mayor Eric Adams has pleaded with the federal government for aid to help defray the cost of housing migrants, which he says will run into the billions of dollars over the next few years. He has chastised the governor of Texas, for arranging to bus migrants out of that state to New York. Adams, a Democrat, has also asked for legal and bureaucratic changes that would allow migrants to get work permits more easily.

HUD did not get data that enabled it to separate out the specific impact of migrants and asylum seekers on homelessness, but some communities indicated it did affect their increase. The Biden administration has provided more than \$1 billion in grant funding to cities and states to fund critical needs for migrants. It’s also identifying potential federal land and buildings that can be made available for shelter and other services for migrants, said a senior HUD official not authorized to publicly discuss the report.

HUD also sought to highlight improvements and noted that some communities bucked the national trend. Chattanooga, Tennessee, and the surrounding region, for example, saw a 49% drop from the 2022 count to this year’s. Chattanooga increased efforts to more rapidly connect people to permanent housing and boosted efforts to prevent people from becoming homeless.

Other communities highlighted for a drop were Dallas, which experienced a 3.8% decrease, and Newark and Essex County, New Jersey, which saw a 16.7% drop. Houston has closed numerous homeless encampments across the city and saw a 17% reduction in unsheltered homelessness. San Jose, California, and Tucson, Arizona, were also cited for improvements.

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H.S. Girls Basketball Strong 2nd half helps Cortland stay unbeaten

BY MATT CZEITNER
Sports Reporter
mczeitner@cortlandstandard.com

The Cortland girls basketball team overcame a slow start and responded with an explosive second half to take the lead and held on to win 41-34 over Moravia in the championship game of the Cortland Holiday Tournament Friday at Cortland Junior-Senior High School.

Cortland 41
Moravia 34

The first half was all Moravia. The Blue Devils spread the ball around and played strong defensively, particularly in the second quarter, holding Cortland to four points. Caraline Wasileski scored nine points in the first quarter, Allison Kehoe added a 3-pointer and Olivia Genson and Jessalyn Jones added two points. The Purple Tigers hung around with strong quarters from Kendall Mack and Valerosa Gambitta, but trailed 16-11.

Moravia did not slow down in the second, getting three more points from Jones and two points apiece from Genson, Jordan Smith, Kendall Hess and Gabby Heim. Cortland's lone field goal came on a 3-pointer from Katie Harris and Gambitta added a point from the foul line.

The Purple Tigers went into the break staring down something unfamiliar to them so far this season — a double-digit deficit. Moravia led 27-15. Cortland knew Moravia was a tough team coming into Friday and after two quarters, it was seeing all the strengths the Blue Devils bring to the court.

“When we saw Moravia in a scrimmage earlier this season, I was like, ‘That is such a comparable team to what we saw in Waterloo last year,’” Cortland head coach Janice Meyer said. “I knew after that if we saw them in the championship, it would be a good game and I wanted it to be because they make us better win or lose. They do the little things, their ball pressure is impeccable, they have depth and they’re just really solid. That caliber team is what we want to see down the stretch and what we will see.”

Meyer had to approach her mid-game adjustments differently to account for the unique position her girls were in.

“It was a different kind of talk at halftime,” Meyer added. “Moravia was the better team in the first half by a long shot. We knew we weren’t where we were supposed to be and we had to keep grinding.”

Cortland responded to its slow start just as it wanted to and quickly was right back in it. The Purple Tigers held Moravia to only three

points in the third, which came via a 3-pointer from Jones. They also began using their defense to their advantage, finding cutters in the half court and scoring buckets. Claire Turner and Mack each scored four points in the quarter and Gambitta and Lily Yang added two. Heading into the fourth, it was 30-27 in favor of the Blue Devils.

“My girls rose to the occasion in the second half,” Meyer said. “We want to be shooters all the time, but our game is slashing through the paint and keeping their defense guessing. If we don’t get our feet in the paint, we’re not going to score because it opens up our shooters. When we do that, we are really hard to beat.”

Cortland rode the momentum into the final quarter and eventually tied the score at 34. With 2:13 remaining, Yang knocked down a 3-pointer to give the Purple Tigers the lead and Mack hit a tough floater after a Moravia miss to increase the lead to five with 36 seconds left.

Jones took an open 3-pointer with under 20 seconds left and missed just short. Genson got the rebound and attacked the rim, but Turner blocked the shot and Cortland gained possession. A free throw from Yang increased the lead to six and Genson missed a three on the Blue Devils’ last chance.

Yang and Gambitta helped power Cortland to a win on the offensive end, as they each scored six points in the final quarter and Mack also added her clutch bucket down the stretch to seal the win. Yang was huge all-around for the Purple Tigers in the final eight minutes and earned high praise from her head coach.

“She was just really locked in the entire game and honestly, I don’t think we win that game without her,” Meyer said. “We didn’t shoot well today so that’s why we had to go to different options but Lily just did the little things. She drove the gaps, made corrections and was a defensive monster pressuring the ball.”

Gambitta led Cortland with 13 points, Mack finished with 11, Yang had eight, Turner had six and Harris had three. Gambitta was named tournament MVP and Yang and Mack also made the all-tournament team.

Moravia was led by Wasileski with 10 points, Jones added eight, Genson had seven, Kehoe had three and Smith and Heim had two. Wasileski and Jones were Moravia’s all-tournament team representatives.

Cortland remained unbeaten with the win, moving to 8-0. The Purple Tigers play again at 7 p.m. Friday at General Brown. Moravia, now 8-2, plays again at 6 p.m. Friday at home against Candor.



From left: Cortland’s Aubree Larkin, Lily Yang, Claire Turner and Kendall Mack celebrate with Valerosa Gambitta, front, following a win over Moravia Friday at Cortland Junior-Senior High School. The Purple Tigers beat the Blue Devils 41-34.

High School Boys Basketball Homer holds on for title game victory over Cortland

Homer 37
Cortland 28

BY MATT CZEITNER
Sports Reporter
mczeitner@cortlandstandard.com

The Homer boys basketball team maintained its lead over Cortland in another low-scoring affair, got big defensive stops down the stretch and sealed its win with timely buckets to win 37-28 in the championship game of the Tom Neugebauer Holiday Tournament Friday at Cortland Junior-Senior High School.

Homer started and finished strong Friday, bookending the game with its best quarters of the game offensively. Out of the gates, it was Wyatt Wilbur powering the offense. He scored seven points in the first. Cortland started slow on the other end, scoring just five points.

It became a comeback effort for Cortland in the remaining three quarters and it hung right with Homer until the finish, but the Purple Tigers could never get that burst of momentum it needed to pull out a win.

Homer led 19-11 at the half and 27-18 after three quarters. The fourth quarter saw plenty of action. Cortland rallied behind its shooting as Caden and Cal Albright each knocked down a 3-pointer to shrink the Trojan lead.

Tyler Van Etten scored his first three points of the night



Matt Czeitner/sports reporter
Homer’s Wyatt Wilbur handles the ball against Cortland Friday at Cortland Junior-Senior High School. Wilbur had 15 points in the Trojans’ 37-28 win.

in timely fashion for Homer, knocking down a shot from beyond the arc to help the Trojans keep their lead.

Homer held a 35-28 lead with under two minutes remaining. Cortland had several chances to cut into the deficit, but the Trojans’ stifling defense never let up. They constantly made the Purple Tigers move the ball and take tough

shots from the perimeter.

Homer’s defense forced a huge five-second violation on Cortland with 1:12 left in regulation. The Trojans failed to convert on the other end following the turnover, then Damauri Bell missed a floater for the Purple Tigers with just under 25 seconds left. The rebound was secured by Homer and a quick outlet pass

Marathon cruises in consolation game

BY MATT CZEITNER
Sports Reporter
mczeitner@cortlandstandard.com

The Marathon boys basketball team controlled the pace from the jump, took an early lead and never let up to beat Groton 56-36 in the consolation game of the Tom Neugebauer Holiday Tournament Friday at Cortland Junior-Senior High School.

Both teams were coming off a loss in the first round. Marathon fell to Homer 56-42 on Thursday and Groton lost to Cortland 56-34. It was also the second meeting of the season between the teams, with the Olympians prevailing 63-51 at Groton on Dec. 15.

Marathon wasted no time taking a lead. Bode Carter and Austin Poth each knocked down a 3-pointer in the first quarter, Jake Byron and Zach Birdsall each scored four points and Bryce Hartman scored two. The Olympians also shut down Groton, holding it to just four points with two coming from the free throw line.

Marathon did not slow down in the second quarter as it continued to get looks it liked converted whether it was a shot from the perimeter or the paint. The Olympians gave up more than they did in the first, but it still held Groton to single digits and took a 29-11 lead into the break.

Coming into Friday’s matchup, Marathon knew it had to put Thursday’s loss behind it and set the tone early.

“We knew we couldn’t be deflated after yesterday,” Marathon head coach Jim Holland said. “Our crowd came in for us and I think that gave us a little confidence



Matt Czeitner/sports reporter
Marathon’s Zach Birdsall, right, makes a move on Groton’s Michael Lane Friday at Cortland Junior-Senior High School. Birdsall had 12 points in the Olympians’ 56-36 win.

and we did what we had to do.”

The Olympians did not let up in the second half, outscoring Groton 17-9 in the third quarter to put the score out of reach.

Though Marathon fell to Homer in the first round and wanted to put that matchup behind it, that game helped in Friday’s win. The Olympians have been seeing similar approaches from opposing teams and Groton came in with the same game plan.

“We beat them before so we knew we could do that, but we’ve been going against an odd-front zone for three or four games in a row,” Holland said. “After yesterday, our guys really knew what they were doing, which is great.”

Marathon has been in several contests so far this season but has fallen short due to a bad quarter or finish. The Olympians were happy to finally get a dominant win, but know there’s more work to do.

“Finally, we get a comfortable win,” Holland said. “Overall, we’re still im-

proving. We’ve been right in some of these games, but at times we lack a go-to guy. Our four seniors are doing a great job. Some of our younger guys are still struggling but they’re giving us good minutes.”

The Olympians had production up and down their lineup. Hartman finished with 14 points, Birdsall had 12, Camdyn Kashuba had 11, Byron and Carter had seven, Poth had three and Colton Oram had two.

Trenton Walker led Groton with nine points, Dom Mackey had seven, Conor Eldred had five, Nick Karandeyev and Carmelo Riley-Israel each had four, Jaiden Mitchell and Michael Lane had three and Sean O’Brien added a point.

Carter was selected to the all-tournament team for Marathon and Mackey was selected for Groton.

Marathon plays again at 7:30 p.m. Friday at Spencer-Van Etten. Groton plays again at 7:30 p.m. Thursday at Odessa-Montour.

SUNY Cortland Mens Basketball SUNY Cortland mens basketball falls in holiday tournament

By FRAN ELIA
Contributing Writer
READING, PA. — The SUNY Cortland mens basketball team fell to Stockton University 77-51 in the opening round of the Albright College DoubleTree Holiday Tournament Friday.

The Red Dragons (4-4) will play in the third-place game at 2 p.m. today versus Neumann. Stockton (7-5) will compete in the championship game at 4 p.m. Kendall Arcuri finished with a career-high 14 points, tied his career best with seven rebounds

and dished out four assists for Cortland. Jaylen Warmack scored 14 points, handed out five assists and grabbed six rebounds and Danny Linehan finished with eight points and five rebounds.

EJ Matthews-Spratley led the

Ospreys with 19 points on 6-of-9 shooting. DJ Campbell tallied 15 points and Martin Anguelov netted 12 points. Anguelov led Stockton with seven rebounds, followed by Campbell with six boards, and Campbell led the team with four assists. Jalen

Collins hit 5-of-6 shots and finished with 10 points.

Cortland led 9-1 to open the game, but Stockton went on a 29-4 run to take a 30-13 lead with just under five minutes left in the half. The Ospreys led 36-20 at halftime and by at least 12

points the entire second half. Stockton shot 47% from the floor, while Cortland was held to 34% shooting.

Fran Elia is the Sports Information Director at SUNY Cortland.

MLB

Ex scouts sue Tigers following termination

DETROIT (AP) — A pair of former Detroit Tigers scouts sued the team, alleging age discrimination over their terminations after the 2020 season.

Gary Pellant and Randall Johnson filed the suit Thursday in U.S. District Court in Detroit, claiming a shift toward analytics was accompanied by a “false stereotype” that older scouts lacked acumen for newer scouting tools.

They claim wrongful termination and post-termination employment interference in violation of the Age Discrimination and Enforcement Act of 1967 and violations of the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, a Michigan law that took effect in 1977.

They also alleged disparate treatment age discrimination and/or disparate impact age discrimination in violation of the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act.

They asked for back pay, front pay and compensatory and punitive damages.

The Tigers did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Seventeen former Major League Baseball scouts sued the league, its teams and Commissioner Rob Manfred in June in U.S. District Court in Denver.

They alleged violations of ADEA along with laws in 11 states and New York City.

Pellant, 68, is from Chandler, Arizona, and Johnson, 67, is from Valley Center, California. The pair said they worked for multiple teams for more than 20 years before they were let go by the Tigers on Oct. 31, 2020.

The suit did not specify which other teams they worked for or when they were hired by the Tigers.

“Plaintiffs are among hundreds if not thousands of employees to be separated from employment with defendant in the last eight years as a result of a decision by the defendant and the MLB to replace older employees with younger employees,” the complaint said.

The suit added that after Manfred became commissioner in January 2015, “MLB endeavored to begin heavily recruiting younger scouts, at the same time intentionally pushing out from the older scouts with prior knowledge, qualifications, expertise, and training, based on a false stereotype that older scouts lacked the ability to use analytics and engage in video scouting with the same acumen as younger scouts.”

The pair said they were among four Tigers scouts over 60 who were terminated and remaining scouts ranged in age from early 20s to early 50s.

The suit said 51 of at least 83 “older scouts” were let go among the 30 teams.

“Defendant claims they terminated plaintiffs due to the financial hardship from the COVID-19 pandemic,” the suit alleged. “COVID-19 was a pretextual reason to terminate plaintiffs’ employment.”

National Hockey League



Dean Rutz/The Seattle Times via AP

Construction of the rink for the New Year’s Day Winter Classic between the Kraken and the Golden Knights continues Dec. 21, in Seattle at T-Mobile Park, home of the Mariners.

Preparations are underway for Winter Classic in Wash.

By TIM BOOTH
AP Sports Writer

SEATTLE — It stands about 215 feet in the air, weighs more than 11,000 tons, covers an area of nearly nine acres and is powered by 96 10-horsepower engines moving it at the break-neck speed of 50 feet per minute.

And it’s at the crux of why the NHL felt comfortable bringing its marquee event to start the new year in a place known to be rather damp in wintertime.

When the Vegas Golden Knights and Seattle Kraken meet on Monday in the Winter Classic, the NHL hopes the story is centered on the clash between the league’s two newest franchises, one of which happens to be the reigning Stanley Cup champions.

But bringing the game to the Pacific Northwest meant relying on a mechanical structure the league hopes won’t be needed on the day of the game but has proven invaluable in protecting the rink in the lead-up to the event — the retractable roof of T-Mobile Park.

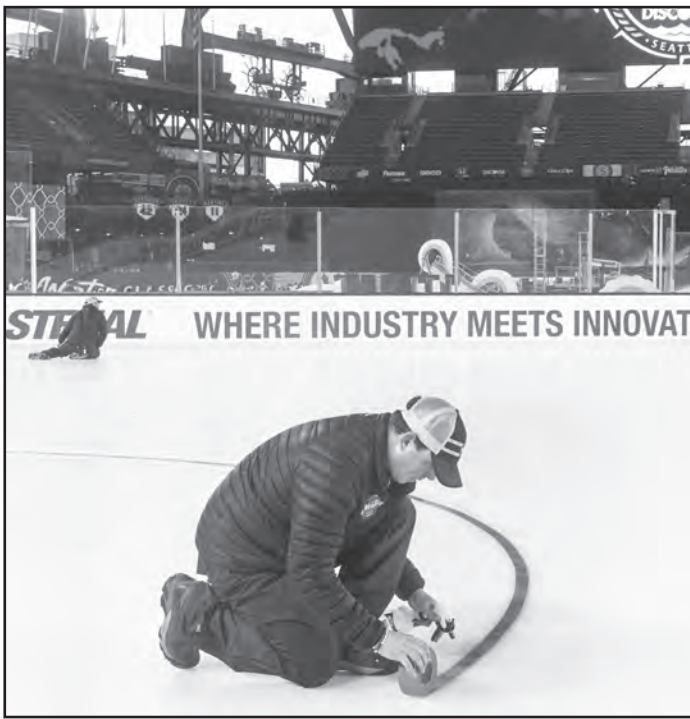
That’s part of the story, too.

“I think it’s a good story and it’s part of the story of Seattle,” NHL chief content officer Steve Mayer said. “This is a place that has a little rain.”

The game Monday will be the 39th outdoor game the NHL has conducted. And they have every intent of it being a truly outdoor game, even with the possible protection provided by playing in the retractable roof stadium.

For now, the forecast seems to be in the NHL’s favor. After a stretch of wet days, the weather on game-day looks to be a mix of sun and clouds with temperatures in the mid-40s.

But it’s the leadup to the



Ellen M. Banner/The Seattle Times via AP

A member of the ice crew sprays water on a line so it will stay in place on the skating rink at the NHL Winter Classic ice skating rink at T-Mobile Park in Seattle, Thursday.

game where the roof that allows the Seattle Mariners to play baseball games protected from the region’s notorious rain and drizzle has proven invaluable in the process of building a hockey rink.

For previous outdoor games, the league has built contingencies into the construction schedule in case weather became an issue.

In Seattle, those contingencies remained, but were mostly not needed. The roof remained closed for the process of building the rink and all the associated elements that come with putting on a hockey game in a baseball stadium.

“We always leave some room in there if we get a really bad rain day or something like that, especially when we start building the ice,” said Dean

is the roof to be retracted, it’s a multiprong process in making the final call. The league consults with a local meteorologist in the days leading up to the game and the morning of. There will be regular communication with executives from the league and the NHLPA as the game draws closer, including about two hours before puck drop when final decisions are made. In a worst-case scenario should the forecast change and rain become an issue, the NHL could opt to have a panel of the retractable roof cover the ice while leaving the rest of the stadium exposed for a modified open-air experience. The T-Mobile Park roof was constructed in sections, meaning only part of the stadium can be covered. It’s not an all-or-nothing proposition.

The only other time the league played one of its stadium events in a building with a retractable roof came in 2014 up the road in Vancouver, British Columbia, for a Heritage Classic game between the Canucks and Ottawa Senators. But a mix of rain and snow led to the roof of BC Place never being opened.

It was a stadium game, but not an outdoor game and it lacked the feel the league wanted. That’s why while the roof has been crucial in the build-up, the NHL wants Monday’s event to be played without the umbrella over the top.

“The NHL does an amazing job and each year it gets better and better,” Kraken forward Jared McCann said Thursday after getting his first look at the setup. “And obviously, we have the facility here with T-Mobile and the roof and everything to host something much more special and we’re going to try and make the most of it.”

While the goal for Monday

Isles beat Caps 5-1

By SCOTT CHARLES
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jean-Gabriel Pageau scored twice and added two assists, Julien Gauthier had two goals and an assist, and the New York Islanders defeated the Washington Capitals 5-1 Friday.

Ilya Sorokin made 26 saves and the Islanders improved to 7-1-3 in their last 11 games at UBS arena. Defenseman Noah Dobson also scored for New York.

“You saw the response to a bad game,” Islanders captain Anders Lee said. That was evident tonight and that was more indicative of who we’ve been of late. ... Guys were working, guys were smart, we didn’t have as many turnovers. We played the game much better tonight and buried our chances.”

Darcy Kuemper finished with 24 saves for Washington in relief of Charlie Lindgren who left the game with an upper-body injury in the first period. Nicolas Aube-Kubel scored for Washington, which has lost three in a row.

Pageau blasted a one-timer to record his third goal of the season and open the scoring at 4:51. Gauthier intercepted a pass in the defensive zone and led the rush into Capitals territory prior to sliding the puck to defenseman Alexander Romanov who set up the one-timer.

Pageau scored his second and capped off the scoring at 14:26 of the third period when he roofed a wrist shot past the glove of Kuemper to extend the Islanders lead to 5-0.

Gauthier scored twice within 17 seconds in the middle of the third period to give the Islanders a 4-0 lead.

PANTHERS 4, RANGERS 3

SUNRISE, Fla. (AP) — Sam Reinhart scored two goals, Aleksander Barkov tied a franchise career record by collecting three assists, and the Florida Panthers beat the NHL-leading New York Rangers 4-3 on Friday night.

Carter Verhaeghe got the winning goal for Florida with 6:23 remaining in the third period. Evan Rodrigues also scored for the Panthers, and Sergei Bobrovsky finished with 31 saves. Barkov tied Jonathan Huberdeau for the Panthers’ record with 415 assists.

“That’s three wins in a row against three really good teams,” said Panthers forward Matthew Tkachuk, who had two assists for a Florida team that has topped Stanley Cup champion Vegas, then Tampa Bay and now the Rangers in its last three outings. “We really haven’t played a perfect start-to-finish game, but we’re finding ways. And that’s very encouraging.”

Artemi Panarin, Will Culley and Mika Zibanejad scored for the Rangers, who tied the game twice after facing deficits of 2-0 and 3-2. Panarin and Culley scored 1:13 apart in the second period to tie the game for New York.

Jonathan Quick stopped 28 shots for the Rangers, who lead the NHL with a .721 standings-point percentage so far.

“I don’t think it was a bad game or our best game, but I thought they played some good hockey too,” Zibanejad said.

National Basketball Association

Wagner, Banchemo help Magic defeat Knicks 117-108

By DICK SCANLON
Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla.— Franz Wagner had 32 points and nine rebounds, Paolo Banchemo added 29 points and 10 rebounds and the Orlando Magic held off the New York Knicks 117-108 on Friday night.

Jalen Suggs had 21 points and six assists before a franchise-record home crowd of 19,587. Wagner also had four steals.

Julius Randle had 38 points, 12 rebounds and six assists in New York’s third loss in four games. Jalen Brunson added 20 points and eight assists, but shot 4 for 15 and missed all four of his 3-points shots.

Both teams struggled from

3-point range, with New York shooting 6 for 30 and Orlando 7 for 33.

New York closed the first quarter with a 17-5 run to take a 29-26 lead. Randle scored 12 points during the spree.

The Knicks then missed 13 of their first 15 shots in the second quarter while committing five turnovers. Wagner and Banchemo led the Magic on an 18-4 run, and Wagner finished the first half with a layup to put Orlando up 55-44.

A layup by Banchemo pushed the Magic’s lead to 20 midway through the third quarter.

Randle, RJ Barrett and Jalen Brunson led a charge that got the Knicks back within five in the closing minute, but Suggs

sealed it with a 12-foot jumper and a dunk.

WIZARDS 110, NETS 104

WASHINGTON (AP) — Kyle Kuzma scored 26 points, Deni Avdija had 21 points, 13 rebounds and six assists, and the Washington Wizards beat the Brooklyn Nets 110-104 on Friday night.

Kuzma checked back into the game with Brooklyn leading 98-97 and scored nine of Washington’s next 11, with fans at Capital One Arena come to a standing ovation as the Wizards dribbled the ball out on a rare home win.

“That’s how I want to play,” Kuzma said. “When you think about the top options on every

team, that’s how they play. I don’t necessarily have the opportunity to do that.”

Tyus Jones added 12 points for the Wizards, who snapped a three-game losing streak. Outside of recent back-to-back victories over the Detroit Pistons, who have currently matched the worst losing streak in NBA history, Brooklyn has lost seven in a row.

Mike Muscala nailed a 3-pointer to start the fourth quarter for Washington to retake the lead at 87-86. Muscala finished with 11 points off the bench in a game that had 13 lead changes and eight ties.

The Wizards could never get too comfortable, leading by no more than seven.



AP Photo/John Raoux

Knicks forward Julius Randle goes to the basket for a shot against Magic forward Paolo Banchemo, left, Friday, in Orlando, Florida.

College Football

No. 9 Mo. beats No. 7 Ohio State in Cotton Bowl

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — All-America running back Cody Schrader rushed for 128 yards and bulled into the end zone for a 7-yard touchdown to open the fourth quarter with Missouri's first score, and the ninth-ranked Tigers capped an 11-win season with a 14-3 win over No. 7 Ohio State in the Cotton Bowl on Friday night.

In a game with almost as many total punts (16) as points, the Tigers (11-2) suddenly scored touchdowns on consecutive drives after punting eight times before that. Brady Cook threw a 7-yard TD to Luther Burden III with 5:12 left in the game.

Ohio State (11-2), which was undefeated before losing its regular-season finale to Michigan, played without two-time All-America receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. The standout junior was on the sideline, but opted out of playing. He hasn't announced yet if he will enter the NFL draft. The Buckeyes were already without starting quarterback Kyle McCord, who left the program earlier this month to transfer to Syracuse.

SUN BOWL

**NO. 15 NOTRE DAME 40,
NO. 21 OREGON STATE 8**

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — Steve Angeli passed for 232 yards and three touchdowns, guiding Notre Dame past Oregon State in the Sun Bowl.

Angeli went 15 for 19 and tossed TD passes of 8 yards to Jayden Thomas, 13 yards to Jordan Faison and 13 yards to Jeremiah Love. The sophomore was making his first start for the Irish (10-3) in place of Sam Hartman, one of many players who opted out of the game.

Jadarian Price of Notre Dame rushed for 106 yards on 13 carries with a touchdown.

Notre Dame had seven players — all starters — opt out of the game. That included Hartman and standout running back Audric Estime.

Oregon State (8-5), which finished the season on a three-game losing streak, had three starters opt out and four others enter the transfer portal — including starting quarterback D.J. Uiagalelei and backup Aidan Chiles.

GATOR BOWL

CLEMSON 38, KENTUCKY 35

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP) — Phil Mafah ran for four touchdowns, including a 3-yarder with 17 seconds to play, and Clemson beat Kentucky to close the season on a five-game winning streak.

Mafah scored three times in a back-and-forth final quarter that saw five turnovers, four touchdowns and five lead changes. Clemson (9-4) outscored Kentucky (7-6) 28-14 over the last 15 minutes.

Cade Klubnik made the play of the game when he connected with Troy Stelato for 16 yards on third-and-18 to set up Mafah's fourth-down run that moved the chains. Mafah scored three plays later to put the Tigers up for good.

Mafah finished with 71 yards on 11 carries. Klubnik completed 30 of 41 passes for 264 yards with no touchdowns and an interception.

Kentucky's Barion Brown scored three TDs. He returned the second-half kickoff 100 yards, had a 60-yard scoring catch and a 22-yard TD run.



AP Photo/Julio Cortez

Missouri quarterback Brady Cook celebrates the team's win over Ohio State in the Cotton Bowl, Friday, in Arlington, Texas.

Creative play-callers fuel offenses for Washington and Texas

By RALPH D. RUSSO
AP College Football Writer

NEW ORLEANS — Washington coach Kalen DeBoer and offensive coordinator Ryan Grubb have coached together for 12 years, a partnership that started in NAIA and made stops in the Mid-American Conference and Mountain West before taking the Huskies to the College Football Playoff.

Texas coach Steve Sarkisian and offensive coordinator Kyle Flood became friends while they were both out of col-

lege football, working with the Atlanta Falcons. They helped Alabama win a national title before leading the Longhorns to their first CFP appearance.

DeBoer handed play-calling duties over to Grubb when he became head coach at Fresno State and kept that set-up at Washington, where the Huskies have one of the most prolific offenses in college football.

Sarkisian made Flood his OC when he got to Texas, but remains the play-caller for one of the most balanced and

productive attacks in the country.

The second-ranked Huskies (13-0) and third-ranked Longhorns (12-1) meet Monday night in the Sugar Bowl in a matchup of offenses known for aggressive and creative play calling.

Determining who makes the calls and how is far from an exact science. What works for one program might not for another, but it's never completely a one-man job. No matter how the Xs and Os are drawn up, success or failure often comes down to trust.

"The confidence (Sarkisian) has in us makes it even better," Texas offensive lineman Christian Jones said Friday.

Flood, the former Rutgers head coach, is also Texas' offensive line coach. He said his role in calling plays is being keenly aware of what his boss likes to call and when so his linemen can execute it.

"I think he's the best play caller that I certainly have ever worked with and I think maybe the top play-caller in all of football right now," Flood said.

Jones said Texas' slogan under Sarkisian — all gas, no brakes — is epitomized by his play calling.

"It's aggressive. He's like a wolf. He's very out there with the calls," the sixth-year offensive lineman said.

Flood said Sarkisian's ability to operate outside the gameplan sets him apart.

"I think as the game is happening and as the teams that we're playing are adjusting, he's adjusting with them," Flood said. "And I think that makes him unique."

National Football League

O-line switch is one of NFL's toughest tasks

By ROB MAADDI
AP Pro Football Writer

TAMPA, Fla. — Driving a car with the opposite foot or shaving with the other hand would be major challenges for anyone.

That's how offensive linemen describe moving from right tackle to left tackle and vice versa. It's a new position that requires different footwork, hand-and-eye coordination and other techniques all while trying to keep strong and speedy edge rushers from annihilating their quarterback.

Tampa Bay's Tristan Wirfs and Cincinnati's Jonah Williams are among the players who've made that difficult switch this season. Detroit's Penei Sewell has gone back and forth.

It's one of the toughest transitions for an NFL player that's often overlooked because of the assumption that offensive linemen all do the same thing. Yes, linemen have to block. But each guy on the line has different responsibilities and major adjustments are necessary.

"You have so many reps on one side and it's muscle memory but then all of sudden you have to do everything the other way and it feels weird," said Wirfs, who was a first-



AP Photo/Jason Behnken

Buccaneers offensive tackle Tristan Wirfs celebrates after the team beat the Jaguars, Sunday, in Tampa, Florida.

team All-Pro at right tackle in 2021 and made two Pro Bowls at that spot before jumping over to the left side. "The more you do it, the more comfortable you get.

But it does suck off the rip. You feel very awkward and it just takes some getting used to. It's easy to get very frustrated with yourself because you had success on this side. But I've got great guys around me."

Wirfs, a first-round pick by the Buccaneers in 2020, credits offensive line coach Joe Gilbert for helping make his transition smoother.

"He said: 'I'm not going to let you fail. You'll be all right,'" Wirfs said. "I'm still getting there. There's some days where you feel great and some days you're like, 'What am I doing?' But I'm definitely more comfortable than I thought."

Williams, the 11th overall pick by Cincinnati in 2019, played left tackle at Alabama and throughout his first three years with the Bengals until moving to the right side this season.

"I think in the NFL and especially at o-line, technique is just so important and so ingrained in you and it's not just knowing the technique, it's feeling it and your feet and your weight distribution and everything like that so it's not as easy as just saying now I'm going to do it the other way," Williams said. "It takes a lot of practice and time."

SCHOOLS

continued from page 9

teams' floor and the Trojans did just that Friday. They also moved to 2-0 on the season against the Purple Tigers.

"It's a good environment whether it's in Cortland or Homer," Updike said. "It is good to see the communities come and celebrate their kids and the kids also enjoy it. I'm just happy that our community and players get to experience a healthy and competitive rivalry."

Four players scored for Homer in the win. Wilbur and Durham each finished with 15 points, with eight of Durham's coming in the second quarter. Max Franco added four points and Van Etten scored three.

Cortland was led by Cal Albright's eight points. Caden Albright added six, Owen Johnson had four, Zach Muir and Antonio Terrazas had three and Bell and Jaxson Gambitta had two.

Terrazas and Caden Albright were named to the all-tournament team for Cortland. Durham was selected for Homer and Wilbur was named MVP.

Homer plays again at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at Skaneateles. Cortland plays at 7:30 p.m. Friday at Carthage.

**BOYS BASKETBALL
OTSELIC VALLEY 61,
CINCINNATUS 44**

Jack Stafford, Camden Stafford and Trevor Shevalier all went for double digit points, but Otselic Valley's Braeden Davis scored 35 points in the Lions' second straight loss. Jack Stafford notched 11 points and Camden Stafford and Shevalier each scored 10. Camden Stafford was named to the all-tournament team at the Fabius-Pompey Holiday Tournament. Johnny Schuyler scored seven points, Zack Streichert had five points and Mason Walker added one point. Cincinnati got down 34-21 at halftime.

RANDOLPH 44, TULLY 43

Tully hung right in there with the defending Class C state champions, but Randolph took a 17-9 lead after a quarter and held on. The Black Knights won the second half 22-16.

**MORAVIA 72,
DUNDEE/BRADFORD 42**

Abram Wasileski scored his 1,000th career point in Moravia's big win, making him the seventh player in program history to reach the milestone. Wasileski finished the game with 13 points, seven rebounds and five assists.

Kyler Proper made his return to the lineup and led the way

with 20 points. Aiden Kelly chipped in 15 points and five rebounds and Drew Nye also notched 12 points.

**GIRLS BASKETBALL
FABIUS-POMPEY 43,
McGRAW 28**

McGraw's four-game winning streak was snapped after the Eagles lost the final three quarters 41-21. Heather Magee led the Eagles with nine points, 11 rebounds and two assists.

Lexi McCall notched six points, two rebounds and five steals, Hannah Wilson contributed six points and three assists and Leah Terwilliger notched five points, a rebound and a steal. Madison Sweeney (two points, seven rebounds, one assist, two steals, one block), Casiana Vasquez (one rebound) and Eden Sears (one steal) rounded out McGraw's effort.

**CINCINNATUS 40,
OTSELIC VALLEY 31**

Cortney Scutt knocked down four triples in a 21-point effort and Sidney Glover scored 15 points as Cincinnati won the fourth quarter 11-6 to create separation.

Rachael Standish scored the Lions' other four points in the win.

**HOCKEY
CORTLAND/HOMER 8,
ALBANY CBA 4**

Cortland/Homer snapped a three-game losing streak thanks to Gabe O'Connor's four-goal, one assist performance. The Golden Eagles scored four goals in each of the first two periods and held an 8-3 lead through two. Liam O'Connor also scored a goal and both O'Connor's were named to the all-tournament team. Brady Coffin contributed three assists in the win, Preston Bowman scored twice and added an assist, Brendan Andrews scored a goal and Bodey McGrath, Cooper Swartz and Declan Vail all had an assist. Jack Medeiros made 29 saves for Cortland/Homer.

**FAYETTEVILLE-MANLIUS 7,
CORTLAND/HOMER 3**

Gabe O'Connor, Liam O'Connor and Brendan Andrews all scored a goal for Cortland/Homer Thursday night in a loss. Gabe O'Connor also had an assist.

UPCOMING SCHEDULE
BOYS BASKETBALL

Moravia at Avoca/Prattsburgh, 7 p.m. today

Cincinnati at Hamilton, 7 p.m. Tuesday

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Cazenovia at Homer, 6:45 p.m. Tuesday

BOYS VOLLEYBALL

Onelda at Cincinnati, 5:30 p.m. Tuesday

WRESTLING

Homer girls at Oswego State, 9 a.m. today



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Biden admin grants La. power to OK carbon capture wells

By **MICHAEL PHILLIS**
Associated Press

The Biden administration is handing Louisiana regulators new power to attract and approve carbon capture projects at a time when the state’s influential energy sector wants to make the Gulf Coast a hub for the rapidly expanding industry.

Louisiana will be able to issue permits for wells that store carbon dioxide, a critical component of carbon capture and removal technology.

In all but two other states, the Environmental Protection Agency is responsible for

permitting. Proponents of the change say it will speed up approvals of new projects that are critical for reducing climate-warming greenhouse gas emissions.

Environmental groups had opposed the move, doubting that a state home to a concentrated stretch of oil, gas and petrochemical plants commonly called “cancer alley” is capable of proper industry oversight and protecting residents.

The EPA said the Louisiana agreement includes safeguards to protect poorer, often majority-Black communities that live

near those facilities — and that those standards will serve as a model for other states.

“It can be done in a way that builds in environmental justice principles that allow for the community to participate in the process and ensures that these communities are safe,” EPA Administrator Michael Regan said Thursday.

The Biden administration has said enhancing environmental justice is a priority and that it would focus its enforcement power on communities already burdened by too much pollution.

The EPA said it secured commitments from Louisiana to have a robust public participation process and to consider how new wells might harm communities near polluting sites and possibly reduce harm.

Carbon capture technology is aimed at reducing emissions from industrial sources like ethanol plants and coal-fired power plants.

The captured carbon can be transported for injection in wells deep underground. It is these wells that Louisiana will now have the power to approve.

The Biden administration has

increased tax breaks for developers of carbon capture projects and provided large grants, including for an ambitious plan in Louisiana to remove carbon directly from the air.

Developers have responded, flooding the EPA with permit applications for new wells, but only a handful of carbon capture projects are currently operating and few wells have been approved so far.

In Louisiana, developers have proposed roughly 30 carbon capture projects, among the most of any state, according to a tracker maintained by the cli-

mate-focused group Clean Air Task Force.

Louisiana officials welcomed the EPA’s decision, saying it will help make the state a major carbon capture player and reduce industrial emissions.

“We have seen unprecedented interest in carbon sequestration projects over the past couple of years, with companies reaching out to our office to express interest in what the regulatory framework will be,” Louisiana Department of Natural Resources Commissioner of Conservation Monique Edwards said in a statement Thursday.

Lancashire accent may fade away, study warns

PA Media/dpa (TNS)

LONDON — In Britain, the Lancashire accent is dying out and may be lost “in the next few generations,” researchers have warned.

Known for its distinctive “strong r” sound at the end of some words, the accent is uncommon in younger generations, a study has found.

Lancaster University’s Dr. Danielle Turton said the accent feature, known to researchers as rhoticity, “may be lost in the next few generations.”

“Accent change is often like a puddle: it dries up in most places and leaves remnants around the edges,” she added.

The “r” in the spelling for speakers from these areas means it should be pronounced like an “r” at the beginning of a word, rather than just creating a longer vowel, the study said.

Prominent Lancastrians including comedians Eric Morecambe and Les Dawson, actress Jane Horrocks and Bullseye presenter Jim Bowen would use a “strong r” at the end of words like purr, car, bird and her.

Lancastrian speakers “usually differentiate between pairs of words such as ‘stellar’ and ‘stella,’ whereas most of England would consider them to be the same,” Dr. Turton said.

Hundreds of years ago, people throughout England used to pronounce strong “r”s, researchers said.

The accent survives in Blackburn where young speakers do mostly say their “r”s, but they are, according to the research team, phonetically very weak and often difficult to perceive.

Young speakers also pronounce their “r”s less frequently than older speakers, the study shows.

“For the youngest speakers in Blackburn, these ‘r’ are very weak, which raises the question of whether future generations will even hear these weak ‘r’ at all, and whether this distinction will eventually fade away,” the researcher said.

Her paper — An acoustic analysis of rhoticity in Lancashire — published in the Journal of Phonetics examines rhoticity.

Researchers interviewed 28 people from Blackburn to analyze how they pronounced their “r”s.

It presents the first systematic acoustic analysis of a rhotic accent in present-day England.

Dr. Turton said the disappearance of the accent might be happening “so gradually that people don’t notice it.”

A 2020 study found northern accents are becoming more similar, with the existence of a general northern English accent among “educated people” in the north.

“In recent years, there has been a lot of talk about the disappearance of traditional dialects and the linguistic homogenisation of regions in England,” the researcher added.

“Unfortunately, it seems that this is the case for the East Lancashire ‘island of rhoticity’.

“In the next few generations, this traditional feature may be lost.

“That being said, Blackburn still retains many other vowel features that make it unique and changes like this often pave the way for further linguistic evolution in the future.”

Homophobia could worsen Congo’s large mpox outbreak, scientists warn

By **JEAN-YVES KAMALE**
and MARIA CHENG
Associated Press

KINSHASA, Congo — As Congo copes with its biggest outbreak of mpox, scientists warn discrimination against gay and bisexual men on the continent could make it worse.

In November, the World Health Organization reported that mpox, also known as monkeypox, was being spread via sex in Congo for the first time. That is a significant departure from previous flare-ups, where the virus mainly sickened people in contact with diseased animals.

Mpox has been in parts of central and west Africa for decades, but it was not until 2022 that it was documented to spread via sex; most of the 91,00 people infected in approximately 100 countries that year were gay or bisexual men.

In Africa, unwillingness to report symptoms could drive the outbreak underground, said Dimie Ogoina, an infectious diseases specialist at the Niger Delta University in Nigeria.



Vials of single doses of the Jynneos vaccine for monkeypox are seen from a cooler at a vaccinations site on Aug. 29, 2022, in the Brooklyn borough of New York.

“It could be that because homosexuality is prohibited by law in most parts of Africa, many people do not come forward if they think they have been infected with mpox,” Ogoina said.

WHO officials said they identified the first sexually transmitted cases of the more severe type of mpox in Congo last spring, shortly after a resident of Belgium who “identified himself as a man who has sexual relations with other men” arrived in Kinshasa, the Congolese capital. The U.N. health agency said five other people who had sexual contact with the man later became infected with mpox.

“We have been underestimating the potential of sexual transmission of mpox in Africa for years,” said Ogoina, who with his colleagues, first reported in 2019 that mpox might be spreading via sex.

Gaps in monitoring make it a challenge to estimate how many mpox cases are linked to

sex, he said. Still, most cases of mpox in Nigeria involve people with no known contact with animals, he noted.

In Congo, there have been about 13,350 suspected cases of mpox, including 607 deaths through the end of November with only about 10% of cases confirmed by laboratories. But how many infections were spread through sex isn’t clear. WHO said about 70% of cases are in children under 15.

During a recent trip to Congo to assess the outbreak, WHO officials found there was “no awareness” among health workers that mpox could be spread sexually, resulting in missed cases.

WHO said health authorities had confirmed sexual transmission of mpox “between male partners and simultaneously through heterosexual transmission” in different parts of the country.

Mpox typically causes symptoms including a fever, skin rash, lesions and muscle sore-

ness for up to one month. It is spread via close contact and most people recover without needing medical treatment.

During the 2022 major international outbreak, mass vaccination programs were undertaken in some countries, including Canada, Britain and the U.S., and targeted those at highest risk — gay and bisexual men. But experts say that’s not likely to work in Africa for several reasons, including the stigma against gay communities.

“I don’t think we’ll see the same clamoring for vaccines in Africa that we saw in the West last year,” said Dr. Boghuma Titanji, an assistant professor of medicine in infectious diseases at Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta.

She said that the gay and bisexual men most at risk of mpox might be fearful of coming forward in a broad immunization program. Countries should work on ways to give the shots —if available — in

a way that wouldn’t stigmatize them, she said.

Dr. Jean-Jacques Muyemba, general director of Congo’s National Institute of Biomedical Research, said two provinces in Congo had reported clusters of mpox spread through sex, a concerning development.

There’s no licensed vaccine in Congo, and it would be hard to get enough shots for any large-scale program, Muyemba said. The country is trying to get a Japanese mpox vaccine, but regulatory issues are complicating the situation, he said.

Globally, only one vaccine has been authorized against mpox, made by Denmark’s Bavarian Nordic. Supplies are very limited and even if they were available, they would have to be approved by the African countries using them or by WHO. To date, the vaccine has only been available in Congo through research.

Oyewale Tomori, a Nigerian virus expert who sits on several WHO advisory boards, said

SpaceX Falcon Heavy takes flight with secret craft

By **RICHARD TRIBOU**
Orlando Sentinel (TNS)

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER — A SpaceX Falcon Heavy basked in the near full moonlight on the launch pad, and then took over the light show, blasting on the first of two planned missions from the Space Coast on Thursday night.

The powerhouse rocket carried with it the secretive X-37B Orbital Test Vehicle on the USSF-52 mission for the Space Force, carving its way into the clear black sky at 8:07 p.m., lifting off from KSC’s Launch Pad 39-A. A Falcon 9 rocket at adjacent Cape Canaveral Space Force Station was set to lift off less than three hours later on a Starlink mission.

Flying for only the ninth time ever, but fifth time this year alone, the Falcon Heavy became the Space Coast’s 71st launch of the year. The rocket that is essentially three Falcon 9 boosters strapped together rumbled into the night sky with 5.1 million pounds of thrust drowning out the cheers of viewing parties at the space center. As the two side boosters separated from the core stage, all three created jellyfish-like contrails that glowed as the booster engines continued to burn through their fuel.

The two side boosters completed their



A SpaceX Falcon Heavy sits on Launch Pad 39-A at Kennedy Space Center ahead of the USSF-52 mission on Thursday.

fifth flight, descending down past a backdrop of Orion and other winter constellations with another recovery landing at nearby Canaveral Landing Zones 1 and 2. Their return after liftoff brought the signature double sonic booms for each booster, shaking windows at the press site, with echoes reverberating off

the massive Vehicle Assembly Building. SpaceX did not plan to recover the core stage.

Earlier in the day, launch fans were seen out in force with about a mile backup leading into Kennedy Space Center Visitor Center by 3 p.m., where visitors who pay extra get a chance to view liftoff

from the Apollo/Saturn V Center at the Banana Creek viewing site about three miles from the launch pad. Reports on X, though, showed some prepaid ticket holders venting frustration after security turned them away.

“We are working as quickly as possible to get the correct information to all parties. We apologize for the inconvenience,” the visitor center posted.

The launch came more than two weeks since poor weather, and then what SpaceX reported was a “ground side issue” found less than an hour before liftoff, forced delays.

It’s the third time Falcon Heavy has flown for the Space Force, but the first time the X-37B Orbital Test Vehicle made by Boeing is getting such a powerful ride. Its six previous launches, the first of which came in 2010, were all on either United Launch Alliance Atlas V or SpaceX Falcon 9 rockets.

Falcon Heavy can send the spacecraft with its top-secret payloads to higher orbits, as it’s the most powerful rocket available for regular launches. A Space Force press release said the X-37B would be heading to “new orbital regimes” as part of the spacecraft’s “experimental test program to demonstrate technologies for a reliable, reusable, unmanned space test platform.”

A look back: Influential people who died in 2023

By **BERNARD MCGHEE**
Associated Press

Yevgeny Prigozhin rose from being an ex-con and hot dog vendor to winning lucrative Kremlin contracts and heading a formidable mercenary army. But it all came to a sudden end when the private plane carrying him and others mysteriously exploded over Russia.

Prigozhin's Aug. 23 death put an exclamation point on what had already been an eventful year for the brutal mercenary leader. His Wagner Group troops brought Russia a rare victory in its grinding war in Ukraine, capturing the city of Bakhmut. But internal friction with Russian military leaders later burst into the open, with Prigozhin briefly mounting an armed rebellion — the most severe challenge yet to Russian President Vladimir Putin's rule.

The rebellion was called off and a deal was struck in less than 24 hours. However, just two months later, Prigozhin joined the list of those who have run afoul of the Kremlin and died unexpectedly.

He was just one of a number of noteworthy people who died in 2023.

The world also said goodbye to former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who died Nov. 29. Serving under two presidents, Kissinger's shadow loomed large in the foreign policy arena, prompting both admiration and criticism from around the globe. And he continued his involvement in global affairs even in his final months.

Another political figure who died this year was former U.S. first lady Rosalynn Carter, who died Nov. 19. She was the closest adviser to her husband, former President Jimmy Carter, during his one term in the White House and then across four decades of global humanitarian work.

Among the entertainers who left the world this year was singer Tina Turner, who died May 24. Turner's powerful voice and stage presence brought her fame across multiple decades, first with her abusive husband, Ike Turner, in the 1960s and '70s. But after leaving their marriage, she found fame again in the 1980s with her hit "What's Love Got to Do With It."

Here is a roll call of some influential figures who died in 2023 (cause of death cited for younger people, if available):

JANUARY

Jeff Beck, 78. A guitar virtuoso who pushed the boundaries of blues, jazz and rock 'n' roll, influencing generations of shredders along the way and becoming known as the guitar player's guitar player. Jan. 10.

Constantine, 82. The former and last king of Greece, who won an Olympic gold medal in sailing and spent decades in exile after becoming entangled in his country's volatile politics in the 1960s. Jan. 10.

Lisa Marie Presley, 54. The only child of Elvis Presley and a singer-songwriter dedicated to her father's legacy. Jan. 12.

Robbie Knievel, 60. An American stunt performer who set records with daredevil motorcycle jumps following in the tire tracks of his thrill-seeking father Evel Knievel. Jan. 13.

Ray Cordeiro, 98. He interviewed music acts including the Beatles during a six-decade career on Hong Kong radio that earned him the title of the world's longest-working disc jockey. Jan. 13.

Lloyd Morrisett, 93. The co-creator of the beloved children's TV series "Sesame Street," which has used empathy and fuzzy monsters like Elmo and Cookie Monster to charm and teach generations around the world. Jan. 15.

FEBRUARY

Paco Rabanne, 88. The Spanish-born designer known for perfumes sold worldwide but who made his name with metallic space-age fashions that put a bold, new edge on catwalks. Feb. 3.

Harry Whittington, 95. The man who former Vice President Dick Cheney accidentally shot while they were hunting quail on a Texas ranch more than 17 years ago. Feb. 4.

Hsing Yun, 95. A Buddhist ab-



AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin, File

Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger attends a luncheon with French President Emmanuel Macron, Dec. 1, 2022, at the State Department in Washington. The former secretary of state exerted uncommon influence on global affairs under Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, earning both vilification and the Nobel Peace Prize. He died Nov. 29, 2023. He was 100.



AP Photo/Doug Pizac, File

Actress Raquel Welch poses backstage at the Emmy Awards in Los Angeles on Sept. 20, 1987. Welch, whose emergence from the sea in a skimpy, furry bikini in the film "One Million Years B.C." would propel her to international sex symbol status throughout the 1960s and '70s, died Feb. 15, 2023. She was 82.



AP Photo/Jason Bronis, File

Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter listens to a speaker at The Carter Center in Atlanta on April 6, 2011. Carter died on Nov. 19, 2023. She was 96.

bot who established a thriving religious community in southern Taiwan and built universities overseas. Feb. 5.

Pervez Musharraf, 79. The general who seized power in a bloodless coup and later led a reluctant Pakistan into aiding the U.S. war in Afghanistan against the Taliban. Feb. 5.

Burt Bacharach, 94. The singularly gifted and popular composer who delighted millions with the quirky arrangements and unforgettable melodies of "Walk on By," "Do You Know the Way to San Jose" and dozens of other hits. Feb. 8.

Raquel Welch, 82. Her emergence from the sea in a skimpy, furry bikini in the film "One Million Years B.C." propelled her to international sex symbol status in the 1960s and '70s. Feb. 15.

MARCH

Tom Sizemore, 61. The "Saving Private Ryan" actor whose bright 1990s star burned out under the weight of his own domestic violence and drug convictions. March 3.

Robert Blake, 89. The Emmy award-winning performer who went from acclaim for his acting to notoriety when he was tried and acquitted in the killing of his wife. March 9.

Jacqueline Gold, 62. She helped make lingerie and sex toys a female-friendly mainstream business as head of Britain's Ann Summers chain. March 16.

Lance Reddick, 60. A character actor who specialized in intense, icy and possibly sinister authority figures on TV and film, including "The Wire," "Fringe"

and the "John Wick" franchise. March 17.

Willis Reed, 80. He dramatically emerged from the locker room minutes before Game 7 of the 1970 NBA Finals to spark the New York Knicks to their first championship and create one of sports' most enduring examples of playing through pain. March 21.

APRIL

Al Jaffee, 102. Mad magazine's award-winning cartoonist and ageless wise guy who delighted millions of kids with the sneaky fun of the Fold-In and the snark of "Snappy Answers to Stupid Questions." April 10.

Mary Quant, 93. The visionary fashion designer whose colorful, sexy miniskirts epitomized Swinging London in the 1960s and influenced youth culture around the world. April 13.

Harry Belafonte, 96. The civil rights and entertainment giant who began as a groundbreaking actor and singer and became an activist, humanitarian and conscience of the world. April 25.

Jerry Springer, 79. The one-time mayor and news anchor whose namesake TV show featured a three-ring circus of dysfunctional guests willing to bare all — sometimes literally — as they brawled and hurled obscenities before a raucous audience. April 27.

MAY

Gordon Lightfoot, 84. The legendary folk singer-songwriter known for "If You Could Read My Mind" and "Sundown" and for songs that told tales of Canadian identity. May 1.

Doyle Brunson, 89. One of the



AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta, File

In this Sept. 5, 2013 file photo, Senate Intelligence Committee Chair Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., speaks to reporters on Capitol Hill in Washington. Feinstein, a centrist Democrat from California and champion of liberal causes who was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1992 died Sept. 28, 2023. She was 90.



Photo by Charles Sykes/Invision/AP, File

Richard Roundtree attends the premiere of "Shaft" on June 10, 2019, in New York. Roundtree, the trailblazing Black actor who starred as the ultra-smooth private detective "Shaft" in several films beginning in the early 1970s, died Oct. 24, 2023. He was 81.



Photo by Brian Ach/Invision/AP

Matthew Perry poses for a portrait on Feb. 17, 2015, in New York. The Emmy-nominated "Friends" actor whose sarcastic, but lovable Chandler Bing was among television's most famous and quotable characters died Oct. 28, 2023. He was 54.

most influential poker players of all time and a two-time world champion. May 14.

Jim Brown, 87. The pro football Hall of Famer was an unstoppable running back who retired at the peak of his career to become an actor as well as a prominent civil rights advocate during the 1960s. May 18.

Timothy Keller, 72. A pastor and best-selling author who founded the influential Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. May 19.

Ed Ames, 95. The youngest member of the popular 1950s singing group the Ames Brothers, who later became a successful actor in television and musical theater. May 21.

Tina Turner, 83. The unstoppable singer and stage performer who teamed with husband Ike Turner for a dynamic run of hit records and live shows in the 1960s and '70s and survived her horrifying marriage to triumph in middle age with the chart-topping "What's Love Got to Do With It." May 24.

JUNE

George Winston, 73. The Grammy-winning pianist who blended jazz, classical, folk and other stylings on such million-selling albums as "Autumn," "Winter Into Spring" and "December." June 4.

Astrud Gilberto, 83. The Brazilian singer, songwriter and entertainer whose off-hand, English-language cameo on "The Girl from Ipanema" made her a worldwide voice of bossa nova. June 5.

Pat Robertson, 93. A religious broadcaster who turned a tiny

Virginia station into the global Christian Broadcasting Network, tried a run for president, and helped make religion central to Republican Party politics in America through his Christian Coalition. June 8.

Theodore "Ted" Kaczynski, 81. Branded the "Unabomber" by the FBI, he was the Harvard-educated mathematician who retreated to a shack in the Montana wilderness and ran a 17-year bombing campaign that killed three people and injured 23 others. June 10.

Alan Arkin, 89. The wry character actor who demonstrated his versatility in everything from farcical comedy to chilling drama, receiving four Academy Award nominations and winning an Oscar in 2007 for "Little Miss Sunshine." June 29.

JULY

Jane Birkin, 76. An actor and singer who made France her home and charmed the country with her English grace, natural style and social activism. July 16.

Tony Bennett, 96. The eminent and timeless stylist whose devotion to classic American songs and knack for creating new standards such as "I Left My Heart In San Francisco" graced a decadeslong career that brought him admirers from Frank Sinatra to Lady Gaga. July 21.

Sinead O'Connor, 56. The gifted Irish singer-songwriter who became a superstar in her mid-20s was as much known for her private struggles and provocative actions as her fierce and expressive music. July 26.

AUGUST

Robbie Robertson, 80. The Band's lead guitarist and songwriter who in such classics as "The Weight" and "Up on Cripple Creek" mined American music and folklore and helped reshape contemporary rock. Aug. 9.

Ada Deer, 88. An esteemed Native American leader from Wisconsin and the first woman to lead the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Aug. 15.

Yevgeny Prigozhin, 62. As head of the Wagner Group, he made his name as a profane and brutal mercenary boss before mounting an armed rebellion that was the most severe and shocking challenge to Russian President Vladimir Putin's rule. Aug. 23. Plane crash.

Bob Barker, 99. The enduring, dapper game show host who became a household name over a half century of hosting "Truth or Consequences" and "The Price Is Right." Aug. 26.

SEPTEMBER

Jimmy Buffett, 76. The singer-songwriter who popularized beach bum soft rock with the escapist Caribbean-flavored song "Margaritaville" and turned that celebration of loafing into a billion-dollar empire of restaurants, resorts and frozen concoctions. Sept. 1.

Shabtai Shavit, 84. The Israeli spymaster who was credited with advancing Israel's historic peace treaty with Jordan during his term as director of the Mossad intelligence agency. Sept. 5.

OCTOBER

Dick Butkus, 80. A Hall of Fame middle linebacker for the Chicago Bears whose speed and ferocity set the standards for the position in the modern era. Oct. 5.

Hughes Van Ellis, 102. He was the youngest known survivor of the Tulsa Race Massacre and spent his latter years pursuing justice for his family and other descendants of the attack on "Black Wall Street." Oct. 9.

Kevin Phillips, 82. The author, commentator and political strategist whose landmark book, "The Emerging Republican Majority," became a blueprint for GOP thinking in the 1970s and beyond. Oct. 9.

Martti Ahtisaari, 86. The former president of Finland and global peace broker who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2008 for his work to resolve international conflicts. Oct. 16.

NOVEMBER

Bob Knight, 83. The brilliant and combustible coach who won three NCAA titles at Indiana and for years was the scowling face of college basketball. Nov. 1.

Frank Borman, 95. The astronaut who commanded Apollo 8's historic Christmas 1968 flight that circled the moon 10 times and paved the way for the lunar landing the next year. Nov. 7.

Rosalynn Carter, 96. The former first lady who was the closest adviser to Jimmy Carter during his one term as U.S. president and their four decades thereafter as global humanitarians. Nov. 19.

Henry Kissinger, 100. The former secretary of state exerted uncommon influence on global affairs under Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, earning both vilification and the Nobel Peace Prize. Nov. 29.

DECEMBER

Sandra Day O'Connor, 93. The former U.S. Supreme Court justice was an unwavering voice of moderate conservatism and the first woman to serve on the nation's highest court. Dec. 1.

Juanita Castro, 90. The sister of Cuban rulers Fidel and Raúl Castro, who worked with the CIA against her siblings' communist government. Dec. 4.

Norman Lear, 101. The writer, director and producer who revolutionized prime-time television with "All in the Family," "The Jeffersons" and "Maude," propelling political and social turmoil into the once insulated world of TV sitcoms. Dec. 5.

Ryan O'Neal, 82. The heart-throb actor who went from a TV soap opera to an Oscar-nominated role in "Love Story" and delivered a wry performance opposite his charismatic 9-year-old daughter Tatum in "Paper Moon." Dec. 8.

Hit-Boy enters Grammys with nod, helps father navigate music industry after prison

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr.
AP Entertainment Writer
LOS ANGELES — When Hit-Boy walks the Grammy red carpet, he expects to proudly strut into the Feb. 4 awards ceremony with his father beside him for the first time.
For three decades, Hit-Boy's dad was in-and-out of prison, with his recent stint lasting nine years until his release several months ago. With his father's newfound freedom, the super producer — who has worked with music heavyweights from Jay-Z, Nas and Kanye West — is focused on strengthening their father-son bond while navigating the music industry together.

Hit-Boy has the Grammys and a producer of the year, non-classical nomination in his sights. He's had three songs involving Brent Faiyaz, Blxst and The Alchemist. He also produced three Nas albums, including "King's Disease III," which is up for best rap album; one with Musiq Soulchild; and his two "Surf or Down" albums, which featured the producer as a rapper and his father on several tracks under the stage name Big Hit.

When Hit-Boy first heard about being a nominee again, he felt an instant "wave of emotions." He was one of the most productive producers this past year compared to others in his category — which includes Jack Antonoff, Metro Boomin, Dernst "D'Mile" Emile II and Daniel Nigro.

"I literally broke down in tears," said Hit-Boy, a three-time Grammy winner through Jay-Z and Kanye West's "... In Paris," Nipsey Hussle's "Racks in the Middle" and Nas' album "King Disease." He's worked with top performers including Beyoncé, Mary J. Blige, Drake, Mariah Carey, Ariana Grande and Jennifer Lopez.

But for Hit-Boy, this past year was different.

"When I really look back and had that moment to reflect, I was like 'Wow, I didn't have the biggest artists in the world that's going to stream,'" he said. "They are going to make it work. I was working with



AP Photo/Chris Pizzello, File

Record producer and recording artist Hit-Boy poses for a portrait March 8, 2022, in Los Angeles.

artists that don't have million-dollar budgets behind them."

Throughout the year, Hit-Boy said he worked mostly with Nas and his father, Big Hit, who recorded his lyrics for the intro on "Surf or Down Vol. 1" while incarcerated. After his father's release, Hit-Boy took him directly to the studio — where they both laid down tracks.

This month, Big Hit, 52, released his debut album "The Truth is in My Eyes," which features Snoop Dogg, Benny The Butcher, Musiq Soulchild, Dom Kennedy, The Alchemist and Mozzzy. He said it was tough being away from his son and watching his success from afar.

"It was torture just knowing the kind of impact I could've had and what I missed in his life," said the rapper, who was arrested during a traffic stop in Illinois in 2014. Turns out, he had an outstanding warrant, which stemmed from a hit-and-run accident in Los Angeles that left several people injured.

At the time, Hit-Boy said

his father was gaining positive momentum and made good impressions with the likes of Jay-Z and 50 Cent before his arrest, which the producer called devastating.

"I thought about how I could have shaped and molded him," Big Hit said. "Being a wonderful addition. Instead of bringing him down, I could have tightened him up. But I still did my best in the situation where I was at. But we're pushing full speed ahead. We're bridging that gap."

Since Big Hit's release, Hit-Boy has been laser-focused on keeping his father busy and spending time with him almost daily while creating an independent lane for their careers. The producer said he's funded "every single thing since he touched down."

"It's bigger than just doing the music," Hit-Boy said. "I'm creating that network, helping them to have a workflow. I'm spending money on these marketing plans. I'm coming with all the best ideas I can. Every

day is an adventure. My whole life, he's got out and went back in. Stressed out that he might do something to jeopardize it again. It's part of that brainwork where you just got to hold it down and financially. I wanted to build, put together pieces that would bring people completely into his world."

Hit-Boy said several labels have offered Big Hit deals, but they turned them down. The producer said they'll be better off on their own for now.

"They wanted to put some cool money in his pocket," Hit-Boy said. "But I've been in the game since I was 19. He got locked up at 19 until he was in his 30s. Now, I'm in my 30s and I'm locked up in the industry, because I'm still to this day in a bad publishing deal with Universal Music Publishing Group. I would feel so crazy to let my dad get caught up with these same systems, the same ways and ideologies that I've been fed since I was a kid. I just can't go for it."

Hit-Boy, 36, and his team decided against releasing Big Hit's new album on digital stream platforms. He wants people to buy directly from them, which according to his team has so far worked out.

"We got physical CDs. We're not going to do any DSPs, no streaming," the producer said. "I've been seeing a lot of people complain about that. Snoop just went on a platform and talked about how he got a billion streams, but only earned about \$40,000 or \$45,000. I feel like if we sell 10,000 CDs, we're going to blow that out the water. We're going to start small. We don't need to have a billion streams, because that might only equate to \$10,000. We're going to let people buy the music directly from us."

Hit-Boy said he and his father are making music, doing business together like he always wanted. If he could win a Grammy with his dad, mother and young son in attendance, it would mean the world to him.

"Every time I won a Grammy, he was locked up," he said. "That would be dope to win. I'm going to speak it into existence."

Cher petitions court for conservatorship over her adult son

By ANDREW DALTON
AP Entertainment Writer
LOS ANGELES — Cher has filed a petition to become a temporary conservator overseeing her son's money, saying the 47-year-old's struggles with mental health issues and addiction have left him unable to manage his assets and potentially put his life in danger.

The Oscar and Grammy winning singer and actor on Wednesday filed the petition in Los Angeles Superior Court that would give her temporary control of the finances of Elijah Blue Allman, her son with musician Gregg Allman.



Cher

Cher's petition says that Elijah Allman is entitled to regular payments from a trust fund. But "given his ongoing mental health and substance abuse issues," she is "concerned that any funds distributed to Elijah will be immediately spent on drugs, leaving Elijah with no assets to provide for himself and putting Elijah's life at risk," the petition says.

Reached through his attorney, Elijah Allman said in a phone call with The Associated Press, "I am well, and able, and of sound mind and body."

He declined to say whether he planned to oppose the petition, or give any further comment.

Contract Bridge

Reducing the risk factor

South dealer.
Both sides vulnerable.

NORTH		EAST	
♠ A 3		♠ 5	
♥ A J 9 4		♥ Q 10 8 3 2	
♦ A 9 8 5		♦ J 6 4	
♣ J 6 2		♣ 7 5 4 3	
WEST		SOUTH	
♠ K 6 2		♠ Q J 10 9 8 7 4	
♥ K 6 5		♥ 7	
♦ K 10 7 2		♦ Q 3	
♣ 10 9 8		♣ A K Q	

The bidding:
South West North East
4 ♠ Pass 6 ♠

Opening lead — ten of clubs.
At times, a high degree of foresight may be required to achieve the best possible result. Take this deal where West led a club against six spades. Declarer won with the ace, played the queen of spades and finessed. Had South next played another spade, hoping West had started with the doubleton king, he would have gone down one.

But rather than put all his eggs in this one basket, South temporarily abandoned further trump leads in

order to first play a heart to the ace and ruff a heart. Now he led a trump to the ace, and when the king did not fall, South continued his long-range plan by ruffing the nine of hearts and cashing the K-Q of clubs.

South then made his bid for fame and fortune by exiting with a trump. West won with the king but, having been shorn of spades, hearts and clubs, he had to return a diamond from the king, handing South the contract.

The hand presents an excellent example of planning the play. Having noted at trick one that his main hope of making the slam was to find West with the singleton or doubleton king of trump, South sought and found a way to add to his chances by setting the stage for a potential endplay against West if he had the guarded king of spades.

When the primary chance failed, the secondary chance came to South's rescue at the end. South was lucky to find West with the king of diamonds and only three hearts and three clubs, but this is the kind of luck than can save the day for a declarer who takes the time at the outset to formulate a contingency plan.

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From tuition to technology, higher education as we know it is changing

By CAITRIONA MARIA
Wealth of Geeks

Looking at college tuition costs in the United States is not for the faint of heart. Attending a four-year university can cost a family upwards of \$104,000. Historically, the exuberant costs associated with a college degree were offset by the perceived return on investment (ROI). That perception has changed. As enrollment rates decline, colleges and universities are looking for new methods to adapt and remain relevant in American life.

RIISING SKEPTICISM
Research from Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce shows that, despite the high cost of a degree, more education doesn't always mean more earnings. Demographic factors and student debt can also drastically alter expected income. Students and their families are reevaluating the long-term benefits of a degree compared to the steep costs. This skepticism is reflected in the University Professional and Continuing Education Association's (UPCEA) 2024 predictions. The rise of online learning, coupled with the advancement of technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and new economic perspectives on higher education, is changing the status quo. Students are no longer willing to wait and see if their hundreds of thousands of dollars will pay off in the long run; they want an education whose value is evident now.

THE LEGACY OF COVID-19
The coronavirus pandemic disrupted various facets of American life; higher education was no exception. For the first time, students and faculty were forced to develop online learning models regardless of their opinions on the subject. This sudden, dramatic shift had three key effects that transformed the education landscape.

Chancellor of UW says he was fired over videos

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Former University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Chancellor Joe Gow said Thursday that the school's governing board fired him because members were uncomfortable with him and his wife producing and appearing in pornographic videos.

The Universities of Wisconsin Board of Regents, which oversees UW-Madison, UW-La Crosse and 11 other regional campuses, voted unanimously during a hastily convened closed meeting Wednesday evening to fire Gow.

After the vote, Universities of Wisconsin President Jay Rothman and regents President Karen Walsh issued statements saying the regents had learned of specific conduct by Gow that subjected the university to "significant reputational harm." Rothman called Gow's actions "abhorrent" and Walsh said she was "disgusted." But neither of them offered any details of the allegations.

Gow told The Associated Press in a phone interview Thursday morning that regents had discovered that he and his wife, former UW-La Crosse professor Carmen Wilson, had been producing and appearing in pornographic videos. He maintained that he never mentioned UW-La Crosse or his role at the university in any of the videos and the firing violated his free speech rights.

"My wife and I live in a country where we have a First Amendment," he said. "We're dealing with consensual adult sexuality. The regents are overreacting. They're certainly not adhering to their own commitment to free speech or the First Amendment."



AP Photo/John Minchillo
Abigail Schneider, 8, completes a level of her learning game on a laptop in her bedroom, Dec. 8, 2021, in the Brooklyn borough of New York.

First, it gave young students a taste for at-home learning. While non-traditional students — those aged 24 years or older — have sought options beyond typical on-campus synchronous learning for decades.

Asynchronous education was considered exclusive to adult students with careers and families. According to Derek Bruff, the Strategic Advisor of UPCEA and Associate Director for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at the University of Michigan, traditional students have joined their older peers. Students of all ages and backgrounds are increasingly seeking online and asynchronous class options.

Students were not the only ones exposed to the perks of online education. A growing number of faculty have expressed interest in teaching online. The same faculty members who might have balked at online courses back in 2019 now have firsthand experience in teaching effectively online. This is especially true at colleges and universities that handled the transition to online learning well during the

2020-2021 academic year. The infrastructure created during the pandemic proved helpful even after lockdown ended. Specifically, the creation and expansion of the Chief Online Learning Officer (COLO or CDLO) position at many institutions provides essential guidance for the digital age. COLOs serve to unite academics and technology. More schools are electing COLOs for important positions like provost, and are selecting candidates with more tech experience over the usual academia-based prospects.

ADAPTING NEW MODELS
Alternatives to traditional degrees are gaining traction. Companies like IBM and Accenture have either relaxed or removed degree requirements altogether, decreasing demand for higher education. Prioritizing vocational training and practical skills will help schools fortify against declining enrollment. To avoid being rendered obsolete, colleges and universities must adapt. UPCEA predicts

schools will start by rebranding. Instead of advertising bachelor's degrees, schools will opt for certificate programs and continuing professional education as their primary focus. These degrees will promote teaching directly related to work and career, which is much more appealing to today's prospective students.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND TECHNOLOGY'S IMPACT
With declining enrollment rates come budget cuts, inflationary pressures, and funding gaps. Colleges in jeopardy will incorporate AI into their operations to combat this. UPCEA predicts that AI adoption will first occur in areas associated with administration, with the goal of increasing efficiency and reducing full-time equivalent headcounts.

Using AI to improve education will happen gradually. Continuing and professional education are considered the "innovative fringe" in most schools, thus providing the most opportunities for experimentation. Universities will likely take advantage of AI and large language models (LLMs) to first improve learning in these areas.

While AI presents many opportunities, its limitations will motivate new technologies in the coming year. Among these limits is security. The privacy policies of most AI models are not equipped to handle sensitive information, prompting schools to create their own. For example, the University of Michigan launched its version of ChatGPT to better align with the campus's needs. LLMs and current AI technologies also fail to provide domain-specific information. These models are often good at providing some data on various subjects but need help to dive deep. Schools are expected to develop new models to circumvent this problem.

Students at closed Conn. nursing school sue state officials

By SUSAN HAIGH
Associated Press

Students at a for-profit nursing school in Connecticut that abruptly closed in February filed a federal class-action lawsuit against state officials on Tuesday, arguing their actions and defamatory statements have prevented the students from moving on with their training and careers.

"They're literally stuck," said attorney David A. Slossberg, who is part of a team of lawyers representing what could potentially be more than 1,200 former Stone Academy students.

The lawsuit, which focuses on the state's conduct after the school's closure, argues the students' constitutional rights have been violated because they have been deprived of property rights to earned academic credits. After the school's three campuses were shuttered, a state audit declared thousands of credit hours retroactively invalid, something Slossberg argues officials did not have the authority to do.

"You really have state agencies who weren't authorized to behave this way, who really went rogue in many respects," he said. "And instead of making things better, they multiplied the harm to these hard-working students exponentially."

The plaintiffs also argue they have been deprived of their "liberty rights to their good name, reputation, honor, and integrity" by state officials. The students

claim they have been "stigmatized" and unable to transfer any credits, audited or otherwise, to other Connecticut nursing schools because they are now seen as "ill prepared to practice as practical nurses."

"Unfortunately, all the people in positions of trust failed these students," said Slossberg, who is working with attorneys Kristen L. Zaehringer, Erica O. Nolan and Timothy C. Cowan on the case. The lawsuit names the commissioners of the Connecticut Office of Higher Education and Connecticut Department of Public Health, as well as two other state officials, as defendants in the case.

It follows an earlier lawsuit filed by the students in May against Stone Academy's parent company, the academy's part-owner and other people. Earlier this month, a judge decided at least \$5 million must be set aside for the students.

In July, the state of Connecticut also sued the for-profit nursing school, accusing it of aggressively using marketing to recruit students, many of them Black and Hispanic women who took out loans and used their life savings to pay the more than \$30,000 in tuition and other costs to become licensed practical nurses. But Attorney General William Tong said the school provided an inadequate education and left them ineligible to take licensing exams and obtain state nursing licenses.

LEGALS

**TOWN OF SCOTT
LEGAL NOTICE**
The Town of Scott will be holding its 2024 organizational meeting on Monday January 9, 2024, at 6:00 pm at the Scott Town Hall, 6689 State Route 41, Homer NY 13077. The regular board meeting will immediately follow.

Donnell Boyden,
Town of Scott Supervisor

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF A LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY
Notice of Formation of CHRIS STULL HOLDINGS, LLC. Articles of Organization filed with Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 2023-12-13. Office location: Cortland County, SSNY designated as agent of Limited Liability Company (LLC) upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY should mail process to The LLC: 1109 Route 13 Cortland NY 13045. Purpose: Any lawful purpose

**TOWN OF GROTON
LEGAL NOTICE**
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that I, Robin Cargian, Tax Collector, has received the tax roll and warrant for the Town of Groton, New York, for the Year 2024. Taxes may be paid in person at the Town Clerk's Office, 101 Conger Boulevard, Groton, NY from Jan 2, 2024 to April 1, 2024. Office Hours are 8AM to 4PM, Mon to Friday. Extended hours: Sat, Jan 24, 8AM to Noon; Tues-Weds, Jan 30-31, 8AM to 6PM. Payments may also be mailed to Robin Cargian Tax Collector, PO Box 36, Groton, NY 13073, deposited in the drop box by the Town Clerk's door; or by credit card or e-check online at townofgroton.org or by calling 607-898-5035 (service fee applies). The date of mailed payments will be determined by the post office mark.

**CORTLAND COUNTY
BID NOTICE**
The Cortland Housing Authority is accepting bids for the following:
Interior Apartment Painting and miscellaneous painting in other common areas. Specifications may be obtained from the office of the Housing Authority at 42 Church St., or by calling (607)753-1771. Or you can email lboyce@cortlandha.com to have one emailed to you.
Bids are due no later than 3:00 p.m. local time January 26th, 2024. Questions about the project may be directed to Nick Giamei, Maintenance Supervisor at (607)753-1772. The owner accepts the right to accept or reject all bids and to waive any informalities in the bidding process. MBE/WBE/DBE's/MWBE & Section 3 businesses are welcome.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that taxes paid in full, or the installment payment made on or before Jan 31, 2024, will have no penalty added. All taxes received between Feb 1 and Feb 29, 2024 shall have 1% interest added. All taxes received between March 1 and April 1, 2024, shall have 2% interest added. Unpaid taxes will be returned to the Tompkins County Treasurer after April 1, 2024. Senior Citizens who qualify for the Senior Exemption or Enhanced STAR, have an extended full payment deadline of Feb 7, 2024.

Tax bills coded for escrow accounts will be mailed to banks for payment. Property owners without escrow accounts who do not receive their tax bills in the first week of January, should notify the Tax Collector, as they will still be responsible for payment.

Robin Cargian, RMC
Town Clerk/Tax Collector

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF A LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY
ENLH FNB LLC Arts of Org. filed SSNY 10/24/23, Cortland Co. SSNY design agent for process & shall mail to Eric Seung Ha 185 Homer Ave Cortland, NY 13045 General Purpose

**TOWN OF VIRGIL
TAX COLLECTOR'S NOTICE**
Take notice that I, Alane Van Donsel, the undersigned, have duly received the Tax Roll and Warrant for the year 2024 and that I shall be available to receive tax payments at 1176 Church Street, Virgil, New York at the Virgil Town Hall during the following times Monday-Friday 10:00AM-3:00PM and on Saturdays in the month of January from 10:00AM-12:00PM for tax collecting purposes. Tax collecting will commence on or after the warrant date of Dec. 31, 2023. Taxes may be paid online at www.virgilny.org.
Please take further notice that there is a 1% interest fee charged for taxes paid from February 1st to Feb. 29th, a 2% interest fee for taxes paid between March 1st and April 1st, a 3% interest fee for taxes paid between April 2nd and April 30th. If taxes are unpaid as of May 1st, 2024 and a second notice of taxes due is processed, an additional charge of \$2.00 (two dollars) will be levied and will become a part of the amount due, plus a 4% interest fee will be charged. Taxes will be collected by the Virgil Tax Collector until May 31st, as per Virgil Town Board Resolution. After May 31st all unpaid taxes will be turned over to the Cortland County Treasurer's Office for collection.

Alane Van Donsel
Town Clerk/Collector

**TOWN OF GROTON
PUBLIC NOTICE**
2024 Organizational Meetings

The Town of Groton Boards will hold their 2024 Organizational Meetings according to the following schedule:

Town Board: Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at 7:30 pm.
Zoning Board of Appeals: Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at 7:00 pm.
Planning Board: Thursday, January 18, 2024 at 7:30 pm.

All meetings are held at the Groton Town Hall, 101 Conger Boulevard, Groton, New York, and are open to the public.

**VILLAGE OF HOMER
LEGAL NOTICE**
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE pursuant to Village Law Section 5-508 (3), a Public Hearing will be held by the Village of Homer Board of Trustees on Tuesday January 9th, 2024, at 6:00 pm in Town Hall, located at 31 North Main Street, Homer, New York, regarding the Final Budget of the Village of Homer for the FY 24/25. Meeting will also be broadcast via the Village of Homer's You-tube channel and via zoom. Copies of the Preliminary Budget are available for review at the office of the Village Clerk, 31 North Main Street, Homer, New York, and may be inspected during normal office hours. A copy will also be posted to the Village website. Further, monies from Special Reserves and encumbrances will be used accordingly:
Machinery Reserves of \$100,000
Purchase of a plow
Current Year Encumbrance of \$97,000 for the purchase of a plow
Police Reserves of \$52,000 for a police vehicle
Fire Station Reserve of \$16,220 for Fire Station Debt Payments
Police Department Reserves of \$6000 for Equipment
Fire Reserves of \$9,000 for purchase of radios
Zoom links can be obtained by emailing treasurer@homerny.org or calling 607-749-3322
By order of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Homer.
Dated: December 28, 2023
Tanya DiGennaro, Village Treasurer

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